



Fighting Together against Antisemitism and Anti-Judaism Will Be the Touchstone of All Real Brotherhood

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In the aftermath of the terrorist murders of Samuel Paty and three people in the Notre-Dame-de-l'Assomption Basilica in Nice, the bishops of France, meeting in plenary assembly, called on our French society to promote mutual respect. Relaying Pope Francis' call for universal brotherhood,^[1] they insisted on the duty that is incumbent on everyone together to uphold freedom of expression and fraternal respect for the other, even for those whose errors we want to criticize. This issue was all the more urgent since in recent years we have witnessed a worrying trivialization of violence with the proliferation of words and gestures expressing discrimination and racism.

Social networks which, in themselves, represent a tremendous opportunity for communication and transmission, are also a space for individual and collective expression that knows no limits, which benefits from anonymity, and which too often leads to the worst excesses.

It is in this context that the bishops urge [all] to be particularly attentive to the worrying resurgence of antisemitism in France. They forcefully reiterate today how much the fight against antisemitism must be everyone's business and they affirm their willingness to work with all those engaged in this fight.

For us Catholics, this concern has its origins in our unique "spiritual connection" with Judaism. More than ever, we must remember the importance of the Jewish roots of Christianity. "We cannot consider Judaism simply as another religion: the Jews are our 'elder brothers'" (Saint John Paul II), our "fathers in the faith" (Benedict XVI).^[2] Let us remember that Jesus, the "Word of God" himself prayed the Psalms, read the Law and the prophets. At the very heart of our liturgical actions and of our personal prayer, by receiving and proclaiming the texts of the Old Testament, with the apostle Paul, we remember that "the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable" (Rom 11:29). If faith in Jesus distinguishes us and separates us, it also obliges us, in memory of the terribly dark hours of history and keeping in mind the victims of the Shoah and the antisemitic murders of recent decades, to acknowledge this: to remedy antisemitism and anti-Judaism is the indispensable foundation of true brotherhood on a universal scale. This therapy is a demanding path on which all humans must help one another. It begins with "spiritual resistance to antisemitism."

We are "committed to living in genuine brotherhood with the people of the Covenant,"^[3] because we have hope in what we have learned from them: that human beings, of any origins, any language, any culture, are called to live forever in a communion where everything will be given to everyone and everyone to everything. This is why the bishops of France urge, not only Catholics, but also all their fellow citizens, to fight energetically against all forms of political and religious antisemitism in themselves and around them.

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Bishop Éric de Moulins-Beaufort, Archbishop of Reims,
President of the French Bishops' Conference

Bishop Dominique Blanchet, Bishop of Belfort-Montbéliard
Vice-President of the French Bishops' Conference

Bishop Olivier Leborgne, Bishop of Arras
Vice-President of the French Bishops' Conference

Bishop Didier Berthet, Bishop of Saint-Dié
President of the Council for Christian Unity and Relations with Judaism

Bishop Thibaut Verny, Auxiliary Bishop of Paris
Member of the Council for Christian Unity and Relations with Judaism

[1] General audience of 13/11/2019.

[2] Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, "'The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable' (Rom 11:29): A theological reflection on the relationship between Catholics and Jews on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Nostra Aetate (n. 4)," 2015.

[3] Conclusion of the Prayer for the First Sunday of Lent in Saint Peter's Basilica, Rome in the year 2000.

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