



A continuous call to reject anti-Semitism

31.01.2016 | Monsignor Janusz Urbanczyk

Statement for Holocaust Remembrance Day (January 27, 2016) of Monsignor Janusz Urbanczyk, Permanent Representative of the Holy See at the 1086th meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, delivered on January 21, 2016.

Mr. Chairman,

I join the previous speakers in welcoming to the Permanent Council the State Secretary for EU Affairs of the Prime Minister's Office of Hungary, Mr. Szabolcs Takács, Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, and Amb. Felix Klein, Special Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany for Relations with Jewish Organizations, issues relating to Anti-Semitism, Holocaust Remembrance and International Aspects of Sinti and Roma Issues. My Delegation is grateful for their presence and for their comprehensive presentation, which coincides with the anniversary of the liberation of the prisoners and survivors of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, now observed as International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The commemoration of this anniversary brings to mind all the victims of those crimes against humanity, remembering especially the planned annihilation of the Jews, and honouring those who, at the risk of their lives, protected persecuted people, resisting the homicidal folly around them.

Every year on 27 January, as we pause in silent meditation, the observance of the Holocaust Remembrance Day invites us to reflect deeply on the significance of the Shoah. With deep emotion, we think of the countless victims of blind racial and religious hatred who suffered deportation, imprisonment and death in those perverted and inhuman places. The memory of those deeds, especially the Shoah, directed against the Jewish people, as well as the planned extermination of Roma and Sinti and other groups of people whom this evil programme treated with outright malevolence, calls for a universal and ever deeper respect for the dignity of every person. In remembering the Holocaust, we also remember that unless all men and women are recognized as one great family and unless we coexist with both neighbour and stranger, inhumanity awaits us. Moreover, the remembrance of the Holocaust serves as a warning to prevent us from yielding to ideologies that justify contempt for human dignity. Today's commemoration is an opportunity to honour also all those men, women and children who in the course of history, including our own time, suffer at the hands of their fellow human beings who are motivated by hatred; and so too we are all aware of ideologies which, even today, in parts of our world, seek to justify such contempt.

It is disturbing indeed to witness how so many human hearts are still filled with hatred: on the one hand, there is the abuse of God's name for the justification of senseless violence against innocent people; on the other, the cynicism which shows contempt for God and ridicules faith in him. The innate dignity of each and every person demands that no regime or ideology be allowed to consider and treat human beings as anything less than equals, endowed by the Creator with inalienable rights and dignity. May the Shoah be a continuous call to reject anti-Semitism and to engage sincerely, with deep respect and care for each other, in a dialogue of common understanding, which is the only secure way that can lead us - all peoples, all cultures and all religions of the world - to the desired encounter of fraternity and peace.

It has been just two months since we marked the 50th anniversary of the Declaration Nostra Aetate of the Second Vatican Council, which clearly affirms that the Catholic Church “deplores the hatred, persecutions, and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and from any source”^[1]. This is the position of the Catholic Church on anti-Semitism, which has been reaffirmed on various occasions by the Popes, who have emphasized that anti-Semitism has no place in the Catholic Church.

The Holy See is profoundly and irrevocably committed to continue working in this direction because, as Pope Francis said last Sunday, “Six million persons, just because they belonged to the Jewish people, were victims of the most inhumane barbarity perpetrated in the name of an ideology that wanted to replace God with man... their suffering, their fear, their tears must never be forgotten. And the past must serve as a lesson for the present and for the future. The Holocaust teaches us that utmost vigilance is always needed to be able to take prompt action in defence of human dignity and peace.”^[2]

Thank you, Mr. Chairman!

^[1] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Declaration Nostra Aetate, 4.

^[2] Pope Francis, Address at the Great Synagogue of Rome, 17 January 2016.

Source: [Saint James Vicariate for Hebrew Speaking Catholics in Israel](#).