JEWS AND CHRISTIANS. From Past to Future

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It is with great pleasure that JCR announces that the book "Jews and Christians. From Past to Future" by the well known Catholic monk and Israeli linguist Yohanan Elihai (1928-2020) is being published today for the first time in English on our website, having already appeared in print in French, Italian and Polish between 1990 and 2000. For more information about Yohanan Elihai, please go here.

PREFACE

In this modest study Brother Yohanan offers his readers, and the Christians among them in particular, an extremely useful and in our times virtually indispensable instrument for an in-depth understanding of the significance of Christian-Jewish relations.

It is true that since Jules Isaac's initial studies[1], many scholarly works have been devoted to the history of Christian anti-Semitism. Furthermore, highly specialized studies of the specific problem of Jewish-Christian relations have been undertaken. But until now it has been hard to find a book as straightforward and accessible as this one, which could be recommended to readers wishing to confront difficult questions without preliminary preparation.

This modest work is in no way intended to replace existing studies: rather, it is intended as an introduction. But we are sure that its readers, as they study this book, will become aware of how little they know, and will find themselves profoundly affected by the portrayal of facts which are troubling for the Christian conscience. Yet this book will not overwhelm its readers; rather, it will inspire them with a desire for a genuine encounter with the Jewish people, as they discover with wonderment the progress that has already been made from Pope John XXIII to Pope John-Paul II, propelled by the decisive impetus provided by the Second Vatican Council.

This timely and useful book will temper our automatic Christian judgments and prejudices with regard to the Jewish people and help us found our relationship on a genuine respect for memory and so to embark upon a more genuine conversion of our minds and our hearts.

This is a book of initiation. The most remarkable thing that could and hopefully will – happen is that this book will inspire the reader with a desire to take things further, as a result of understanding the importance and urgency of this dialogue.

If this happens, as we believe it will, Brother Yohanan can only thank God for the fruits of a labor in which – above and beyond all the technicalities of research – the impact of the thirty years he has spent in Israel is clearly discernible.

This is our wish after reading this most valuable book.

Mgr Poulain
Bishop of Perigueux
President of the Episcopal Committee for Relations with Judaism

FOREWORD

How did I, not even a writer, come to write such a book?

I was born to a Christian family, and knew nothing of the Jewish people until I was nineteen. Then, in 1945, I learned of the horror of the Shoah. In 1947, I came to Jerusalem as a pilgrim – my first encounter with this people, returned at last to the land of its forefathers. It made me think: "Something crucial is happening here, and the Christian world is missing it."

In 1956 I came to the land of Israel because I thought it important that a Christian share in this adventure of the Jewish people. I little suspected what I would discover, both the bitter history of the Jews in Christian Europe, with the deep wound left by that experience, and the spiritual wealth of this same people, with their depth of thought, their passion for truth (even to the extent of merciless self criticism), and their "innate" knowledge of the Bible, the book of their history, written in their own language.

Today, after sharing the daily life of this people for the past forty years, I thank God, and those who welcomed me.

How is it possible, however, to live in this country without getting to know the other people which have lived here for centuries? The study of Palestinian Arabic led to my involvement in its teaching, as a way toward mutual understanding in a tangled situation. This work, which included the preparation of a Hebrew?Palestinian Arabic dictionary, would have been quite enough to keep me pleasantly busy.

However, I often meet visiting Christians who know as little now of Judaism and Jewish history as I did before coming to Israel. In view of this ignorance, I felt the need to share some of what I have learned over the years.

May these pages invite the reader to experience something of the encounter with the Jewish people, a difficult yet fascinating adventure, and which has hardly begun.

> Si autem de veritate scandalum sumitur,
> utilius permittitur nasci scandalum
> quam veritas relinquatur
>
> Even if truth gives rise to scandal,
> it is better to allow scandal to arise
> than to abandon truth.
>
> *Gregory the Great, Hom. in Ezechielem 1,7,5*

INTRODUCTION

The Second Vatican Council opened vast new horizons to Catholics and invited them to begin a dialogue with all mankind. It is in this context that we meet our Jewish neighbors of whom we know very little. We are ignorant of their history, their sufferings and their hopes. Likewise, we are unacquainted with their time?honored tradition and way of life.

How can we start a dialogue without knowing or understanding the other, in however limited a fashion?

The present work aims to give the Christian reader some elements of reflection necessary if

relations are to be renewed between Jews and Christians, and a fraternal dialogue established.

It would be wrong to think that these relations should be the same as those established by Christians with other religious groups such as Moslems or Buddhists. Yet the current Christian attitude toward the Jews could be summed up by the phrase: "Of course we should be friendly to the Jews since we should be friendly to everyone." In fact there are two reasons why the Jewish?Christian dialogue should be seen as unique:

– the serious role played by Christianity in the dramatic past of the Jewish people;
– the Jews' special place as the "older brother" in God's salvation plan both yesterday and today, which must at last become part of our awareness.

During the last few years many have spoken and written about the destruction of six million Jews at the hands of the Nazis, sometimes comparing it to other acts of genocide while failing to note that the Shoah (the Holocaust)[2] is unique in human history. Moreover, what many have overlooked or even still refuse to admit is the influence which Christian teaching and actions throughout history have had on the treatment of Jews over the centuries leading up to the Nazi genocide. This tragedy did not come about by chance and one must ask how, after two thousand years of Christianity, could the systematic extermination of the Jews have been carried out in Europe?

The Primate of the Church of England, Dr. Robert Runcie, had the courage to acknowledge in October, 1988 (on the 50th anniversary of the Krystallnacht): "Without the centuries of Christian anti?Semitism, the passionate hatred of Hitler would never have evoked such a strong response. Without the poisoning of Christian minds throughout the centuries, the Holocaust (the Shoah) is inconceivable."

This study, written by a Catholic, is intended to help Christians reassess the traditional attitude of Christians, and particularly those in the Roman Catholic Church, towards the Jews. The Church has had the courage to do this, and has expressed its repentance, as we shall see. But Christians as a whole must now understand the consequences of this action. This understanding is vital if we are to free ourselves of the weight of a past which still influences both our own reactions and those of our Jewish brothers. Therefore the subject of the first part of the book will be: Christian anti?Semitism and the Shoah.

An attitude of humility will make us freer and enable us to move on to the second stage: an acknowledgment of the special place which the Jewish people still have in Salvation history. This second part – the Jewish people and Christians today – will therefore be devoted to some recent statements of the Roman?Catholic Church, as well as declarations of the Pope and other influential persons, on the subject. For many these forgotten or unknown texts will be a voyage of discovery.

This theological awareness is indispensable if Christians are to look anew at their relations with God's people of the First Covenant, who have "remained the chosen people" (John?Paul II, see p.38). There is no reason to run from the past or to fear a confrontation with its facts. Jesus' words: "The truth will make you free" are also true in this context. Let us not confuse the beauty of the message of our Christian faith with the image we would like to have of an ever?perfect Christianity. Let us distinguish between the treasure received and what we have made of it. Certainly, there have been saints and the faithful common folk; but there has also been popular violence as well as deficiencies and blindness on the part of spiritual leaders.

We are in a period of renewal. The courage to face these facts, as well as the desire to make amends and turn over a new leaf are proofs of vitality, a sign of God's action in the heart of man.

1. CHRISTIAN ANTI?SEMITISM AND THE SHOAH

Christian anti?Semitism?

When Christians speak of anti?Semitism or of the Shoah [2] – the extermination of six million Jews by the Nazis – including one million children), they generally think of an ideology and its tragic result which they condemn and which does not concern them. "Anti?Semitism is anti?Christian" – is an affirmation which should be true, because it is right in principle, in the sense that the true understanding of Jesus' message should make anti?Semitism impossible for a Christian. Unfortunately, sixteen centuries of Christian anti?Semitism (anti?Judaism is a better term for its incipient stage, as we shall see) belie this often complacent assertion.

In the preface of his book "The Anguish of the Jews", Fr. Flannery[3] recounts his first encounter with the reality of this anguish: "One evening several years ago, I walked north on Park Avenue in New York City in the company of a young Jewish couple. Behind us shone the huge illuminated cross the Grand Central Building displays each year at Christmas time. Glancing over her shoulder, the young lady – ordinarily well disposed towards Christians – declared: `That cross makes me shudder. It is like an evil presence”. This disturbing comment evoked many questions in me [...]. How did the cross, the supreme symbol of universal love, became a sign of fear, of evil, for this young Jewess? It soon became clear that her fearful reaction to it was the fruit of a knowledge which she, but not I, had – a knowledge of the immense suffering undergone by her people at the hands of Christians for many centuries. It was my first introduction to the problem of anti?Semitism. Later discussions of the incident with both Christian and Jewish friends led me to a further discovery: Jews generally are acutely aware of the history of anti?Semitism, simply because it comprises so large a portion of Jewish history. Christians, on the contrary, even highly educated ones, are almost totally ignorant of it – except for contemporary developments. They are ignorant of it for the simple reason that anti?Semitism does not appear in their history books. Histories of the Middle Ages – and even of the Crusades – can be found in which the word 'Jew' does not appear, and there are Catholic dictionaries and encyclopedias in which the term 'anti?Semitism' is not listed. There seems to be only one conclusion: The pages Jews have memorized have been torn from our histories of the Christian era."

These pages, which are unknown to us, were never included in our books because they concern the sufferings inflicted on the Jews by the Christians; they do not trouble us very much: man does not like teaching the shameful events of his history, and tends to minimize them.

A church dignitary with whom we were speaking on this subject, replied confidently: "Of course, there were some bad Christians, ... but the Church? It has always defended the weak and the oppressed!" There is a tendency to apologetics, a desire to preserve the ideal image of the Church, which in fact ends up having the opposite effect.

The acknowledgment of past faults is a necessity for one's own truth before God, before oneself and before others; moreover, it evokes more sympathy and readiness to forgive on the part of others than does a response of self?justification. Speaking to Cardinal Gasquet of this tendency to excuse and justify, Pope Leo XIII remarked, not without some humor: "If the Gospel had been written today, the denial of St Peter would have been justified, and the betrayal of Judas would have been passed over in silence, in order not to offend the dignity of the Apostolic College."

We hope that these pages will help Christians to become aware of the tragic past of Jews in Christian Europe, and will make them better understand certain aspects of Jewish sensitivity.

Our aim is also to reveal how Christian teaching on the Jews, the `teaching of contempt’, as it was called by the historian Jules Isaac, has resulted in and justified violence against these people

throughout their history. This teaching, too, ultimately prepared a favorable ground for the Nazi extermination in the 20th century. This is a fact generally recognized by those historians who are specialists on the subject, but one unknown to most Christians.

The aim of this chapter is twofold:

– to help Christians become aware of this past, the consequences of which are still felt today, and to help them understand the initiative taken by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in asking forgiveness for the grievous wrongs committed by its members and its clergy against the Jewish people.
– to help Christians better understand the Shoah in the context of Christian Europe, and the Jewish perception of a direct link between the Shoah and the anti-Semitism of past centuries. This should enable Christians to adopt a humbler and more sensitive manner when speaking on this subject.

We will return to these two points in the Conclusion.

The facts reported below do not form a complete historical picture, but rather a summary of the negative facts, unknown to many, regarding Jewish?Christian relations. There has also been some light in this darkness, as we shall indicate here and there. But Christians tend to overestimate the positive points and believe that they represent the whole picture. For example, regarding the Shoah, one hears: "... and all that was done to save them!" The Jews for their part cannot forget the Christians' failure to help, their insults, their scorn, and those who actively collaborated with the, Nazis. If we had written for Jewish readers – which is one of our future projects – we would have made a list recalling many positive things. But these could not possibly eclipse the negative ones which, unfortunately, have weighed much more heavily on our contacts with our Jewish brethren.

Jewish?Christian relations in the past

The first ten centuries

The 'first schism' – between the synagogue and the nascent Church – was followed by rivalries, arguments and attacks on both sides during the first three centuries. Later the situation worsened to the detriment of the Jews, in the wake of Constantine’s victory and the Edict of Milan (313), which granted religious freedom and made Christianity a legal religion.

The Church feared the influence of the Jewish communities (still very active) on the new Christians, and to combat this resorted both to virulent polemical writings and to the force of civil power, which now supported them. At the Council of Nicaea (in 325), it was decided to dissociate the date of the Christian Easter from the Jewish Passover. The Emperor wrote: "It appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled theirs hands with enormous sin, and are, therefore, deservedly afflicted with blindness of soul [...] Let us have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd." There followed a series of civil laws limiting the rights of Jews in the city. In Jerusalem, Christian sanctuaries were built and pilgrims began to come, and during this period the Jews were even forbidden entry into this city except for one day in the year (the fast day commemorating the destruction of the Temple!).

Certain Fathers of the Church in this period called the Jews "slayers of the Lord, haters of God, advocates of the devil, demons" (Gregory of Nyssa), "serpents, their image is Judas, and their prayers are the braying of donkeys" (Jerome). These statements pale in comparison with the verbal violence of John Chrysostom: "lustful, rapacious, greedy, perfidious bandits, destroyers, debauchery has given them the manners of the pig, and the lusty goat, [...] they immolate their

offspring to the devil; [...] for their deicide no pardon is possible, rejected by God, dispersed and under the yoke of servitude for ever.. God hates the Jews and has always hated them" (Homily 1:4, 1:6, 6:2, 6:4).

Flannery remarks: "The effect his preaching and writing exerted on both populace and clergy of his time and thereafter were unfortunate."

By way of example, we must mention certain texts of the Byzantine liturgy, still in use today (some have been corrected in recent Catholic editions):

> "Adulterous and unfaithful Jewish race, come [...] and see how He espouses the new Zion, for she is chaste, and rejects the synagogue which is condemned" (Palm Sunday).
> "The Jews have rejected (the justice of God) by their faithlessness; that is why they are the only ones to receive, like the fig tree, a curse". "Prepare your priests, Oh Judah, prepare your hands for deicide" (Monday in Holy Week).
> "Thou, Oh Lord, repay them according to their works, since they have not understood..."
> "When thou wert raised on the cross, it was the doom of the Hebrew race". "The swarm of deicides, the impious race of the Jews, pushing their way to Pilate furiously shouting said to him: 'crucify the innocent Christ!' " (Good Friday).

The Syrian liturgy has similar examples:

> "The blood which the impious people shed has conquered, it is spread across the world, it destroys their city, disperses their inhabitants, their feasts cease (Sunday, Office Lilio).
> "The cross which the cursed Jewish people, traitors to grace, has buried, is shining today..." (Friday Sapro).
> "Lord, protect the peoples, and reject the People who have not believed in Thee... Jerusalem, blessed is he who has ruined and scattered it, who crucified its Lord." (Holy Thursday Lilio).

Similar texts can be found in other liturgies, and when one considers what influence the liturgy had on Christian believers throughout history, it is not surprising to note that pogroms often occurred immediately following ceremonies held during Holy Week.

In order to explain the continued existence of the Jewish people, saint Augustine invented the theory of the 'Witness?People', remaining like Cain, to give witness through their humbled state to the truth of Christianity. He insisted, however, that they should be properly treated and that they be told: "Come, let us walk together in the light of the Lord". Unfortunately, it was Augustine's idea of a witness?people and not his appeal to goodwill which was to dominate the course of Jewish?Christian, relations in subsequent centuries.

It is important to note that during these first centuries, it was more a question of a religious anti?Judaism, a reaction of self?defense on the part of Christians against the "rival religion", a desire to be distinct (an anti?Semitism of differentiation, as Fr. Lovsky says). It is not yet the anti?Semitism which would manifest itself in the centuries to come... Nevertheless, in the verbal and at times physical violence of this anti?Judaism, we can already discern the roots of what was to follow.

This atmosphere of accusations, and the fact that in some isolated cases, Jews had killed Christians, provoked the first 'pogroms' and burning of synagogues. In 388 at Callinicus in Mesopotamia, a Christian mob, led by the local bishop, burned a synagogue. The Emperor Theodosius ordered the synagogue rebuilt, but St Ambrose, bishop of Milan, intervened,

threatening him with excommunication, adding: "It is my negligence which prevents me from setting fire to the synagogue of Milan myself."

Flannery adds: "Attacks continued in both provinces of the empire. In Dortona, Italy, with encouragement from the bishop, the synagogue was destroyed and replaced by a church. In Tipasa in Africa, the synagogue was seized and turned into a church. In Rome, the synagogue was destroyed. [...] At Antioch, the tomb of the Maccabees was converted into a church. In Edessa[4] a synagogue was seized, the bishop participating [...] "

In the 6th century, the Justinian code further restricted the rights of Jews and claimed jurisdiction over their worship. On the other hand, Pope Gregory I, called Gregory the Great, had a balanced attitude of which Jules Isaac says: "He inaugurated with respect to the Jews a policy of humanity, equity, and relative protection, which does him honor, and will do honor to popes after him; for a tradition was thus established from which many – but not all – would have the goodness of mind and heart to find their inspiration."

In the 7th century, the Emperor Heraclius decided on the forced baptism of Jews (in spite of the recommendations of the Church). From the 7th to the 11th centuries the fate of Jews varied according to place and time, yet they were often faced with the choice of baptism or exile. Fleeing from country to country, they constantly met with this same dilemma and were again obliged to flee elsewhere. Often, their children were taken forcibly from them, baptized and brought up in convents. The Church recalled that adults could not be baptized against their will, but did not question the validity of the enforced baptisms of the past: Jews thus baptized must remain Christian, and in cases where the children of unbaptized Jews had been baptized, the children were to be taken from them for Christian education (Council of Toledo, 633).

In the 9th century, Charlemagne showed himself to be favorable to the Jews and endeavored to protect them. But he came up against St Agobard, archbishop of Lyons. The latter, anxious to defend the faith and interests of Christians, took up the abuses and accusations of the past: "Jews are a stain on Christian society, [...] they are cursed and covered with malediction." During the same period various false accusations were the pretext for violent actions against the Jews. For example, in Toulouse at this time we see the beginning of the custom of slapping the face of a Jewish leader during the Good Friday liturgy, in punishment for the blows given to Jesus during the Passion. This went on for 300 years and it was only in 1160 that the bishop Guillaume put an end to the practice. Likewise at Béziers (France), it was the custom during Holy Week to throw mud at Jews as they passed by.

The 10th century was relatively calm. It should be noted, however, that Pope Leo VII, in answer to a bishop who asked him what to do with the Jews in his region, said that one must preach the Gospel to them, then expel them if they refused baptism. The great tempest was to begin in the 11th century with Pope Innocent III and the Crusades.

The Crusades and the Middle Ages

The Crusaders, setting out for Jerusalem to deliver the tomb of Christ from the hands of the 'infidels', found it more practical to begin in Europe by killing Jews on the way. It must be pointed out that several bishops opposed this violence and in various European towns saved the Jews from being massacred. However, the Crusaders wore the cross, were roused by the preaching of monks, and took revenge on the Jews because of official Christian teaching which for centuries had presented them as 'accursed, punished by God'. Besides, it did happen that when they refused baptism, the bishop himself delivered to the Crusaders the Jews who had taken refuge in his palace. From January to July 1096, 10,000 perished in this way in France and Germany. Upon their arrival in Jerusalem, the Crusaders shut the Jews in the synagogue and set fire to it.

At the time of the second Crusade, St Bernard opposed the monk Radulph, who was inciting the Crusaders, but the massacres continued. Peter, abbot of Cluny, said: "It is useless to strike the Saracens in far?off countries while there are so many [Jews blasphemers of our Saviour in the midst of Christians." He wrote to Louis VII: "They should not be killed, but afflicted and prepared for an existence worse than death." In Rameru, France, the famous Jewish scholar Jacob Tam had five wounds inflicted upon his head in vengeance for the five wounds of Christ (Flannery).

In the 13th century, Pope Innocent III was particularly severe, in contrast to some of his predecessors. "The Jews are like Cain, the fratricide", he wrote. "Against them, the blood of Jesus Christ calls out, as wanderers must they remain upon the earth, [...] the Christian princes must not protect them, but condemn them to servitude." St. Thomas Aquinas too validated the principle of Jewish servitude to both Church and state, adding "the princes may regard the possessions of the Jews as belonging to the state; however they must not deprive the Jews of things necessary to life."

The 4th Lateran Council, in 1205, decided that the Jews should wear a distinctive sign on their back and on their breast, to prevent contact with Christians. In France, this was a badge of red felt, in Germany, a yellow sphere, the "rouelle" Their example was followed by the Nazis, when they forced the Jews to don the yellow star. At the Council of Vienna, in 1267, the wearing of a long, pointed hat was imposed on them. Flannery remarks: "Physically marked off from his social environment, the Jew stood out like a pariah, prey to insult in his daily life and to violence in time of crisis. Outbreaks against Jews took place in Erfurt and Baden a few years after the introduction of the badge." Other humiliating customs were added: stoning or beating with sticks during Holy Week, marking Jewish houses with a distinctive sign (for example in Crete and in Sicily), an idea later adopted by the Nazis; the Jews were forced to serve as hangmen by erecting gallows in their cemeteries; public baths were forbidden to them, or they were admitted only on those days reserved for prostitutes.

Later there was the prohibition of Jewish practice of handicrafts and commerce. Since Christians were forbidden to practice usury, the Jews were practically obliged to take up this occupation. When we hear Jews referred to as usurers, we tend to forget that they were more or less forced into this situation by Christian society. Kings and princes used their services extensively, and when the royal debts were too great, they often resorted to expropriation, expulsion or massacre to solve the problem.

One of the accusations which was repeated throughout the centuries and which made numerous victims was that of 'ritual murder'. From the 12th century onward, but especially in the 13th, rumors began to circulate which accused the Jews of killing a Christian child in order to use his blood for their Passover.

All inquiries showed that these accusations were unfounded (and so the popes declared on several occasions); but in various countries, new cases of missing children would be reported, followed by massacres of Jews, and then the local clergy would encourage the Christians to build a sanctuary in honor of the 'little martyr'.

Some examples:

> in 1181 in Vienna, three boys disappeared while playing on the ice. Christians claimed that they had seen Jews entice them into a house, presumably to kill them. Three hundred Jews were tried and condemned to the stake. When the ice melted in the spring the corpses of the children were retrieved intact from the Danube.
> In 1171, at Blois, following a similar accusation, forty Jews were burnt.
> In 1263 the Dominican Thomas de Cantimpré a pupil of Albert the Great, wrote that every year the Jews were spilling Christian blood. One hundred and fifty cases of ritual murder

> accusations, frequently followed by massacres, have been counted, in England, in France and in Germany. Such accusations can be found in other countries right up to the 19th and 20th centuries.

It is worth noting the conclusion of the Church historian Abbé Vacandard: "There is not one case of ritual murder which can be proved historically." Only recently, especially since the Second Vatican Council, has the Church suppressed various devotions related to these child "martyrs". A plaque was placed in Lincoln Cathedral (England) as a sign of repentance. The same thing has happened in Austria, where the bishop of Innsbruck, in 1985, laid a stone with an inscription which corrects the story of the so?called martyrdom of Little Anderl of Rinn, recalls other false accusations and deplores the ensuing persecution of the Jews.

In addition to the blood?libel accusations, there was the Christian claim that the Jews desecrated the Host. About a hundred such cases can be noted. In Belitz in Germany, all the Jews of the town were burnt on this pretext. At Brussels in 1370, 20 Jews were burnt, the others driven out of the town.

In the 14th century, the Black Death provided yet another occasion to turn on the Jews, who were accused of poisoning the wells. Confessions were extracted by torture, and then the Jewish population of the town was massacred. This happened in France, Spain, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Poland, Austria. Twice Pope Clement VI intervened to condemn these acts of violence, to declare the Jews innocent (since they, too, were victims of the plague, as much as the Christians), but in vain. At Strasbourg in 1349, all the Jews: men, women, children and old people, were heaped on pyres; in 36 hours, 2,000 were burnt, while monks held a cross in front of those executed.

In the 15th century, there were new expulsions on various pretexts, as well as pogroms, arrests and confiscation of goods. The Council of Basel renewed past restrictions: special clothing, separate quarters, refusal to grant university diplomas, and obligatory presence at Christian sermons. From the 13th century, the Jews had been forced to attend such sermons, sometimes lasting two hours, and the Council of Basel generalized this practice, which was only abolished in 1848 by Pius IX.

The Inquisition

This dark period of Church History, especially in Spain and Portugal, is fairly well known. It is useful, however, to recall certain facts and to state them more precisely What is not generally known is that most of the victims of this religious fury ? which Pope John?Paul II deplored on his Spanish journey ? were Jews. The Inquisition was, in theory, concerned with 'bad Christians' and their errors against 'the Catholic faith'. But it must be remembered that many Jews had converted to Christianity against their will, due to social pressure and fear of massacre. In Seville the archdeacon Martinez led a campaign against the Jews, in spite of the Archbishop's remonstrances, and the mob rushed on the Juderia (the Jewish quarter) killing 4,000 Jews; many escaped death by accepting baptism.

The scourge spread through Spain and 70 Jewish communities disappeared, 50,000 Jews were massacred, and a greater number baptized. Now, for the Church of this period, even forced baptism was irrevocable (Council of Toledo). Among these marranos (Jews baptized against their will), many remained faithful to the religion of their fathers and continued to practice in secret. Torquemada, the Dominican confessor of the Queen, was appointed Inquisitor General; Flannery notes: 'The Inquisition attained a ruthlessness that held all Jewry in a state of terror for years. [...] The faithful were obliged, under severe penalties, to denounce suspects [...] It was enough to ascend a tower on the Sabbath and see the smokeless chimneys of homes of marranos who

scrupulously observed the Jewish prohibition of lighting a fire on that day." The suspects were arrested and tortured to make them confess their 'faults'. Pope Sixtus IV, who had approved the appointment of Torquemada, intervened several times to try to curb his zeal, but to no avail.[5]

As there still remained a great number of unconverted Jews, the dream of the king of Spain – 'one state one religion' – could be realized only by their general expulsion. On March 30, 1492, Isabella and Ferdinand signed an edict ordering the Jews to leave the country within three months. Thus 300,000 Jews had to leave the country where they had lived for 15 centuries; many of them were exposed to danger of shipwreck, piracy, slavery or death. Some of the survivors found a refuge for a few years in Portugal, but in 1497 the same fate awaited them. In that country, in 1739, it was still possible for the great dramatist José da Silva to be condemned to be burnt alive as a secret follower of Judaism. The Inquisition in Portugal was only suppressed in 1821 ? which makes it all the more surprising that groups of marranos, who had held to certain Jewish practices, were discovered there up to the 20th century.

Christian teaching did not change during this period. To give only a few examples: In the 16th century, Luther, who was at the outset favourably disposed to the Jews in the hope of bringing them to the Christian faith, later turned violently against them and put pressure on the German princes to oppress or expel them.

In the 17th century Pascal, though known to be sympathetic towards the Jews and their religion ? differing in this from the Church of his time ? took up again the teaching of St Augustine who saw the misery of the Jews as a proof of Christian truth. The bishop and great preacher Bossuet presented the Jews as an accursed and hardened race, hated by God, and in great misery as punishment for their deicide. "In their misery wrought by divine malediction, they are the laughing stock of all sensible people."

Rome and Italy

It should be noted that, in contrast to the rest of Europe, Papal Rome often served as' a peaceful haven for the Jews, but for all that their situation was not ideal. Between 1475 and 1555 five Popes were particularly favorable to the Jews.

The liberal policies were abruptly interrupted by Paul IV Flannery says of him: "There are few popes who compare with him for severity towards the Jews. [...] As soon as he became Pope, he reversed the indulgent policies of his predecessors toward the converted Jews and allowed sixty of them to be burnt by the Inquisition. Many draconian measures were introduced during his pontificate. The Roman ghetto was established; a yellow badge was imposed; Jews were not permitted to own land, practice usury, or enter any trades or professions except the most menial. One synagogue was permitted to exist, all others were destroyed. [...] . Conversionist sermons were ordered. [...].

After Paul IV, papal policy varied according to the temperament of the Popes.

Pius IV relaxed Paul's harsh measures [...], Pius V expelled all Jews from papal territories except Rome and Ancona, Sixtus V annulled almost all of Paul V's policies, granted Jews a status of tolerance and conceded them many privileges."

In Poland

From the 12th to the 17th centuries the situation of the Jews was, for the most part, especially good compared with the rest of Europe. Protected by royal rulers, especially by Casimir the Great (1333?1370) the Jews developed and lived prosperously, in spite of frequent opposition from the clergy, who were worried about their influence. Yet in Poland too there were accusations of ritual

crime – and the ensuing mass punishments. This relative success of the Jews took a turn for the worse with the Ukrainian invasions of Poland. The Jews were accused of collaboration by both the local population and the invaders, and the pogroms began. After the atrocities of the Cossack invasions, there came the Swedish invasion, during the course of which Jews were attacked in turn by the Russians, the Cossacks and the Swedes, and by the Poles who, after the invaders withdrew, accused the Jews of having helped them. Seven hundred Jewish communities were destroyed and it is estimated that there were between 100,000 and 500,000 deaths. In the 17th century accusations of ritual crime multiplied, with the same consequences already mentioned. Such cases are reported until the 18th century.

18th and 19th centuries

It was the French Revolution in 1791 which finally accorded equality of rights to the Jews, and this new order spread through Europe with varying difficulties and reversals. In Prussia, progress was slower. The historian Graetz, although no special admirer of Catholicism, remarks: "Protestant theology and German philosophy proposed regulations against the Jews surpassing by far the canonical restrictions of Innocent III and Paul IV".

The revolution of 1830 in France consolidated the progress toward the equality of the Jews, and from that time onwards, one could find Jews in different areas of social activity. In Italy, emancipation came about last of all in Rome, where Pius IX tried to maintain the old regime, with its ghetto and compulsory sermons, until the Papal States were seized in 1870.

Non?religious anti?Semitism

The appearance of non?religious anti?Semitism – such as that of Voltaire – and of the racial myth in the 19th century, cannot be ignored. What concerns us, however, is the permanence of religious motives in the anti?Semitism of the Christian world, and their connection with the Shoah. Of course, the theory of the superiority of the Aryan race is a pagan ideology with no Christian basis. Christian anti?Semitism is always founded on religious motives and admits of no distinction founded on biological race.

The heirs of Hegel, W Marr, Lassen and Gobineau could, however, benefit from the ground prepared by Christian teaching. Thus Drumont, the theorist of French anti?Semitism, who introduced himself as a Christian, could write in 1886: "Like us, the Spanish Dominicans were ardent patriots who did not hesitate to do away with all the Jews." The wave of anti?Semitism launched in Germany by racist thinkers crossed over into Austro?Hungary. In this context, Father Rohling, a priest in Prague, actively spread the charge of ritual murder; a trial took place in 1882 which ended a year later without any result. The influence of this priest was also felt in Austria. To quote Flannery: "In the 1890's, the anti?Semites were joined by the clerical parties under the guidance of Karl Lueger, the burgomaster (mayor) of Vienna", of whom we shall speak later.

The Dreyfus Affair

It was also toward the end of the 19th century, in 1894, that the Dreyfus Affair broke out in France. Dreyfus, an officer and a French Jew, was accused of spying, degraded and condemned to exile for life. His innocence was recognized five years later, when the real criminal was discovered. His trial caused a violent anti?Semitic campaign in Catholic society and in its press, especially in the paper La Croix, which proudly proclaimed itself to be France's most anti-Jewish paper—, and published violent articles during the trial. There, one reads: "The Jews are like serpents: the good cannot be distinguished from the bad, so all must be crushed".[6]

Flannery recalls that there were some Catholics among the defenders of Dreyfus unfortunately, a

minority. As Pierre Pierrard, known for his historical studies on La Croix, notes: "Apart from a small group of priests and laymen, nearly all of a liberal tendency, [...] , the cultured families who constituted French Catholicism were with few exceptions anti?Dreyfusards: the low clergy and the common Christian people devoured the newspapers La Croix and Le Pèlerin, where anti?Semitism and anti-Masonry reached the peak of sectarianism at the time of the Affair."

It is interesting to recall that it was at the Dreyfus trial that Herzl, a Viennese journalist and assimilated Jew, received a shock which contributed to make him the principal promoter of Zionism. He drew the following conclusion: If, even after the Revolution, such a lawsuit was still possible in France, then assimilation was obviously not the right solution: the Jewish people needed a land where they could take refuge. Hence the idea of the return to Zion. The Shoah was to confirm the soundness of his intuition.

Unfortunately, Pope Pius X did not understand that Christian support for the Jewish homeland could have been something of a gesture of reparation, but instead rejected the idea of a Jewish presence in Jerusalem on allegedly theological grounds.. In fact, when in 1907 Herzl came to ask his support, he replied: "The Jewish people did not recognize Our Lord, we cannot therefore recognize the Jewish people. [...]. If you are going to settle in Palestine, we shall prepare churches and priests to baptize all of you." He could not understand the terrible memories that these words evoked for a Jew: the hundreds of thousands of forced baptisms, including countless Jewish children taken from their parents to be baptized, in the course of the past centuries.[7]

In the same spirit La Croix wrote in 1920: "The Holy Land for the deicide people! [...] . The authors of the greatest crime in history must never become masters in the place of their crime, which in any case they abandoned, fleeing the curse which was weighing upon them and upon their children."[8]

Somewhat earlier, the Jesuit periodical Civiltà Cattolica, a publication closely associated with the Holy See, had printed a series of weekly articles during the years 1881?1882, which were violently hostile to the Jews, "an alien tribe, the enemy of all nations, a lazy people who never worked nor produced anything at all..." In particular, the publication resumed the accusation of 'ritual murder': "It is generally proved that the bloody paschal rite [...] is a general law that imposes on the conscience of every Jew the obligation to make use of the blood of a Christian child" (November and December 1881). "Every year the Jews crucify a child... In order that this have a powerful effect, the child must die in horrible suffering."

Pinhas Lapide calls attention to the fact that Karl Lueger, mayor of Vienna, had translated and published many of these same articles in 1907, and that it was in 1909 that the young Hitler, one of Lueger's admirers, came to him to be instructed on the 'Jewish problem'. Likewise, the well?known Nazi periodical Der Stürmer published in 1936 a special issue on 'Jewish ritual murder', which used numerous quotations from the Jesuit periodical and was illustrated with caricatures of Jews sucking the blood of Christian children.

Nazism and the Shoah

As was already mentioned, it is not our aim to present here a detailed historical study. We are only trying to determine to what extent centuries of Christian anti?Semitism may have contributed to the success of the Nazi project to exterminate the Jews, and what influence such teachings had on the attitude of Christians during this period.

Certainly one could supply numerous testimonies of courageous acts on the part of Christians who saved Jews,[9] but this reality cannot erase the fact that most Christians were indifferent, sometimes hostile, and thus were passive – or even active accomplices of this extermination. Such behaviour was often motivated by the anti-Jewish mentality, whether conscious or not, formed by

sixteen centuries of constant teaching that the misfortunes of the Jew are the punishment of God for deicide and the refusal to acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah.

After the extermination of the Jews, Hitler planned to liquidate Christianity next, as being a continuation of Judaism, and therefore an obstacle to Nazi ideology. This in no way changes the fact that he knew how to exploit Christian hostility to the Jews in order to succeed in this first step. Thus he said to the German bishops, in 1933: "For 1500 years the Catholic Church has considered Jews to be pests and has relegated, them to the Ghetto, for people knew what the Jews were worth. [...] . I am repeating what has been done for 1500 years and perhaps in this way I am rendering the greatest service to Christianity."

Another sign of "continuity": in 1938 Der Stürmer published an illustrated edition for children under the title “The Father of the Jews is the devil”,[10] with eleven quotations from the Fathers of the Church and Luther. (Other cases from Germany and France will be mentioned later).

Christian reactions

One cannot forget the firm attitude of Pius XI, who left Rome at the time of Hitler's visit to the city, nor yet his memorable words to Belgian pilgrims (7.9.1938): "Spiritually we are all Semites", yet the Italian newspapers and the Osservatore Romano, which published his speech, did not mention this phrase. Likewise the courageous encyclical Mit brennender Sorge, often quoted because of its condemnation of racism, neither mentions nor criticizes anti?Semitism as such. Nevertheless his intention was known and this great Pope will remain in the memory of the Jewish people.

We will not speak in detail of Pope Pius XII whose acts, words, motives, and hesitations have been reported in many books, especially those of J. Nobécourt and Leon Papeleux (See Bibliography). He has been greatly reproached for his 'silence'. It seems permissible to say with Cardinal D?pfner, archbishop of Munich: "The retrospective judgment of History perfectly endorses the opinion that Pius XII should have protested more firmly. In any case, we have no right to doubt the absolute sincerity of his motives, nor the authenticity of his profound reasons." He acted personally to save lives, he intervened in writing, and various Jewish organizations would thank him after the war for his help. Yet his voice did not make itself heard officially, although he was urged to speak out by persons both religious and secular.

Why then did Pius XII not speak out more frequently and more clearly? The chief reasons put forward are:

– the fear of more serious consequences for the victims themselves (but, as a Jewish historian replied, "what could have been worse than what befell them?") Papeleux says on this matter: "The refusal to condemn publicly and by name those responsible for Nazi crimes gave Pope Pius XII a heavy conscience and caused an inner struggle. He recognized that he should have had "words of fire" for the horrors of what was being perpetrated in Poland. But on numerous occasions he mentioned the other side of the dilemma: the fear of reprisals which a public condemnation could have provoked against those under Nazi control." This silence, in fact, allowed a fair number of persons to be saved. Yet would not severe and repeated warnings have made the Nazis shrink from their actions? Certain facts seem to prove that a firm attitude bore fruit (see what is said on this subject further on concerning the attitude of the bishops on euthanasia in Germany). On the other hand, absence of protest did not necessarily lead to positive results: the protests of Dutch bishops hastened the arrest of Catholic Jews (among them Edith Stein), which was already planned, but the silence of the Dutch Reformed Church did not prevent the arrests of Protestant Jews a little later. Certain people think that an official warning by Vatican Radio of what was happening, would have prompted many Jews, ignorant of the fate which awaited them, to escape before they could be arrested. The more testimonies one reads, the more one it is clear that,

objectively speaking, a forceful word against this genocide would have been able to limit the range of the evil.

– Another reason given by certain historians is that Pius XII greatly feared the advance of communism, and saw in Germany the only power capable of stopping it. But this thesis is contested by the Holy See, which has presented evidence to the contrary.

– Lastly, it is also said that he feared that he would not be followed by the German Catholics. The Jewish historian Poliakov writes: "We shall not admit that there was any trace of anti?Semitism in the Pope's mind [...] but he did not feel sure of being backed by this great movement of opinion coming from the masses. The silence of the Vatican only reflected the deep?rooted disposition of the Catholic masses of Europe." Pius XII himself is reported to have said to Eduardo Senatro, the correspondent of the Osservatore Romano in Berlin: "Do not forget that millions of Catholics are enrolled in the German army. Must I expose these people to a conflict of conscience?" And to the American diplomat Tittman who was putting pressure on the Holy See to intervene, the reply was that the Pope hesitated to do so, because he did not want the Germans to be able one day to reproach the Catholic Church for having contributed to their losing the war. If Pius XII did not speak, it was because Christians in general were not ready to draw conclusions from the words that the Pope would have pronounced. In any case, his attitude did evolve and toward the end of the hostilities he intervened in a clearer fashion.

Nobécourt concludes: "At the close of this investigation, we are convinced that Pius XII should have said the words that he withheld." And he imagines himself questioning the Pope:

> ? All the same, Holy Father, why did you not speak?
> ? Because all of you together were feeble witnesses. If the Just among you, who died in the camps, have saved the honor of the name 'Christian', they have left you the anguish of your failure. You too will weep bitterly.

Let us now recall some facts showing the attitude of Christian populations in various countries, which echoes this judgment of Nobécourt.

Germany

After the first world war, the Jews were held responsible for Germany's defeat, for the inflation, and for all the misfortunes of the country, although in 1925 they were only 0.90 per cent of the population. From 1923 to 1932, 128 Jewish cemeteries and 50 synagogues were desecrated. Jews were killed, wounded or mistreated. In face of this situation, the Vatican condemned anti?Semitism in a decree of September 25th, 1928, but it seems to have had little effect on the long?standing hostility towards the Jews.

In fact some declarations of bishops during this period show that the tone remains unchanged. In this respect they were in harmony with what the periodical Civiltà Cattolica wrote in 1936: opposition to Nazi racism (expressed in certain texts of the Church) should not be interpreted as a condemnation of anti?Semitism, and the Christian world should defend itself against the Jewish peril by taking civil rights from the Jews and confining them to ghettos. In 1938 the review again took up these ideas of legal measures of 'segregation and signs of identification', and the official newspaper Il Regime Fascista, quoting the Jesuit review, wrote: "Italy and Germany still have much to learn from the Society of Jesus, the Fascism is still far from the excessive severity of the Civiltà Cattolica."

Cardinal Faulhaber, justly presented as a courageous man in his declarations against the administration, nonetheless said, in his Advent sermons of 1933: "The wisdom of the Old

Testament is not a product of the spirit of this people"; and with regard to his defense of the Old Testament, he stressed that this should not be seen as taking a stand on the current Jewish question.

In his Lenten letter of 1939, Bishop Hilfrich of Limburgh wrote: "The Christian religion does not derive from the mentality of this people; the Jews are guilty of deicide, and therefore cursed for ever."

Archbishop Gröber, in a pastoral letter of 1941, recalled the responsibility of the Jews for the death of Jesus, adding that "the curse they had called down on themselves was being realized in a terrifying way in our days". Here we see clearly the connection made in the Christian mind between the violence done to the Jews and their so?called punishment by God.

Following the Kristallnacht ('crystal?night', November 9?10, 1938, when dozens of Jews were killed, 20,000 interned in camps, and 200 synagogues burnt) the only priest who raised his voice against these injustices was Lichtenberg, the Vicar General of Berlin: "Outside (this church) the synagogue is burning, and it is also the house of God". When he was arrested in 1941, a Nazi document had an answer ready in case of a protest from the Nuncio: "At the time of the deportations, Lichtenberg pronounced a prayer for the Jews." But the Nuncio asked no questions, and only requested that the procedure should be accelerated 'because of the bad health of the imprisoned priest'. In fact he died during his transfer to Dachau.

During all these years and in face of the methodical action of the Nazis, there were few statements from the local Church, and their content was somewhat vague: the word 'Jew' is not clearly stated, and many interventions are made in favour of 'non Aryan' Catholics (converts from Judaism). And yet it seems that vigorous protest did have an effect, as in the case of 'euthanasia' (a term which in fact designated the extermination of the mentally ill), which ceased with the protests of Mgr von Galen. Likewise, when the Nazis arrested Jews married to Aryan women, the latter gathered by the thousands and their shouts resulted in the release of their husbands.

Lastly, one cannot forget that the great specialists of the extermination, Himmler, Goebbels and Hoess came from good Christian families. From all these facts it seems right to conclude with the statement made by a group of Catholic and Protestant theologians in 1950: "There were some courageous Christians who aided the victims, but the great majority failed miserably."

Poland

The attitude of the Poles can be summarized briefly by the formula: an active minority helping the Nazis, an indifferent or powerless majority, and an active minority helping or hiding the Jews (and it must not be forgotten that any Pole hiding a Jew was executed on the spot with his family). On the whole, there are countless testimonies – either written accounts or oral reports – made by persons living in Israel ? which underline the indifference or hostility of the population in general. Here also a religious attitude was at play in many cases. From the testimonies of many Shoah survivors we can learn about different form of behaviour of Catholic priests, some calling upon their parishioners to help Jews, other expressing their approval for their extermination. Let us quote a few:

Nehama Tec (see Bibliography) cites the following cases: A peasant who was hiding some Jews, heard a priest saying at Sunday Mass that "it was a sacred duty to deliver Jews to the authorities". Genial Parska, speaking to a well?known priest about what she had done to help the Jews, got the answer: "You should not have done so, it was a mistake to save Jews." This is not an isolated instance. In many minds there was, without a doubt, the idea that what happening was the manifestation of the divine punishment, as the following story illustrates. When a Jewish survivor asked a Polish woman, after the war, why she had led the Gestapo to the place where his mother was hiding, she replied: "It was not Hitler who killed the Jews, it was God's will and Hitler was his

tool. How could I stand aside, contrary to the will of God?" And a Pole interned at Birkenau said: "You Jews have crucified Christ and that is why a curse is upon you, an eternal curse."[11]

Furthermore, there is no dearth of testimony (hundreds of cases) regarding the fate of Jews who, having been saved from the death camps, were killed by the partisans of the Polish resistance or by local inhabitants. Such was the case of the father of Itzhak Shamir, formerly Prime Minister of Israel. Dr Zygmunt Klukowski, a member of the Home Army, could write in his war diaries (November 26, 1942): "The peasants, fearing German reprisals, are hunting for Jews in the countryside; they bring them to the towns or sometimes they kill them on the spot. [...] The people here are driven into a kind of psychosis and, disinhibited by the German example, they forget that the Jews are human beings, they treat them like rabid dogs, rats, or other vermin which have to be exterminated in any way possible." We find the same appreciation in the report that an officer of the Polish Underground Army Tote, in January, 1942, to the Polish Government?in?Exile: "I really wonder if the attitude of our people towards the Jews does not resemble that of the Germans. This is the only case where the principles of Christian justice based on charity have broken down completely and failed to influence their behaviour towards the Jews." (Krakowski, Kulka collection).

In our own day, people like Lech Walesa express similar sentiments. A letter of Walesa's was read by the Solidarity spokesman at an event in April 1988, marking the 45th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. It included the following words: "As a son of this land, I pay homage to the Jewish people and I ask this of them: that all that has poisoned the relations between our two communities during ? and especially after ? the Shoah, that all those shameful and painful manifestations of anti?Semitism may be forgiven."

Without forgetting the thousands of Poles who, risking their lives, did their utmost as individuals, or as members of monasteries and convents, to save Jews (as reported, for instance, in the documentation published in London by the historian Wladislaw Bartoszewski), we shall conclude with these words of the Polish Bishops in their Declaration about anti?Semitism, in November 1990: "Many Poles saved Jews during the last war [...] There were also people who remained indifferent to this incomprehensible tragedy. We are especially disheartened by those among the Catholics who in some way were the cause of the death of Jews. They will forever gnaw at our conscience [...] . If only one Christian could have helped and did not stretch out a helping hand to a Jew during the time of danger or caused his death, we must ask for forgiveness of our Jewish brothers and sisters."

Slovakia

The independence of Slovakia, proclaimed in 1939, realized the aspirations of the People's Party, which was founded by two priests, Hlinka and Tiso. The collaboration of Mgr. Tiso, president of the Slovak State, with the Nazis in their anti?Jewish policy is known. The secretary of the American Legation in Prague wrote in February, 1939: "It is evident that the Slovak leaders will encounter little opposition from the Church in the promulgation of an anti?Semitic policy."

Regarding the attitude of the Catholic Church, however, we can distinguish between, three different periods:

1) a rigid dogmatic attitude until the summer of 1942 (the end of the mass deportations);
2) a more lenient approach, individual interventions, and finally the Pastoral Letter of March, 1943;
3) after the renewal of deportation in the autumn of 1944, consistent action, especially to provide shelter and assistance to Jews in hiding.

A Pastoral Letter prepared at the time of the mass deportation of March 1942, and banned by the

government, was not published. A declaration replacing it appeared in the official newspaper of the Church. It affirmed that "Jews are human beings and must be treated as such", but also recalled "their hatred of Christianity and the horror of the crucifixion", and asserted that the Church had no objection to the “legal action that the government was taking to put an end to their evil influence". On the whole, with two or three exceptions, the bishops supported the official policy, despite the protests of the Vatican.

As in other countries, the protests, if any, were mainly concerned with the plight of Jewish converts to Catholicism. Bishop Kmetko, for example, asked: "What will the world say if it learns that persons converted to Christianity are expelled from a Christian country?" And Mgr. Skrabik said to the rabbi of Nitra who asked for his aid: "The little influence we may have must be used for the benefit of those who have seen the light..." (the 'converts').

In the face of the threat of a last mass deportation, the bishops finally published a Pastoral Letter in March, 1943, which was read in all the churches. "The new political climate caused the Slovak leadership to reconsider its stand and the deportations were halted. The influence of the Holy See at this stage was, without a doubt, a decisive factor." (Livia Rothkirchen, Kulka collection).

Kállay, the Prime Minister of independent Hungary, was opposed to Nazi policy and in 1943 spoke of it to Pius XII, who expressed in his presence a clear condemnation of the inhuman and brutal methods of the Germans, especially in their treatment of the Jews. In March 1944, however, the Germans invaded Hungary, Kállay was replaced by Sztójay, and the deportations of the Jews began. The Papal Nuncio intervened at once as did several bishops. However, the clergy generally supported the government, partly on account of the fear caused by the advance of the Red Army; and this influenced their attitude on the Jewish question. Anti?Semitisin was also rife as a consequence of economic factors, and the Germans could congratulate themselves on the behaviour of the population during the deportations, affirming: "An essential condition for achieving success in this campaign was the fact that the steps taken against the Jews were met with approval by the majority of the Hungarian people."

The preparation of the Pastoral Letter dealing with this subject dragged on for over two months and government censorship finally prohibited its circulation. The Papal Nuncio criticized the passivity of the bishops. On the 25th of June 1944, Pius XII made his first personal intervention against the treatment inflicted on persons 'because of their nationality or their race'. The word 'Jew' did not appear (and Vatican Radio did not broadcast the text), but the deportations were halted. The acts of terror started again in October 1944, and the Nuncio and other neutral countries (especially Sweden with its representative Raoul Wallenberg) gave diplomatic protection to numerous Jews. In addition, thousands of Jews were hidden in Catholic institutions.

France

The widespread support enjoyed by Marshal Pétain after the defeat of France explains the silence of the Church on the Jewish question in 1940?41. Anti?Semitic feelings were still present in the population, but the atmosphere was far more tolerant than at the time of the Dreyfus affair, and La Croix now condemned anti?Semitism. Nevertheless the return to order, to 'moral' (Christian) values, and the discipline and respect for religion which Pétain represented in the eyes of many, attracted the sympathy of the Catholic hierarchy; and this in fact paralyzed it when it was faced with the first measures of the Nazis against the Jews. Even Cardinal Gerlier, Archbishop of Lyons, who was later to take a strong stand favouring the Jews and would help to save them, did not initially oppose the anti?Jewish laws. He considered Xavier Vallat, the General Commissioner of Jewish affairs, to be a good Christian. Vallat himself said: "I mistrust the Jews and I fear them, as the Church has mistrusted and feared them since Golgotha." And to justify his position and the measures taken against the Jews, he relied on the Christian past: after having cited the Councils, St Agobard, various Popes and 57 papal bulls concerning the Jews, and the restrictions imposed

on them in these documents, he drew on the Christian past: "If one compares these prescriptions to the contemporary French law, it is easy to see that the Marshal's government has made no innovations and even falls short of the harshness of former times."

From 1942 onwards, however, the clandestine Témoignage Chrétien run by the Jesuits took a courageous stand in opposition to such policies and contributed to opening the eyes of the French public. Several bishops began to intervene energetically (Gerlier, Saliège and Théas).

Unfortunately, the protests were not widespread and gradually diminished, because of the support given to Marshal Pétain; Cardinal Suhard, for example, asserted: "The French government cannot be held responsible [...]. If one cannot avoid obeying orders, one must at least refrain from excessive severity and inhuman behaviour: Nevertheless, the government helped the Nazis greatly, sometimes even exceeding their demands – by handing over Jewish children, for example, as an “extra” along with adults – and there were a good many French policemen who carried out their orders zealously.

It was only the activity of private people and Christian groups which permitted the survival of thousands of Jews. The conclusion of Michael R. Marrus (Kulka collection) is: "That this aid was insufficient or unsustained, too slow in coming and too limited, is also clear, especially in Catholic circles, as the churchmen themselves involved were painfully aware."

A famous Catholic historian, Francois Delpech, echoes the above conclusion: "We cannot help but think that positive interventions were rare, late, partial and quite insufficient. There were, however, some protests, some of which very courageous, an undeniable effort at assistance, and a shift in opinion, if not in all, at least in some. We should neither over? nor underestimate this."

The Shoah – conclusion

It is impossible to give a concise picture of all the European countries,[12] and the few examples given above will serve to illustrate the influence of a long Christian tradition on Christian attitudes during the Shoah. There seems no other alternative but to regretfully accept the conclusion of some American authorities in 1947, after the fall of Hitler: "The societies most marked by anti?Semitism are those of practicing Christians of the two confessions (i.e. Catholics and Protestants)".

Fr. Dujardin, a French historian, concludes about this period: "One has to admit the possibility of a deep?seated connection between Christian anti?Judaism and modem anti?Semitism. This connection is difficult to observe and measure. It can be clarified thus: Anti?Semitism, when it appeared, found some dormant or perverted consciences that were inclined to accept and tolerate it. Nazi anti?Semitism was to all appearances the same, especially as it masked its intentions by using a code language and a special strategy. Too many consciences, convinced at the time that there was a 'Jewish question' and that it was legitimate to settle it, accepted this anti?Semitism at least in principle, although not for its ultimate results which were not desired and would have been unthinkable. Christians had become too accustomed to the abnormal existence of the Jewish people to be surprised by anti?Semitic measures. Unfortunately it required the horror of the camps to completely open the eyes and to incite them to make the necessary changes in their outlook, thought and action vis?a?vis the Jewish people.[13]

During the years 1933?1945, the ecclesiastical authorities only gradually came to understand the seriousness, the cruelty and the consequences of the Nazi activity. Initially, the various populations, due to the background of religious and social anti?Semitism, let the Germans (who 'rid them of the Jews') do as they wanted; some even helped them actively. Later the Church began to react, often too slowly, or in a timid or limited fashion (due to a lack of unanimity), or in veiled

terms; finally, towards the end, in a more unequivocal fashion. By then it was too late. The wave carried away the Jewish masses without sufficient opposition from the Christian population, and the protests of the Pope and bishops generally had little effect. Charitable action was then the only recourse left to save a minority.

Is the picture exact?

In spite of all the precautions taken and the verifications made, there is surely a detail here or there which may be open to question. Sadly, however, the more one reads serious studies (including those of the Vatican), the more apparent it becomes that the general impression arising from the above conclusions is an accurate one. This is further confirmed by various statements by churchmen or Christian intellectuals, such as the following examples:

"We wish to acknowledge frankly the general weakness of the men who directed the Church, the Catholic associations and the Catholic people. Our generation, and particularly our youth, is skeptical in the face of any attempted apologetics (Cardinal Döpfner, archbishop of Munich, 8.3.1964).

"In large circles of the German population an anti?Semitic tradition existed and the Catholics did not escape it" ? and after referring to the Encyclical of Pius XI against racism: "It is all the more difficult to understand today that [...] neither at the time of the racial laws of Nuremberg in September, 1935, nor following the excesses committed after Crystal Night, November 9?10, 1938, did the Church take a sufficiently clear and timely stand." (Declaration of the Secretariat of the German Episcopal conference, 31.1.1979).

"The events of this period transpired with everyone's knowledge, in numerous towns and villages of our country. Our Jewish fellow citizens found themselves forsaken. The churches and Christian communities for the most part kept silent before this denial of public justice." (Text of the German Episcopal conference, published on the anniversary of Crystal Night and read in all the Catholic parishes of Federal Germany, 9.11.1978).

"The Christian religion itself must stand at the gates of Auschwitz, contemplating its own guilt. [...] . It is Christianity which produced the shameful word 'deicide', [...] . The killing of the Jews in the twentieth century was the final result of a tradition of denigration and rejection of Jews and Judaism dating from early in Christian history." (article from the Times In the Holy Week III 3.4.1985, read by Henry MacConkey on Vatican Radio).

"Not only individuals, but nations also have a conscience (memory) and historical continuity [...] . Conscious of this fact, we contemplate what happened to our Jewish brethren and compatriots in Slovakia 45 years ago. We have no desire to weaken our expression of regret by recalling the help given to the Jews and the interventions in their favour [...] . We feel the need to express our profound regret and our sincere request for pardon for all that was done to our Jewish brethren, the majority of whom were driven out of Slovakia, interned in camps and exterminated." (extracts from a long, moving statement sent to Israel by a group of Slovaks, 24 intellectuals, artists, historians and scientists and a Catholic bishop, in October, 1987).

And the positive?

We have been making an examination of conscience, an inquiry into the evil for which we must atone, and not drawing a complete picture of the problem. We have mentioned several times in this account that there were also righteous persons from all levels of the Church, and outside of it, throughout history. But when a building collapses because so much of the material used was of a bad quality, one does not go about boasting that at least a third of the stones and rafters were excellent. If, in opposition to priests saying from the pulpit that Jews must be delivered up, there

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were priests who said that they had to be helped, we must admit that this latter attitude was only normal Christian duty: "We are merely servants: we have done no more than our duty." (Luke 17,10).

As we consider the entire period of the Shoah, as well as the preceding centuries, we can adopt the words of the bishop of Dijon, Mgr. de la Brousse. In 1972, in response to anti?Semitic demonstrations in his diocese, he wrote: "Anti?Semitism, which often fears to show itself, is a particular insidious form of racism ? a subtle poison which, regrettably, has permeated Christian consciousness throughout the centuries. It is infinitely sad to realize that anti?Semitism was fostered by pseudo?theological arguments. And this led to Auschwitz..."

The overall evaluation of the Christian attitude towards the Jews in the course of history is unfortunately very disheartening, and the reading of massive and detailed works of history only confirms the impression gained from the few examples given above. The Catholic Church had, therefore, a grave and urgent obligation to express publicly and officially its profound regret for all this evil, the principal cause of which was Christian teaching.[14] Various Christian leaders in different countries have already done this over the past few years, and the Catholic Church also took such an initiative, in the Rome document of 16 March 1998 We remember— (see below, A time for repentance). However, these initiatives have not been understood by all Catholics. Various objections can still be heard, and it is these which we shall now set out to examine.

Objections to asking pardon

1) "This step has already been taken"

Generally, the text of Nostra Aetate is cited as replying to this demand: 'The Church [...] moved by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions and displays of anti?Semitism, directed against the Jews at any time and by anyone." But this is presented as an initiative inspired by the "Gospel's spiritual love", as a favour, and not as a step dictated by the sense of a grave duty to make amends. Moreover, the vague and generalizing formulation "by anyone" avoids a clear condemnation of the error of Christianity itself, of the churchmen and of Christian teaching throughout the centuries. This convenient phrase was repeated at every opportunity, such as when John?Paul II visited the synagogue at Rome. It is evident that it was not perceived by either Jews or Christians as an act of self-criticism or as an explicit acknowledgement of Christian responsibility.

2) "Pardon is asked for one's own faults"

This explanation is added: "It was said at the Council that the Jews of today should not be blamed for the death of Jesus, therefore we cannot be accused of the persecutions committed against the Jews in the past." No one asks each Christian to confess these crimes as a personal fault, nor to feel himself guilty and accused personally. Yet there is a natural and spontaneous human reaction which seems to be suddenly forgotten when it comes to the Jews, namely a sense of solidarity and shared responsibility such as that felt by a father who asks his neighbor to pardon him for damage caused by his son, or of the man who feels honour?bound to express his regret and to pay the victims of the damage caused by his parents. Pope Paul VI asked forgiveness of the Protestants and the Orthodox for whatever responsibility the Catholic Church had in these dramatic schisms; he obviously couldn't be blamed personally for these past dramas, but everyone understood and appreciated his gesture.

It seems that the Anglican?Roman Catholic Committee in England had this same healthy and natural reaction, when on November 20, 1987, writing on the subject of 'heretics' put to death during Reformation controversies, they asked: "Is this not a subject for which our Churches must

publicly and explicitly ask pardon of one another, and of God, before making further progress on the way to reconciliation?"[15]

In the case of the Jews, there is a much more serious injustice, extending throughout Christian history (from the 4th to the 20th centuries), affecting hundreds of thousands of victims (without speaking of the Shoah), which resulted from the official teaching of contempt, of deicide, of the alleged punishment of God. : It is astonishing that in this case the sane, normal reaction no longer applies, and that there are Christians who raise objections. These stem, no doubt, from an ignorance with regard to this past, and perhaps also from a fear of facing reality. It is worthy of note that the prime minister of Portugal, Dr. Mario Soares, a socialist, also showed that he had the courage to acknowledge his country?s responsibility for what happened in the past, when he said: “In the name of the state of Portugal, I ask the Jews? pardon for all the persecutions which they have suffered on our soil.” Today’s disciples of Christ must show the same courage if they wish to remain faithful to his spirit, and the Church has understood this, as we shall see.

3) "It concerns the long-distant past"

Strange as it may appear, this affirmation is also heard, either in the sense that 'The Inquisition was long ago!" or even when speaking of the recent past: "The Shoah that is half?a?century ago! We should now speak of the future!". The answer to this should be, on the one hand, that an unredressed injustice continues to cry out to heaven; and on the other hand, that these horrors and errors are continuing to have an influence on people in our own day.

This is primarily because the official decision to reform Christian teaching has only recently been taken: the well?known French historian Daniel?Rops still wrote after the Shoah in 1946, "The horror of the pogrom compensates, in the secret balance of the divine will, for the unbearable horror of the crucifixion." (!)

Many people living among us in Israel today were ill?treated in their childhood by Christian children coming from their catechism lessons, with the pretext, "You are a Jew ? you killed Christ!" Many religious books and missals still contain stereotyped phrases reflecting dangerous clich?s of the past, of which the following are examples:

One of the numerous sources quoted by Michel Remaud is a book written in 1977 by a Christian author who says that for Jesus? contemporaries: “Serving God leads eventually to homicide [...] The religious men of those days made of God the enemy of Man”.

A missal which appeared in 1979 comments on the day's Gospel: "Jesus knows that he will be rejected by a community definitively (!) enclosed in its religious system." "The people of Israel [...] centered on purely human affairs, neglected to come to the feast. Even more, they rejected and killed the prophets [...]. They will be punished for it." One could also mention the notes to certain recent translations of the Bible, in various countries, which still retain many derogatory phrases.

The recent official texts of the Catholic Church are not yet sufficiently influencing the reactions of Christians. An Israeli friend, to whom we had spoken of this new approach, this, reassessment of Catholic teaching, reported to us recently upon his return from a visit to Europe: “I spoke of that to a young Swiss Christian, who exclaimed, 'After all, it was you who killed Him!”

While the trial of Eichmann was unfolding in Jerusalem, a priest in Jaffa ruefully remarked, "It is a pity that he did not kill more!" This was before the recent Vatican Council. Thank God, it has today become theoretically impossible for enlightened Christians, who have received a proper religious education, to utter such words. But they do give an idea of the depth of the wound inflicted in the past; and much remains yet to be done, especially in those countries in which the texts of Vatican II have not yet filtered down to the general population.

Even among preachers who condemn these words from the past, there are still many who use such phrases such as 'Jesus was crucified by the Jews', or 'the Jews rejected Jesus', using, or so they claim, the words of St John's Gospel. They forget two facts:

a) The translation which has 'Jews' for the Greek word Ioudaioi in St John is in fact a misleading translation (see Appendix I, p.52).
b) Such phrases have served as slogans to justify pogroms all through the history of Christianity. This alone should suffice to oblige the teachers of the Church to reform their vocabulary. The Chief Rabbi of Istanbul, invited to a Church for ecumenical prayer for peace, received a shock on hearing this kind of phrase, and went out completely upset: "I came in a spirit of fraternity, and I received a slap...".

4) "Let us forget our reciprocal wrong"

This phrase is sometimes used as the starting?point for Jewish?Christian dialogue. But such a sentence can be uttered only if it comes from both of the concerned parties by mutual agreement. It can come only after a clear acknowledgment of the facts, an admission of real injuries, and not as a form of lip?service which saves one from facing reality.

The word "reciprocal" seems to suggest that the wrongs on both sides were more or less equal. However the principal picture that we have presented, although very limited, should suffice to show how scandalous it would be to attempt to equate 16 centuries of humiliation, compulsion and extermination with whatever wrong Jews may have done to Christians during history.

The Church has courageously acknowledged the role of Christians and of the Church authorities in this tragic and painful sequence of events. This has cleared the air and has finally paved the way for closer relations with our elder brother, the People of the First Covenant.

5) “It is the problem of European Christians”

The response of Third World Christians is often along the lines of "why should a young Brazilian or a Middle Eastern Arab Christian feel that a request for forgiveness concerns him in any way"?

Three things must therefore be borne in mind:

– The Church?s plea for forgiveness does not relate only to the Nazi period or to the behaviour of European Christians. We have seen that the problem dates back to the first centuries of Christianity and to the Fathers of the Church, including St. John Chrysostom, a Byzantine from Constantinople. If the members of the Church are a united entity and share in its sanctity, they must also share responsibility for the sins of Christianity. Any Christian – even in Latin America or the Middle East – who feels a shared pride in the saints of the Church – such as St. Francis of Assisi, who was a native of neither Latin America or the Middle East – must also feel the shared concern at the horrors of anti-Semitism which has long been prevalent in Christian countries;

– Another point is that the anti-Jewish attitude has probably affected Christian teaching in countries outside Europe. Christians of other countries would perhaps do well to reflect on this, and make the same effort to reform their religious teaching, as has been done in North America and Europe.

Finally: the second part of this book will emphasize how the Church is rediscovering the place and role that the Jewish people still have in God?s plan. This is an important step, which is relevant for all Christians in every part of the world.

Conclusion

These reflections could be developed indefinitely, new facts could be brought up, the role of iconography stressed (ritual murders recalled by stained glass windows in churches, the statue of the humiliated Synagogue in cathedrals...), attention drawn to how the sign of the cross has become for the Jews a menacing symbol of misfortune (see the Appendix II: What does the cross symbolize?). We can now better understand the reaction of the young Jewish woman cited by Flannery and reported at the beginning of this work. Our protestations that the cross is the sign of love, of the gift of self, ? which is true for us Christians ? changes nothing at all in the feeling which is deeply rooted in the Jewish soul. A great deal of love and sensitivity will be needed to help heal this profound wound in the hearts of our elder brothers in the faith.

A time for repentance

Although written in 1988, the preceding pages are still worth reading, since they enhance our understanding what has happened since in the Catholic Church since that time. For the Church has fortunately begun to examine its conscience, and has initiated various acts of repentance as enumerated below:

Conscious of the grave nature of Christian anti-Judaism in earlier centuries, and desiring to take seriously Jesus? injunction: “If you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there, go first and be reconciled with your brother,” (Matt. 5:24) Churches in various European countries have reflected upon the deficiencies of their flocks. This has culminated in an act of repentance and a plea for forgiveness from God and from the Jewish people.

The Hungarian bishops, together with the Ecumenical Council of Churches, on 29 November 1994 acknowledged their part in the shared responsibility for the fate of Hungarian Jews and asked forgiveness for their failure to act when 600,000 Hungarian Jews were sent to their deaths.

Czech, Slovak, Italian and Dutch bishops have taken similar action in recent years.

On 23 January 1995 the German bishops reiterated their act of repentance, repeating their earlier declarations, as described above.

The most radical examination of conscience was that carried out by the French bishops on 30 September 1997, at the former site of the transit camp at Drancy, near Paris, through which 64,000 Jews passed between 1941 and 1943 on their way to the death camps. Mgr de Berranger read out an official declaration on behalf of the bishops of all the French dioceses in which internment camps had been situated.

This text was groundbreaking in that it did not concern itself exclusively with the period of the Shoah; it also looked back to what had happened in earlier centuries. For the first time, an official Church text took stock of the Church?s inadequacies during the 1939-1945 period, and linked them to centuries of Christian anti-Jewish sentiments. The text states, among other things:

> “According to historians, it is a well-documented fact that for centuries, until the Second Vatican Council, an anti-Jewish tradition prevailed among Christians which, on various levels, has affected Christian doctrine and teaching, theology and apologetics, preaching and liturgy. On this fertile ground the poisonous weed of hatred for Jews was able to flourish. [...]”

> “Insofar as the clergy and the Church officials for so long allowed the teaching of contempt to develop, and maintained within Christian communities a common fund of religious culture which has left a lasting mark on people?s mentalities and warped their attitudes, they bear a grave responsibility. [...] As a result, consciences often remained unawakened, and their capacity for resistance showed itself to be reduced, when Nazi anti-Semitism – a diabolical and paroxysmal form of hatred for Jews, founded on categorization by race and by blood, and whose avowed aim was the physical elimination of the Jewish people – arose in all its criminal violence. [...]”

> “Faced with the scope of the drama and the unprecedented nature of the crime, too many members of the Clergy, by keeping silent, trespassed against the Church itself and against its mission. [...]”

> “We confess this sin. We beg God?s forgiveness and ask the Jewish people to hear these words of repentance. This act of memory summons us to a heightened vigilance for the sake of all mankind in the present and the future.”

The following year, on 16 March 1998, came the Holy See?s declaration *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*, which, in the name of the Church as a whole, appraises and examines Christian attitudes towards Jews throughout history.

This text, which underwent a long period of reworking and revision, seemed to many Jews, and to many Christians too, to be weaker and less clear than had been expected.[16] It is, nonetheless, a plea for forgiveness for all the acts committed against Jews by Christians throughout the course of history, and a clear stand against anti-Semitism. In this sense, it is a document which will leave an impact, because it is directed at the entire Catholic world. The following extracts are worth quoting:

> It is not only a question of recalling the past. The common future of Jews and Christians demands that we remember, for “without memory there is no future” (John-Paul II).

> The very magnitude of the crime raises many questions. Historians, sociologists, political philosophers, psychologists and theologians are all trying to learn more about the reality of the Shoah and its causes. Much scholarly work still remains to be done. But such an event cannot be fully measured by the ordinary criteria of historical research alone. It calls more for a "moral and religious memory" and, particularly among Christians, a very serious reflection on what gave rise to it.

> “The fact that the Shoah took place in Europe, that is, in countries of long-standing Christian civilization, raises the question of the relation between the Nazi persecution and the centuries-long attitudes of Christians towards Jews.”

> “At the end of this Millennium the Catholic Church desires to express her deep sorrow for the failures of her sons and daughters in every age. This is an act of repentance (teshuva), since, as members of the Church, we are linked to the sins as well as to the merits of all her children. The Church approaches with deep respect and great compassion the experience of extermination, the Shoah, suffered by the Jewish people during World War II. It is not a matter of mere words, but indeed of binding commitment. "We risk causing the victims of the most atrocious deaths to die again if we do not have an ardent desire for

> justice, if we do not commit ourselves to ensuring that evil not prevail over good as it did for millions of children of the Jewish people ... Humanity cannot permit all that to happen again. We pray that our sorrow for the tragedy which the Jewish people has suffered in our century will lead to a new relationship with the Jewish people".

The text concludes with the following appeal:

> "The tainted seeds of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism must never again be allowed to take root in any human heart."

Pope John-Paul II has expressed himself forcefully on this issue on more than one occasion, as, for example: "Lord, we have not always respected Your commandment, [...] with our religious wars, our passivity when confronted with the persecutions of the Jews and the Holocaust. Forgive us and have pity upon us."

The Pope also constantly reiterates the need for a "new attitude— and for a new relationship with the Jewish people."

This is the area which we will now explore.

II. THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND CHRISTIANS TODAY

After reading the preceding pages, many Christians will readily say, "It was certainly necessary that we ask God's pardon and express our remorse to these people." But many will perhaps add: "But now, let's turn the page and move on to more urgent problems." as if it were one case of injustice among others, which once repaired could be forgotten, because the Jews have no place in our lives, since they no longer have any part in God's plan.

This way of thinking is wrong. It is the consequence of a whole Christian tradition which still affects us, and sees the Church as "the new Israel".[17] According to this erroneous view, the Christians have replaced the Jews as the people of God and it is felt that "This people is no longer anything special in the eyes of God." Those ignorant of the Jews' spiritual vitality will even affirm in axiomatic fashion: "It is a tree which no longer bears any fruit."

Mention should now be made of the changed attitude of the Church towards the Jews at the Second Vatican Council (1965), which was first echoed in the text "Nostra Aetate", and continues to become more precise and to be expressed in various texts. This will help us to discover both the special place that the Jewish nation still has in God's plan of salvation and in our Christian life, and what the Jews can offer us today.

The following pages are not aimed at replacing the reading of official texts of books specializing on the subject, but they will give the reader a first contact with forgotten aspects of these texts, and will perhaps awaken the desire to know more about the question.

Nostra Aetate and the Guidelines

The teaching of Nostra Aetate (Vatican II ? 28,10,1965) has largely passed into the catechism, at least on one point: it is said that the Jewish contemporaries of Christ, taken as a whole, cannot be held responsible for his death (even if some of them collaborated with the Romans who, in any case, had crucified thousands of other Jews during this time) and still less is it possible to incriminate the Jews of later generations. One is amazed today that such an elementary truth had

to be affirmed so solemnly.

There is more in this text than this important correction. At the beginning it is also written, “As this sacred synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it recalls the spiritual bond linking the people of the New Covenant with Abraham’s stock. [...]

According to St. Paul, the Jews, because of their forefathers, still remain very dear to God whose gifts and special call are irrevocable (Rom. 11, 28?29)”.[18]

Ten years later, in Rome, the Guidelines for the application of Nostra Aetate (3.1.1975) were published, which explain further.

"The spiritual ties which link the Church to Judaism condemn all forms of anti?Semitism [...] and render obligatory a better mutual understanding. [...] Christians must therefore strive to acquire a better knowledge of the basic components of the religious tradition of Judaism. They must strive to learn by what essential traits the Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience."

And again: “The Old Testament and the Jewish tradition founded on it must not be set against the New Testament in such a way that the former seems to constitute a religion of only justice, fear, and legalism with no appeal to the love of God and neighbour.”[19]

From year to year one can observe a progression in the official texts[20] and Papal declarations. Little by little the encounters between Jews and Christians are giving these texts a personal and practical dimension. The “older brother” is being discovered as the one who was misjudged, whom one sought to replace, evict, and eliminate by scorn and humiliation if not always by action. Now we are beginning to recognize the spiritual riches of his life and his special place in history.

During a long conversation about Israel with Pope John?Paul II, the author of these pages recalled the sufferings of the Jewish people and what we can receive from this people today. The Pope nodded his head in agreement and concluded: “Other nations have also suffered terribly, but the case of the Jews is special; they are the chosen people, they remain the chosen people. This has not been seen, has not been understood, and it is very regrettable."

As an echo to this assertion, we can recall this sentence from his speech in the Roman synagogue, on April 13, 1986: “The Jews remain very dear to God who has called them to an irrevocable vocation”, or at Mainz on November 17, 1980. is reference to “... the people of the Old Covenant which has never been revoked."

The People of God

The reader may ask: Is not the Church sometimes called the “new Israel, the new people of God”? How should this phrase be understood after what has just been said?

First, we should remember that, according to the image which Paul uses in his Epistle to the Romans (11:11), the true olive tree is Israel, and the members of the pagan nations have been grafted in among the branches of this olive tree;[21] and Romans 9:4, quoted by Nostra Aetate, says: “They who are the Israelites, to whom the adoption, the Glory [that is to say the presence of God among his people], the law, worship and promises belong [...]”. It does not say “to whom belonged” in the past tense, as if it were a matter of something which had expired. All this is their inheritance. God has not deprived them of it, and it is this which makes them live.

The question then follows: Who, or which, is the People of God?

