“Blessing for Each Other”

30.09.2012 | Gérald Caron

It was not long ago that a multiplicity of events were planned to celebrate the fortieth year anniversary of Vatican II Declaration Nostra Aetate, more particularly its section 4 on the Relations with the Jews and Judaism. On that occasion, it became almost commonplace to hear about not only what had been achieved (mind-boggling in many respects) during those 40 years since the Council declaration, but also what still needed to be done to strengthen good and solid relations between Catholics and Jews.

As preparations are now being made to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Council (1962 – 2012), I offer the following reflections on what I see as an amazing change taking place in the way Catholics and Jews relate to each other, that, perhaps as John Paul II wished, we are now beginning to become a “blessing for each other”[1].

Both Christians and Jews acknowledge the significance of *Nostra Aetate* for improving relations between them. Rightly described as a “turning point” in Catholic theological perspectives on Jews and Judaism, this short statement – fruit of years of discussion among Council Fathers and theologians – was sufficient to get past what Jules Isaac had called the “teaching of contempt” in 1948, and help move towards a teaching founded on understanding and respect. In hindsight, after half a century of reflections, it is now easier to see that this turning point in the Catholic theological perspective on Jews and their faith was just the beginning of long years of clarification, maturation and, as we are about to see, also some amazing mutual learning about true dialogue between the two faith communities[2]. Indeed, much of this reflection, maturation and learning will be conducted both within the Church and in an increasingly fruitful partnership with our Jewish partners. Without the respect, honesty, and esteem that both groups have developed for each other over these years, this reflection and partnership would not be possible.

This is not to say that the road to greater understanding has been smooth and trouble free. There have been, both within and outside the confines of the Church, a number of controversies or bumps on the road, which at times have strained the newly formed bond between the two communities. The battle over the crosses in Poland (finally resolved through a direct intervention from John Paul II), the present pope’s continuing endorsement of Pius XII’s beatification, the lifting up of the excommunication of four traditionalist bishops, including the Holocaust-denying Williamson, and finally the pope’s rather timid reformulation of the Tridentine Good Friday prayer for Jews, are recent issues that have disturbed Jewish-Christian relations and provoked some particularly passionate reactions from our Jewish partners.

It is no secret that these Jewish reactions were – and continue to be in some circles – resented by Catholics and their leaders. Jews, it is argued, should not meddle in what after all are matters internal to the Catholic Church. However, things are changing. As the spiritual relationship heralded in *Nostra Aetate* is taking hold between the two faith communities, fostering respect, esteem and mutual understanding of each other is requiring more openness and dialogue. It is clear that questions connecting in any manner or form with Jews and their faith can no longer be regarded simply as internal matters. This is especially important as both faith communities are beginning, through a more open dialogue, to reap fruits that were unthinkable a few years ago, thereby increasing self-awareness and understanding.

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One of the most significant and far-reaching outcomes of *Nostra Aetate* was the acknowledgement, some 10 years after its promulgation, of the necessity for Catholics to “strive to acquire a better knowledge of the basic components of the religious tradition of Judaism and to strive to learn by what essential traits Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience”[3]. Although by and large still unknown to the majority of Catholics, this hermeneutical principle has been “reiterated and expanded on several occasions” by John Paul II, the first of which is found in his now famous address to Jewish leaders in Mainz, Germany, on Nov 17, 1980[4]. In doing so the Polish pope has underscored the connection with “the religious reality lived by … the present-day people of the Covenant concluded with Moses”[5]. To sum up, this imperative for Christians to understand Judaism accurately and on its own terms is not only about correcting tragic past views, but also about better understanding the thriving Judaism of today. If the last ten years are any indication, we may be witnessing a new phase in the dialogue between Christians and Jews, resulting from the impact of recent controversies upon the *self-understanding* of our respective communities. In the following pages, I report on two recent episodes, which, by all accounts, provide good illustrations of how the two faith communities are working to become more of a “blessing for each other”.

The *Osservatore* Exchange between Cardinal Koch and Rabbi Di Segni (2011)

The first example comes from the pages of *L’Osservatore Romano*, the official Vatican newspaper, reporting an exchange between Cardinal Kurt Koch (successor to W. Kasper as president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, which includes the Vatican’s Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews) and Rome’s top Rabbi, Ricardo Di Segni. The piece that caught the eye of the Rabbi and led to the remarkable exchange reported in *L’Osservatore Romano* was an essay written by the Cardinal on the “upcoming interfaith gathering” set for Oct. 27, 2011 in Assisi. Two points made by the Cardinal drew the attention of Di Segni, which, in his own words, “refer [red] to the relationship with Judaism.” Here are the two points, again cited by the Rabbi.

The Cardinal writes that the cross of Jesus "stands above us as the permanent and universal Yom Kippur," and "therefore the cross of Jesus is not an obstacle to interreligious dialogue, but rather, it indicates the decisive way that especially Jews and Christians [...] should accept with a deep inner reconciliation, becoming the leaven of peace and justice in the world."

Turning to the language used by the Cardinal, Di Segni first observes, “Dialogue presupposes difference” and goes on to suggest that for a real dialogue to succeed, “we need to see what constitutes difference.” While he fully agrees with the Cardinal’s “need to demonstrate to his own community that the necessity and urgency of dialogue are rooted in the principles of faith,” Di Segni contends that

It is a quite different proposition to suggest a "decisive way" to a Jewish interlocutor using symbols that he does not share. All the more so when these symbols are presented as replacements, with additional value, for the rituals and symbols in which the interlocutor believes.

Then Di Segni speaks with emotion and vigilance:

The Christian believer can certainly think of the cross as a permanent and universal replacement for the day of Yom Kippur, but if you want to talk honestly and respectfully with the Jew, for whom Yom Kippur retains its permanent and universal value, you must not propose Christian beliefs and interpretations to the Jews as indicators of the ‘decisive way’. Then you are really likely to fall into a replacement theology and the cross becomes an obstacle.

In a well-known back-and-forth pattern not usually found in the Vatican newspaper, on the same

day the Rabbi’s rather pointed critique of Koch’s “references to the relationship with Judaism” appeared, the cardinal responded[6]. The amazing thing was not so much that Koch responded so quickly, but what was actually said in the response. Three points, in particular, are worth mentioning. In an effort to remediate what his words had provoked, the Cardinal first rejected any suggestion that “Jews should see the cross as Christians do in order to be able to journey together to Assisi.” Then, he asserted that it was never his intention “to substitute the Cross of Christ for the Jewish Yom Kippur.” Finally, he stated that he saw in “this back-and-forth between the two parties” the core of present-day Christian-Jewish dialogue, faced with the ever-challenging question of “how to reconcile the conviction, which is binding for Christians, that God’s covenant with the people of Israel has permanent validity with Christian faith in universal redemption in Jesus Christ.” The Cardinal’s reference to this fundamental question in this context can be seen as a step forward in drawing Jewish faith communities into the discussion. This way forward must be further explored.

In a short piece, “Catholic-Jewish Relations: How Far We’ve Come, How Far We’ve Yet To Go”, published in *The Huffington Post*, 08/31/11, Philip A. Cunningham and Eric J. Greenberg concluded their report on this episode with the following two comments. First, that this exchange, including Koch’s immediate attempt to address De Segni’s concerns, was reported in the Vatican official journal speaks volume to the importance given by the Vatican to the dialogue between the two faith communities[7]. Second, this exchange also shows “how easy it is to be misunderstood when using each other’s religious terminology. Describing the cross as the *universal* ‘Day of Atonement’ might go unnoticed by Christians, but it rings very differently to Jewish ears; it smacks of old replacement theologies that saw Judaism as obsolete and superseded by Christianity”[8]. Clearly, both traditions are still learning how to speak to one another about their respective, interrelated self-understandings. I would add another point to which I shall return momentarily. Any theological statement that might affect the ‘other’ – the Jews in this instance – should always be made in the presence, physical or symbolic, of this ‘other’. Learning about how the ‘other’ define themselves can only take place when the ‘other’ is given a voice in the conversation[9]. It looks as if the Catholic Church is beginning to learn the profound implications that the above-cited hermeneutical principle, urging respect for the right of the ‘other’ to define themselves, is having on her theological discourse.

In his reply to Rabbi Di Segni, the fundamental question raised by Cardinal Koch, underlying Christian-Jewish relations, is a case in point. This is not a question unique to the Jewish situation. From a Christian perspective, the question of the universality of Christ’s redemptive work relates to our interaction with all other faith traditions. By all accounts, it is the Christological question, which is currently at the forefront of interfaith discussions in today’s pluralistic world. The resolution to this question may very well get some inspiration from the Christian-Jewish Dialogue, which is already portrayed as a model for interfaith or inter-religious dialogue. Why?

This model for interfaith dialogue is rooted in the relationship that developed between the Jews and the Catholics after *Nostra Aetate*. In *Nostra Aetate*, Catholic theology was radically altered to reflect a move away from a history of Christian condemnation of Judaism and the Jewish people. The new perspective adopted on Judaism and the Jewish people, issued from the Council declaration, has already brought about radical changes in the way Jews and their religion are being addressed in Catholic theology. One remarkable change is the recognition of the permanent validity of God’s covenant with the people of Israel. This change has already had important repercussions for Jews of today, especially with regard to the interrelated issues of supersessionism and proselytizing.

In recognizing, even implicitly, the perpetual validity of the covenants with Israel, *Nostra Aetate* had for all practical purposes rejected supersessionism or the doctrine of replacement of Judaism by Christianity – a major component of what is now referred to as the Christian “teaching of contempt” toward Jews. Once the covenantal relationship of Israel with God is understood as still

alive and well, the supersessionist theory loses its *theological* foundation. Contrary to Christian traditional teaching, the covenant between God and Israel is still well and thriving.

Not surprisingly, the rejection of supersessionism has had an impact on the issue of proselytizing, because at long last it has eliminated the theological rationale for the conversion of Jews. This may be what David Novak is indicating in his recent suggestion that Jews could accept "the Church's self-understanding as the new people of God and the fulfillment of the scriptural promises" on condition that this "supersessionist teaching" is not used as "a theological motive for trying to convert Jews"[10]. Whether or not this is what David Novak is indicating, with the advent of *Nostra Aetate* and its follow-up documents the RC Church has already begun its move away from this "supersessionist teaching". However, while Jews have reasons to rejoice over this quasi removal of the theological rationale for their conversion, there are influential voices in some Catholic circles still pushing for conversion of the Jewish people. The presence of what has been called a "neo-supersessionist" movement in the US Catholic church (see below) should serve as a warning that this crucial issue for the Jewish-Christian dialogue is far from being resolved.

While most mainline protestant Churches, in keeping with the view taken by the World Council of Churches in the early 1980's, have abandoned any attempt to convert Jews, the RC Church has lagged behind on this issue. Yet, although there has been no official statement from the Vatican which might have put to rest the fears and suspicions of some Jews, recent interventions by some high-ranking officials, including Cardinal Kasper and Cardinal Koch[11], have indicated that the Roman Church has abandoned the idea of proselytizing Jews. However, yet again, there are dissenting voices which consider this to be a betrayal of the universal mission of the Church. This reluctance to give up the proselytising of Jews is rooted in the so-called neo-supersessionist movement. This movement is most likely influenced by the "crusade" waged by cardinal Vanhoye and the late cardinal Dulles, which is aimed at repudiating the perpetual validity of the Mosaic covenant.

Both Vanhoye (in two articles published in the 1990's in *NRT* and in his recent intervention at the 2008 Synod on the Word of God) and the late Dulles (in his rather strong reaction in *First Things* to the 2002 dialogue document, *Reflections on Covenant and Mission*, of which more ahead) made their case for the traditional teaching that the Mosaic covenant has been revoked by God, thus paving the way for a re-affirmation of a supersessionist view of the status of Judaism and consequently of the need for efforts by Christians to evangelize or convert Jews to Christ (irrespective of the clearly eschatological perspective of their salvation [as stated by Paul], already entrenched in *Nostra Aetate*)[12].

According to Cunningham, analysis of the language recently used by Pope Benedict suggests a rejection of this neo-supersessionist thought, a thought that would also contradict John Paul II's earlier teaching.

Benedict's words are incompatible with recent efforts by some Catholics to argue that the Mosaic covenant was rendered obsolete or inert by Christ's coming, or that ongoing Jewish covenantal life can somehow be separated from the Torah. The pope could not [speak this way] if he endorsed such 'neo-supersessionist' arguments. It seems to me that those Catholics who like to assert there is a serious Catholic debate over the vitality of Torah covenantal life after Christ would do well to ponder today's papal address[13].

The Never Revoked Covenant: Still an Unsettled Teaching?

Our second example of how the two faith communities are working to become more of a "blessing for each other" comes from the USA. This example is more recent, but no less instructive. It, again, seems to involve the neo-supersessionist movement demonstrating a strong resistance,

even at the highest level of the American Church hierarchy, to the post-Vatican II teaching of a never-revoked Mosaic covenant. But, as in our initial example, strong reactions from top Jewish organizations in the USA have led to a stunning reversal by the American Catholic leadership on issues concerning Jews and their religion.

One might say that this dialogue started with the publication of a study document entitled *Reflections on Covenant and Mission*, prepared by a group of Catholic and Jewish scholars in 2002, and released “unofficially” by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) under the sponsorship of Cardinal William Keeler[14]. In the eyes of its promoters, that document reflected a positive view inspired by *Nostra Aetate* of the state of affairs of Christian-Jewish relations. Many Catholics did not hold such a positive view of the document. They found it deeply disturbing for its apparent rejection of the Church’s mission to the Jews. It was not until 7 years later, however, that the US Catholic leadership issued an official reaction to this document. The reaction consisted of two closely related interventions from the USCCB, which caused additional friction within the American Catholic-Jewish relations. The first intervention, entitled “A Note on Ambiguities Contained in *Reflections on Covenant and Mission*”[15], was intended to clarify or correct a number of ambiguities found in the initial 2002 document. The revised formulation achieved two things: first, it rubber stamped the conviction among Catholics that interreligious dialogue would always be a form of evangelization; and second, it reiterated the doctrine of Christ’s fulfilment of all the divine promises made to Israel, including the covenants. (See paragraph 7 of the *Note*). Particularly significant, as noted by Cunningham, is the change in wording from both *Nostra Aetate* and post-counciliar documents.

By using the present tense to say that Christ “is the fulfillment of all covenants,” the *Note* expressed a realized eschatology without any of the nuance or caveats articulated in *Nostra Aetate*’s “the Church awaits the day known to God alone,” and repeated in both the 1974 *Guidelines* and in the 1985 *Notes*[16].

The publication of the *Note* provoked a swift and unprecedented reaction from a wide spectrum of the American Jewish Interfaith leaders, shocked by what they considered a blatant failure to “take cognizance of Vatican documents to implement *Nostra Aetate* – disregarding Jewish self-understanding, proposing Christ to Jews in the context of interreligious dialogue, and preferring a realized over a futurist eschatology”[17]. Before the USCCB could even respond to these Jewish concerns, a second episode provoked more frustration and resentment among Jews.

This second episode was triggered by an August 27th, 2009, press release and an accompanying “Backgrounder” information sheet, announcing the Vatican *recognitio* or “approval” of a change in the American Adult Catechism. A clear statement concerning the perennial validity of the Mosaic Covenant *had been replaced* by a quote of Ro 9: 4-5, which is further explained in Christological terms. Here was the proposed change:

Catholics believe that all previous covenants that God made with the Jewish people *are* fulfilled [again note the present tense] in Jesus Christ. Through the new covenant established through his sacrificial death on the cross.

Why remove the statement concerning the perennial validity of the Mosaic Covenant, that it “remains eternally valid” for Jews? Cunningham’s conclusion sounds like a warning.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the “Note on Ambiguities” and the “Backgrounder” of the catechism *recognitio* were *attempts to advance neo-supersessionist theologies* of the church’s relationship to Jews and Judaism (Italics added). (p. 29)

A strong letter of concern from the Jewish interfaith leaders concerning the removal of the statement has yielded some positive results. It generated a public response by five representatives

of the USCCB[18], complemented by a six-point "Statement of Principles for Catholic-Jewish Dialogue"[19]. In their response to the letter the bishops "took the unusual and perhaps unprecedented step of *retracting* some problematic language on baptism and evangelization." Once again, a strong reaction from their Jewish partners had led representatives of the USCCB to amend a language deemed incompatible with the insights of *Nostra Aetate*. This achievement, while significant in many respects, has not, however, obliterated the last pocket of resistance. For reasons difficult to understand, the bishops could not bring themselves to revert to the original wording of the adult catechism and simply re-affirm the eternal validity of the Mosaic covenant. Instead, in the fifth Statement of Principles (#5), they chose to describe this wording as "not yet settled teaching". Not surprisingly, such caution was decried by those strongly involved with Christian-Jewish relations, who were quick to bring up the discrepancy between such a conclusion and "the body of relevant official Vatican documentation and papal allocutions"[20].

In a time when the momentum in Catholicism seems squarely with the evangelicals, it has been suggested that this decision might reflect dissatisfaction with the liberal-dominated wing of the Catholic Church often associated with formal inter-religious dialogue[21]. According to Gregory Baum, Christian-Jewish relations have been living, for a decade or so, "under the shadow" of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. With the neo-supersessionist theologies showing their teeth, might another shadow be threatening to hinder the ongoing dialogue between our two faith communities? In Baum's view, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should not inhibit "theological dialogue and co-operative ventures between Christians and Jews"[22], and neither should the neo-supersessionist movement. For continuing theological dialogue to have any chance of success, both communities need to keep forging ahead and continue challenging each other with respect, honesty and a growing understanding that they are indeed called to be "blessing for each other." Such hesitations and drawbacks as have occurred in recent years need not eclipse the fact that again thanks to some spirited Jewish interventions, Catholic leaders have learned important lessons about dialogue with, and respect for, their Jewish faith partners.

Initiatives Shaping the Dialogue.

The positive contribution of Jews to Jewish-Christian Dialogue and to the Church's self-understanding has not been limited to reactionary criticism of events and interventions that were perceived to be a betrayal of the major insights of *Nostra Aetate*. This last decade alone has seen a number of Jewish initiatives as well as an increasing cooperation between Jewish and Christian scholars that, yet again, are transforming the landscape of Jewish-Christian relations.

One such initiative, the publication of *Dabru Emet* in 2002 came as a surprise to Catholics and Christians, little accustomed to such public Jewish views on Christians and Christianity. One of the authors of that publication, David Novak stated that *Nostra Aetate* and its post-Declaration documents have "stimulated a desire among Jews, to present, in our own way, a Jewish view of Christians and Christianity, just as *Nostra Aetate* presented a Christian, specifically Catholic, view of Jews and Judaism"[23]. In general, this unanticipated document was received with profound respect and interest by Christian churches. Ironically, it caused resistance within the wider Jewish community, not unlike the resistance which *Nostra Aetate* and post-conciliar documents on the Jewish question are still causing within the Catholic Church of today.

Another Jewish initiative may be considered the books written on Jesus by Jews. As a recent appraisal of the last hundred years or so of Jewish works on Jesus has showed, Jewish authors have for a long time shown interest in and provided their own perception of the man from Nazareth. Not surprisingly, the last twenty years have seen Jewish historians contributing to the current interest in the "Jewish" identity of Jesus[24]. On that score, their knowledge of ancient Judaism and of both "the status and mentality of Galilean and Judean Jews at the time of Jesus" has provided Christian scholars with new insights for their own research on the historical Jesus. Yet, according

to the authors of *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*[25], no Jewish scholars have as yet "annotated and written essays on the complete New Testament." Though primarily written for Jewish scholars and Jews in general, this Jewish edition of the Second Testament should be on the shelves of every Christian biblical scholar. To single out one of the many short essays included in the book, I found Levine's "Common Errors Made about Early Judaism" (subtitled 'Bearing False Witness') to be particularly insightful.

In interfaith relations, cooperation between Christian and Jewish scholars is also becoming increasingly more common. Two books of such cooperative work will suffice as an example. First, the book *A Time for Re-commitment: The Twelve Points of Berlin* is the outcome of the 2009 Conference of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ) marking 70 years after the beginning of WWII and the Holocaust. It is described by Philip A. Cunningham, Vice-President of the ICCJ, as "a photograph, a snapshot of the current state of Jewish-Christian relations as viewed by Christians and Jews from about a dozen countries, all veterans of interreligious dialogue"[26]. Published more than 60 years after the "Ten points of Seelisburg," this book opens with the "12 points or theses of Berlin", addressed in turn to Christians, then Jews, and finally to Christians, Jews and members of other traditions. A narrative entitled "The Story of the Transformation of Relationships" follows the Twelve-points of Berlin.

The second book, *Christ Jesus and the Jewish People of Today. New Explorations of Theological Interrelationships* was published in 2011[27]. In this book, the authors carry on the reflection begun in 2005 at an inter-religious conference held in Rome on the impact of *Nostra Aetate* upon relationships between religions[28]. More limited in scope, this book's focus is on Catholic-Jewish relations – a major component of the discussions at the inter-religious conference. As is well known, the theological, scriptural, liturgical, and catechetical developments that have taken place during the forty years since *Nostra Aetate* have drastically changed the Church's traditional understanding and presentation of Judaism and the Jewish people. This is not to say that all theological questions have been resolved. One might say that in this book the most challenging question of all is being raised: "How might we Christians in our time reaffirm our faith claim that Jesus Christ is the saviour of all humanity, even as we affirm Israel's (that is the Jewish people of today and yesterday) covenantal life with God?" In other words, this meta-question concerns Christian perceptions of who Jesus Christ is and the status of the Jewish people in relation to the covenant and salvation[29]. This book draws attention to an "emerging consensus" on this most challenging theological issue. Finally, and this makes the book somewhat unique, is the decision to include specific responses from Jewish scholars to the essays written by Christian scholars (mostly Catholics with a few Lutherans) on a variety of relevant topics. This decision is a good illustration of the principle that "Christian theology can no longer ignore the Jewish religious experience" of today. Some of these Jewish responses are particularly illuminating and, in their own way, help clarify the Church's self-understanding on a number of critical issues. The inclusion of Jewish responses to studies by Christian scholars is fast becoming a feature in Jewish-Christian dialogue. This growing participation by Jews in theological discussions inspires confidence and optimism about our advancing reflection on these yet to be resolved theological issues.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, two considerations, one brief the other a little longer, are in order. One, it is no mystery that difficulties, conflicts, and roadblocks encountered in the Christian-Jewish dialogue have led segments in both communities to focus their energy on what is deemed possible at this point in time, like mutual cooperation in areas of justice and peace for building a better world – *Tikkum olam*. While such cooperation is promising, the promoters of the dialogue are correct to insist that it should not weaken our resolve to tackle the hard theological questions which still confront us in today's pluralistic and secular world. It is imperative that we continue to challenge ourselves at the academic level so as to move toward a genuine and respectful dialogue between

our two faith communities.

Two, it is also crucial that we do a better job of disseminating the many achievements (as well as the crucial questions yet to be resolved) among members of our communities. Such dissemination should involve clergy, rabbis, and educators, the front line workers in teaching and preaching the faith. For many years, there have been complaints of the poor job we have been doing in our theological schools and seminaries about the urgent task of educating future pastoral leaders on this topic. In an interview which I could not locate, I remember Amy-Jill Levine speak of her dismay at learning of the failure of most American and Canadian theological schools and seminaries accredited by the ATS (Association of Theological Schools) in engaging their students with the Jewish-Christian dialogue. Of all these institutions, there were only two schools that had a course or seminar dedicated to the Jewish-Christian agenda. According to Amy-Jill, the same dismal situation would apply to Jewish seminaries or religious Schools.

Some years ago, a colleague and I did offer a course in a theological school entitled “Christian Proclamation After Auschwitz”[30]. It was well attended and initiated great interest among students in the challenges encountered in Jewish-Christian dialogue, enough interest for some to keep asking why the course ceased to be offered after only two years. To paraphrase Paul, how are things going to change if there is nobody to teach or preach our people? But how can our clergy, rabbis, and religious educators teach about this topic if they, themselves, have not been trained to do so, if they themselves are not made aware of this important reality for both our communities?

On that score, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops and the National Council of Synagogues appear to be moving forward. In their most recent round of conversation, the USCCB and the NCS shared how each of them, respectively, is educating their faith communities about each other. Noteworthy, there was an admission by representatives from both faith that there is still too little being done in this area[31]. In my experience, I feel that Canadian religious communities are not as actively involved in this kind of dialogue as we perhaps could be. We could be learning from these recent initiatives engaged in by our neighbours to the South.

Shalom to all those who, through their work, help both faith communities to be “blessing for each other”.

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[1] This was part of a talk given on April 15, 2012 to the Christian Jewish Dialogue of Montreal on the occasion of *Yom HaShoah*.

[2] As a Jewish writer put it, *“Nostra Aetate* and its rejection of the teaching of contempt was a good starting point, but it did not provide a replacement.”

[3] See the Preamble of the 1974 Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, 4.

[4] See http://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/roman-catholic/pope-john-paul-ii/297-jp2-80nov17; also in his homily at the Sinai on 26 February 2000 (http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/travels/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_20000226_sinai_en.html).

[5] See Philip A. Cunningham, “Official Ecclesial Documents to Implement Vatican II on Relations with Jews: Study them, Become Immersed in them, and Put them into Practice.” *In Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 4 (2009): 1-36. At http://escholarship.bc.edu/scjr/vol4.

[6] John L. Allen Jr. described it as “one of the most pointed critiques of a Vatican statement you’ll ever see” at http://ncronline.org/blogs/all-things-catholic/vatican-engages-jewish-critic-new-home-ex-anglicans.

[7] Also noted by John L. Allen Jr. at http://ncronline.org/blogs/all-things-catholic/vatican-engages-jewish-critic-new-home-ex-anglicans.

[8]http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/08/31/christian-jewish-relations_n_943997.html.

[9] On this point, see also John R. Donahue, “Trouble Ahead? The Future of Jewish-Catholic Relations.” Available at http://commonwealmagazine.org/trouble-ahead-0.

[10] Cited by Gregory Baum, “Afterword” in Michael Attridge, ed., *Jews and Catholics Together*. Celebrating the Legacy of *Nostra Aetate* (Ottawa: Novalis, 2007): 158.

[11] See his most recent intervention, “Building on *‘Nostra aetate’*: 50 Years of Christian–Jewish Dialogue.” Available online at http://www.news.va/en/news/cardinal-koch-on-jewish-catholic-dialogue-since-va.

[12] Cardinal Dulles’s article is found at http://www.firstthings.com/article/2008/08/the-covenant-with-israel---42. The latest article of Vanhoye is available at http://www.zenit.org/article-23841?l=english.

[13] Reported by John L. Allen, “A Sampling of Reactions to the Pope’s Synagogue Visit,” at http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/sampling-reaction-popes-synagogue-visit.

[14] “Reflections on Covenant and Mission,” *Origins* 32:13 (September 5, 2002): 218-24.

[15] See http://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/themes-in-todays-dialogue/conversion/559-usccb-09june18. This note was issued on June 18, 2009 and revised, in response to Jewish concerns, on October 13, 2009. See http://old.usccb.org/doctrine/covenant09.pdf.

[16] See Cunningham, Official Ecclesial Documents, 27.

[17]*Ibidem.* See also John Pawlikowski, “Catholic-Jewish Dialogue: The Road Remains Bumpy,” *Ecumenical Trends* 38/8 (2009): 8-9,14. For Jewish reactions, see “Letter to U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops: Jewish Organizations Express Concern about Future of Interfaith Dialogue,” at http://www.adl.org/interfaith/usccb_letter.asp; also Abraham H. Foxman, “A Precarious Moment in Catholic-Jewish Relations,” at http://www.jta.org/news/article/2009/09/13/1007817/op-ed-a-precarious-moment-in-catholic-jewish-relations; and Ruth Langer, “Seeking Integrity” in the same issue of *Ecumenical Trends* 38/8 (2009): 6-7,15.

[18]http://old.usccb.org/seia/ResponsetoRabbis.pdf

[19]http://old.usccb.org/seia/StatementofPrinciples.pdf

[20]*Ibid.*

[21] John L. Allen’s piece, “Vatican Engages a Jewish Critic, New Home for Ex-Anglicans.” *National Catholic Reporter*, Aug 05, 2011. Retrieved from http://ncronline.org/blogs/all-things-catholic/vatican-engages-jewish-critic-new-home-ex-anglicans. Also see the *CNS* report of the recent intervention of Msgr. David Jaeger at http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1201832.htm.

[22] In the words of Gregory Baum, “it would be a tragic mistake if the shadow of the Israeli-Palestinan conflict were allowed to inhibit theological dialogue and co-operative ventures between Christians and Jews” (165).

[23] See *Jews and Catholics Together*, 84.

[24] See D. Jaffé, *Jésus sous la plume des historiens juifs du XXe siècle. Approche historique, perspectives historiographiques, analyses méthodologiques.* Paris: Cerf, 2009.

[25] Edited by Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler. Oxford University Press, 2011.

[26] See *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations,* 4/1 (2009). Cunningham’s introduction of the book is available at http://escholarship.bc.edu/scjr/vol4.

[27] Edited by P.A. Cunningham, J. Sievers, M. Boys, H.H. Henrix and J. Svartvik. Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company – G&BP Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2011. For what follows, see the Introduction to the book, p.xix-xxxii.

[28] The conference, entitled *“Nostra Aetate* Today: Reflections Forty Years after Its Call for a New Era of Interreligious Relationships,” was held at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome from September 25-28, 2005.

[29] This conclusion emerged from papers and discussions on these questions at the 2005 *Nostra Aetate* anniversary conference, held in Rome in the Fall of 2005. See *Christ Jesus and the Jewish People Today*, xxi.

[30] The course was offered at Atlantic School of Theology, Halifax (Canada), in the early 2000’s.

[31] See http://www.usccb.org/news/2012/12-011.cfm.

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/ Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2008).