

**The Delegation of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the  
Jews and the Chief Rabbinate of Israel's Delegation for Relations with the  
Catholic Church**

**Bi-Lateral Commission Meeting**

**Rome, October 17-19, 2004**

1. The fourth meeting of the respective high ranking delegations took place in Grottaferrata ( Rome ) on the theme of A Shared Vision of Social Justice and Ethical Conduct in an atmosphere of amity and cordiality. This encounter was pursuant to the successful previous three meetings in Jerusalem and Rome which had addressed the themes: The Sanctity of Human Life and Family Values; [and] The Relevance of Central Religious Teachings in the Holy Scriptures we share for Contemporary and Future Society.
2. In their opening welcomes, the chairmen of the delegations Cardinal Jorge Mejía and Chief Rabbi Shear Yashuv Cohen, expressed their satisfaction and joy that the meetings continue in a spirit of prayer and with a deepening relationship of friendship and collaboration between the members of the delegations, which holds great promise for the future.
3. The bilateral committee reiterated its commitment to the principle declarations of the previous meetings which included a call for mutual respect of our different religious identities; and affirmed a common rejection of any attempts to persuade people to reject their own heritage. The committee similarly reiterated the past declarations' condemnations of violence and terror in the name of religion as desecration of religion itself; as well as of resurgent manifestations of anti-Semitism, which Pope John Paul II has described as "a sin against God and humankind."
4. Deliberations of the current meeting focused on the inseparable relationship between Faith and Social Justice based on the belief that all human moral values have their source in God and are rooted in the Biblical teaching that each and every human person is created in the Divine Image (Gen 1:26). Accordingly, our respective religious traditions categorically reject moral relativism.
5. Furthermore, Biblical teachings require that the goal of justice (*zedek umishpat*) must be pursued through the ways of human beneficence and compassion (*chesed vrachamim*). This demands that we strive to go beyond the letter of the Law (*lifnim mishurat hadin*) for the wellbeing of society as a whole.

6. Accordingly, the Joint Committee called for special attention to be given to the challenges of poverty, sickness and marginalization; the inequitable distribution of resources to combat these; the challenges of globalization without human solidarity; the need for peaceful resolution of conflicts; and our responsibilities in the face of the specter of terrorism in all its manifestations.

As people of Faith and moral heritage we are called to respond to the consequences and implications of these as well as the social crisis caused by extreme individualism and materialism. In this regard, special mention was made of abuse of sexuality and of economic exploitation, which lead to new forms of modern slavery, including trafficking in women and children that desecrates the dignity of the human person.

7. As believers in the One God whose name is Peace, prayer was offered up to Him to bring an end to war, bloodshed, violence and suffering in the world – and in particular in the Holy Land. The members of the Joint Committee accordingly called upon their communities and leaders throughout the world to similarly intensify prayer and work for the promotion of peace and harmony everywhere.

8. As this meeting took place on the eve of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews (on October 22<sup>nd</sup> 1974); the committee took the opportunity to express its appreciation for the role that the Commission has played in the implementation of *Nostra Aetate* (n. 4) and the subsequent statements and documents advancing Catholic-Jewish reconciliation, cooperation and understanding.

### **The Jewish Delegation**

Chief Rabbi Shear Yashuv Cohen  
Chief Rabbi Rassin Arussi  
Chief Rabbi David Brodman  
Chief Rabbi Yossef Azran  
Chief Rabbi David Rosen  
Mr. Oded Wiener

### **The Catholic Delegation**

Jorge Cardinal Mejia  
George Cardinal Cottier, O.P.  
Bishop Giacinto-Boulos Marcuzzo  
Msgr. Pier Francesco Fumagalli  
Fthr. Norbert Hofmann SDB  
Nuncio Pietro Sambi  
Msgr. Ambrogio Spreafico