



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE "ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE OF B'NAI B'RITH"**

*Consistory Hall
Thursday, 29 September 1994*

Dear Friends,

I am very pleased to welcome the representatives of the *Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith*. It is with great joy that I greet you.

In your kind words, Mr. Chairman, you have spoken of friendship and its unifying force in our lives. Friendship is a great gift from God and is a blessing for everyone who experiences it. Genuine friendship has a strength which is capable of building indestructible bridges, resisting many evils and overcoming all kinds of difficulties. At the same time it poses a constant challenge to those who seek to be friends.

These convictions lie behind the following words which I wrote on the occasion of the Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto: "As Christians and Jews, following the example of the faith of Abraham, we are called to be a blessing for the world (cf. Gen. 12:2). This is the common task awaiting us. It is therefore necessary for us, Christians and Jews, to be first a blessing to one another. This will effectively occur if we are united in the face of evils which are still threatening: indifference and prejudice, as well as displays of anti-Semitism" (John Paul II, *Message on the 50th Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising*, [6 April 1993]).

Was it not the bond of friendship which in many cases during the terrible days of the past inspired the courage of Christians who helped their Jewish brothers and sisters, even at the cost of their

own lives? Truly, nobody has greater love than the one who lays down his life for his friends (cf. Jn. 15:13). Friendship stands against exclusion and makes people stand together in the face of threat.

Let our friendship, strengthened by our respect for divine Providence, bring us ever closer, for the good of the whole world.

© Copyright 1994 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana