



The Holy See

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE MEMBERS

OF THE BRITISH COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIANS AND JEWS Friday, 16 November 1990 Your Excellency, Distinguished Visitors, I am pleased to welcome to the Vatican the members of the *British Council for Christians and Jews*, and I greet you with a joyful word that has profound significance for us all: Shalom! *Peace is, before all else, a gift of God: the fullness of redemption for humanity and for the whole of creation. That peace, which is so seriously threatened today, is at the same time something which is integral to the rational and moral nature of men and women, created as they are in the image and likeness of God. In the human order, peace requires and implies justice and mercy, and culminates in the love of God and of neighbour which is the high point of the teaching of the Torah and of the Prophets. On this matter Jesus Christ himself affirms: "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets. I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them" (Mt. 5:17). Truly great is the spiritual patrimony shared by Christians and the Jewish people (Cf. *Nostra Aetate*, 4)! For this reason, in the period after the Second Vatican Council, cooperation between Christians and Jews has become ever more intense, and I am very pleased that important contacts continue, such as the recent meetings which took place in Prague. At the thirteenth meeting of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee the themes of anti-semitism and of the Shoah were addressed, as well as the wider question of human rights. It was rightly acknowledged that anti-semitism as well as all forms of racism are "a sin against God and humanity", and as such must be rejected and condemned. In a renewed spirit of collaboration, Catholic and Jewish delegates set out new orientations for *joint efforts aimed at defending human rights, safeguarding freedom and dignity where they are lacking or imperilled, and promoting responsible stewardship of the environment*. I offer my heartfelt encouragement to the British Council of Christians and Jews to continue actively to foster friendly dialogue, brotherly understanding, and the exchange of spiritual values at the national level, as well as at the level of the International Council of Christians and Jews of which you form part. Finally, I take this occasion to express once again the sorrow - but also the hope - that I share with the peoples of the Holy Land, the land of our fathers in faith. With you and with all who are heirs to the faith of Abraham - and I am thinking also of our Islamic brothers and sisters - I raise up the prayer of the Psalmist: "For the peace of Jerusalem pray, / 'Peace be to your homes, / May peace reign in your walls, / In your palaces, peace'" (Ps. 121 (120): 6-7). May God grant that progress towards peace in the Holy Land will not be long in coming! ©*

Copyright 1990 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana
