



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF
THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE**

Monday, 6 February 1995

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am pleased to meet once again the Board of Governors of the *American Jewish Committee*. Your visit to Rome this year coincides with the thirtieth anniversary of the promulgation of the Declaration "Nostra Aetate" by the Second Vatican Council. It thus offers us an opportunity to look back with gratitude on the progress made in relations between Jews and Christians, and at the same time to commit ourselves to facing the challenges of the future with confidence and hope.

As a result of dialogue and cooperation carried out with patience and in an atmosphere of respect and good will, the last three decades have indeed witnessed *profound changes in the relationships between us*. The misunderstandings and difficulties of former times are gradually being replaced by trust and mutual esteem. Who can deny that these positive changes are the work of the Almighty, who is able to create all things anew and to turn our gaze from the things of the past (cf. Is. 65:176)?

2. As we look to the future, there is an urgent need for us to *continue building on the foundations already laid*. One of our greatest mutual challenges remains at the level of education and information, where the results of our cooperation must ultimately be implemented. If it is to be fruitful, *dialogue between Christians and Jews must find eloquent expression in the life of both our communities*. What is more, we must work to make our mutual respect increasingly evident in a world where voices of polarization, confrontation and violence seem all too often to distract attention from the quiet but effective accomplishments being made on behalf of *solidarity in the service of justice and peace*.

3. At this time, fifty years after the liberation of Auschwitz, we cannot fail to remember together *the horrors of the Shoah*. Last year, at the concert held in the Vatican to commemorate this genocide decreed against your people, we – Jews and Catholics together – experienced how different voices blending in a unison of sounds and harmonies can move us deeply and bring us closer together in common resolve. The memory of the Shoah should impel us to renew our commitment *to work together in harmony to satisfy the hunger and thirst for justice* innate in every human being created in the divine image (cf. Gen. 1:26-27).

4. I willingly invoke upon each one of you and your families the divine gift of peace. May this precious gift dwell in the hearts of all men and women of good will. Let us never cease to pray and to work, together and with others, in order to foster peace in the Holy Land, which is so dear to Jews, Christians and Muslims alike.

Thank you for your visit. *Shalom!*

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