



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI TO THE DELEGATION OF THE ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE

*Hall of Popes
Thursday, 12 October 2006*

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to welcome to the Vatican the delegation of the Anti-Defamation League. On many occasions you visited my predecessor Pope John Paul II, and I am happy to continue to meet representative groups of the Jewish people.

In our world today, religious, political, academic and economic leaders are being seriously challenged to improve the level of dialogue between peoples and between cultures. To do this effectively requires a deepening of our mutual understanding and a shared dedication to building a society of ever greater justice and peace. We need to know each other better and, on the strength of that mutual discovery, to build relationships not just of tolerance but of authentic respect. Indeed, Jews, Christians and Muslims share many common convictions, and there are numerous areas of humanitarian and social engagement in which we can and must cooperate.

The Second Vatican Council's Declaration *Nostra Aetate* reminds us that the Jewish roots of Christianity oblige us to overcome the conflicts of the past and to create new bonds of friendship and collaboration. It affirms in particular that the Church deplores all forms of hatred or persecution directed against the Jews and all displays of anti-Semitism at any time and from any source (cf. No. 4). The four decades since the Declaration have brought many positive advances, and they have also witnessed some early steps, perhaps still too tentative, towards a more open conversation on religious themes. It is precisely at this level of frank exchange and dialogue that we will find the basis and the motivation for a solid and fruitful relationship.

May the Eternal One, our Father in heaven, bless every effort to eliminate from our world any

misuse of religion as an excuse for hatred or violence. May He bless all of you, your families and your communities.

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