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American Jewish Committee News Release

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February 5, 2008 - New York - The American Jewish Committee expressed disappointment today regarding the new text of the Latin liturgy's "Easter Prayer for the Jews" written by Pope Benedict XVI.

"While we appreciate that the text avoids any derogatory language towards Jews, it's regretful that the prayer explicitly calls for Jews to accept Christianity," said Rabbi David Rosen, AJC's international director of interreligious affairs. "This differs greatly from the text in the current universal liturgy that prays for the salvation of the Jews in general terms."

Last year, Pope Benedict authorized wider use of the traditional Latin Mass, which contained, in its original form, an Easter prayer calling for the conversion of Jews.

"We hope that through further dialogue, the full implications of the Second Vatican Council's affirmation of the Jewish covenant might lead to a deeper understanding of the value of the Torah as the vehicle of salvation for the Jewish people," said Rosen.