



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS TO MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

*Consistory Hall
Thursday, 13 February 2014*

Dear friends,

I welcome you here today. Your organization, which on various occasions has met with my venerable Predecessors, maintains good relations with the Holy See and with many representatives of the Catholic world. I am very grateful to you for the distinguished contribution you have made to dialogue and fraternity between Jews and Catholics, and I encourage you to continue on this path.

Next year we will commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of the Second Vatican Council *Nostra Aetate*, which today constitutes for the Church the sure point of reference for relations with our “elder brothers”. From this document, our reflection on the spiritual patrimony which unites us and which is the foundation of our dialogue has developed with renewed vigour. This foundation is theological, and not simply an expression of our desire for reciprocal respect and esteem. Therefore, it is important that our dialogue be always profoundly marked by the awareness of our relationship with God.

In addition to dialogue, it is also important to find ways in which Jews and Christians can cooperate in constructing a more just and fraternal world. In this regard, I call to mind in a particular way our common efforts to serve the poor, the marginalized and those who suffer. Our commitment to this service is anchored in the protection of the poor, widows, orphans, and foreigners as shown in Sacred Scripture (cf. *Ex 20:20-22*). It is a God given duty, one which reflects his holy will and his justice; it is a true religious obligation.

Finally, in order that our efforts may not be fruitless, it is important that we dedicate ourselves to

transmitting to new generations the heritage of our mutual knowledge, esteem and friendship which has, thanks to the commitment of associations like yours, grown over these years. It is my hope therefore that the study of relations with Judaism may continue to flourish in seminaries and in centres of formation for lay Catholics, as I am similarly hopeful that a desire for an understanding of Christianity may grow among young Rabbis and the Jewish community.

Dear friends, in a few months I will have the joy of visiting Jerusalem, where – as the Psalm says – we are all born (cf. *Ps* 87:5) and where all peoples will one day meet (cf. *Is* 25:6-10). Accompany me with your prayers, so that this pilgrimage may bring forth the fruits of communion, hope and peace. Shalom!