An official document of the Church, the Notes on the Correct Way to Present Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechizing in the Roman Catholic Church[22] (henceforth called the Notes) gives an unexpected answer to this question. And the unexpected answer, in turn, introduces a new way of looking at the question: “By underlining the eschatological dimension of Christianity, we shall reach a greater awareness that the People[23] of the Old[24] and the New Testament are tending towards a like end in the future: the coming or return of the Messiah – even if they start from two different points of view. We shall see more clearly that the person of the Messiah, on which point the People of God are divided, is also a point of convergence. Thus it can be said that Jews and Christians meet in a comparable hope, founded on the same promise to Abraham."

According to this text, therefore, there is one single people of God, Jews and Christians.[25] How this can be explained theologically, what is the place I of each one, the type of fidelity demanded by God, the forms of belonging to this people, is not elaborated in the text. Fortunately, this vocabulary allows a certain vagueness as regards the limits of this People, and this better respects the secret of God than does the desire to know precisely what is the fate of others and what is the nature of the tie which they have with God.[26]

The New Catechism (October 1992) respects this new sensitivity in its choice of words, referring to the Church as “the People of God of the New Covenant”.

It is not the aim of this book to discuss this delicate problem. Others who are more competent speak of it with prudence, and serious studies on the subject will no doubt continue to appear right up until the definitive arrival of the Messiah.

God’s faithfulness

Actually, whatever we may do, God remains faithful, and whomever He chooses remains chosen. We may temporarily stray away from Him, break the Covenant, and then return, He himself keeps waiting patiently. He is always ready to welcome back those who turn to Him, within in the framework of his Covenant. Paul assures us, “If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself” (II Tim. 2,13). He also wrote about the people of Israel, “God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable."(Rom. 11,19).

This very fact guarantees us that our unfaithfulness will never cause a collective rejection on the part of God. If He had rejected his people of the first Covenant, He could have been tempted, many a time in the course of History, to reject the Christian people, so often unfaithful to the Gospel, and starting again with another group... until the next betrayal? This is the best answer to those sects which claim to be “the congregation of the pure”, the other Christians having betrayed God and being therefore rejected.

The special place of Judaism

All this leads to an understanding of how this people, such as it is, with all its grandeur and weakness, has a special place in the history of salvation, both in the past and also at the present time, because of a free choice on the part of God.[27] This is expressed, either clearly or by allusion, in various texts recently published by the Church and in statements by the Pope, such as:

> "The permanence of Israel (while so many ancient peoples have disappeared without a trace) is an historical fact and a sign to be interpreted within God’s design. In any case, we need to rid ourselves of the traditional view of the Jews as a people punished by God and preserved only as a living argument for Christian apologetics. It remains the Chosen People, the cultivated olive tree on which were grafted the branches of the wild olive tree, which are Gentiles.” (Notes, VI, 25).

> "Christians must feel themselves to be brothers of all men; this obligation is all the more compelling when they find themselves facing those who belong to the Jewish people. [...]. Whoever meets Jesus Christ, meets Judaism. [...] The Jewish religion is not 'extrinsic', but in a certain way is intrinsic to our religion. We thus have a connection to it which we have with no other religion. You are our favourite brothers, and in a way we could say 'our older brothers'." (John?Paul II at the Roman Synagogue, April 13, 1986).

The well?known French theologian, Y. Congar, in reply to the question "Can one, from a Christian point of view, content oneself with according to Judaism the same place as to Islam?"[28] declared: "The parallel is not justified. Basically, Islam presents us with no internal questions, whereas Judaism does. We carry Judaism within us. Islam is exterior to Christianity, while Judaism is interior, at least at its roots. Yet these roots are inseparable from what followed, because Judaism has continued, and what it has undergone since then also says something to us [...].

"There is, at least for those who know the Jewish religion, an evident renewal of its vitality [...], the greatness of a good people who have the Bible as their history, the Psalms as their prayer. Unquestionably there is a very deep renewal of Jewish thought. This thought can contribute much to our understanding of the Bible, of God, of man. [...], One of the great problems is precisely for us Christians and Catholics to make sense of Jewish vitality after Christ, since it is still creative."[29]

In an important meeting at Vallombrosa. (between Jews and Christians, July 9, 1984) Cardinal Martini, the Archbishop of Milan, also stressed this vitality and all that Christianity could receive from Judaism:

> "If the Christian Church feels called to be a critical conscience, especially in Europe, to warn of the tragic events and questions which beset all of us, then in this mission it will find the strength of the religious and moral doctrine of Judaism at its side. [...]. I am convinced that a profound knowledge of Judaism is vital for the Church, not only to overcome the long?standing ignorance and to favour a fruitful dialogue, but also to deepen its self?understanding.
>
> [...]. Every schism and division in the history of Christianity deprives the Church of possible precious contributions, and this produces a certain deficiency in the vital balance of the Christian community. If this is true for every great division in Church history, it is especially true of the first great schism which deprived the Church of the aid which would have come from the Jewish tradition."

He then cites some deficiencies or weaknesses in Christian practice which are the consequences of this absence.

More recently (in 1993), he continued this thought, concluding: "We have lost our Jewish roots, and this wound is still open. It is only by returning to Jerusalem that the Church will be healed."[30]

The French Jewish writer André Chouraqui arrives at the same conclusion: "I think that the great schism of the Church and Israel, by cutting Christianity off from its Hebrew roots, produced an unending series of misfortunes, hampered the course of history, and distorted true perspectives and the chances of salvation."

The Pontifical Biblical Conference expresses the same idea. "The wealth of Jewish learning placed at the service of the Bible, from its earliest origins until the present day, is an aid of vital

importance.” (18.11.1993)

In the same spirit, Cardinal Etchegaray, then Bishop of Marseilles, declared at the Synod of Bishops in Rome on October 4, 1983: “The Church, without losing anything of its originality, is becoming aware that the more sustenance it draws from its Jewish roots, the more it flourishes."

And the French Orthodox theologian, Olivier Clément, also declared during a prayer meeting (at the Church of Notre-Dame des Champs, on October 13, 1980) after the attack on the synagogue on Copernic Street in Paris:

> “Christians must tell their Jewish brothers how much they need them, how for us the destiny of the Jewish people remains bound to the mystery of salvation. We need them, because they bear an incomparable carnal and spiritual connivance with Scripture, because they know the solemn blessings which make a liturgy of life, because they underline the unity of man called by God, contrary to our disincarnating dualisms, and because they permit us to understand all the human truth of Jesus.”

> “We need them because they are still the destroyers of idols, the great denunciators of ideologies which threaten to close history on itself, even within Christianity, and that is why they have so often been called on to ‘sanctify the divine Name’ in the precise, tragic sense, which this expression has in Jewish tradition (the martyr’s death).”

This manner of thinking, expressed by such leading personalities as these, is not a mere matter of personal opinion. An official text such as the Notes also stresses the fact that Judaism is still very alive:

> "Israel’s history does not finish in the year 70. It will continue especially through a numerous Diaspora which will allow Israel to bear witness – often heroic – to the whole world of its fidelity to the one God and to ‘exalt Him before all the living’ (Tob.13.4) while preserving the memory of the land of their forebears at the heart of their hope (Seder Pesach). [...]. It will be noticed how this permanence of Israel is accompanied by a continuous spiritual creativity, in the rabbinical period, in the Middle Ages and in modem times starting from a patrimony which for a long time had been common to us, so much so that ‘the faith and religious life of the Jew such as they are professed and lived can still help to a better comprehension of certain aspects of the life of the Church’ (John?Paul II, March 6, 1982).” (Notes, par.25).

The document of the French Episcopal committee of Easter 1973 already stated this:

> “We shall endeavour to present this people’s vocation as the ‘sanctification of the Name’ [in a general sense]. This is one of the essential dimensions of the synagogal prayer by which the Jewish people, invested with a priestly mission (E.Y 19.6), offers every human action to God and gives Him glory. This vocation makes the life of the, Jewish people a benediction for all the nations of the earth.” “[...] A feeling for the transcendence and faithfulness of God, His justice and mercy, for repentance and pardon for transgressions are fundamental traits of the Jewish tradition. Christians who claim to have the same values would be wrong in thinking that they no longer have anything to gain from Jewish spirituality."

Here we are far from the idea of a Jewish people who, having played their role of preparation, have

disappeared from the scene.[31]

A Testimony of living Faith

It may be of interest to cite some examples of this spiritual vitality of Judaism.

Christians are always impressed when they encounter ‘synagogal prayer’, prayer that a Christian could make his own almost entirely, including as it does Psalms, praise, and appeal to God’s mercy. This praise takes up an entire Saturday morning; a Jew at prayer does not look at his watch. During a period of 10 to 30 days, according to different traditions, before the Days of Awe Jewish New Year), at 3 o’clock in the morning many little synagogues already resound with Psalms and appeals to the God of mercy.

There are also all the blessings which give rhythm to the life of the religious Jew. Every occasion is an opportunity to thank God for what He is continually giving. For the blessing is not a formula which would bestow a sacred character on an object. It is a formula of praise to God for his unending gifts.

There is a basic acknowledgment of the absolute sovereignty of God over all things: nothing belongs to us; and we praise and thank God for all that comes from Him. After the blessing we can enjoy these things. The following are some examples: “Blessed art thou, Lord, King of the universe who hath chosen us – who giveth us this bread – who healeth the sick – who brings joy to the newly?married – who hath kept us living until this day, until this feast – who h;3th sanctified us with thy commandments and who hath ordained that we should carry out this act.” Thus, God is praised when one awakes in the morning, when one lights the Sabbath candles, when one eats the first fruits of the season, when one sees the sea, or any wondrous natural phenomenon, or the beauty of nature, or when one receives good or bad news. On reading the ‘prayers after Communion’ at the end of the Roman Catholic Mass, we wonder: instead of the thanksgiving which would be so appropriate, we find above all prayers of request. Louis Bouyer, a well?known theologian and liturgist. draws attention to the fact that Jewish prayer always begins by giving thanks before asking for more.

Other riches of Judaism include the liturgy both in the synagogue and in the family. The different feasts mentioned in the Bible (Lv. 16.29; Deut. 16.1?17, Ex. 23. 116; and alluded to in the Gospels (John 2.13?22; 7.2; 10.22; Luke 21.1?7, etc) give rhythm to Jewish life throughout the years. Moreover they are celebrated in such a concrete fashion that they impress the mind and engrave their profound meaning on young and old alike. A few examples:

> ? Rosh Hashana (New Year) is the day when God’s awesome majesty is proclaimed by his people – with references to the Creation and to the Last Judgment, with the sound of the Shofar. This instrument, a ram’s horn, unites the living experience of the present with that of ancient times.
> – Yom Kippur (the day of Atonement) follows; even the recognition of God as King is not enough, for human actions often fall short of the brave words. So the next step is confession of one’s own inadequacy, and the request for God’s forgiveness. The day is marked by a 25?hour fast, and for many by day?long prayer. In Israel, total calm reigns nationwide, and traffic remains at a standstill (except in cases of emergency).
> – Sukkot (the Feast of Tents or Tabernacles: near house each family builds a little hut where meals are eaten during eight days; the father explains the wandering in the desert, the precariousness of life, the extent to which God is our sole support.
> - Simhat Torah (the joy of the Torah): after the service in the synagogue, when the reading of the Torah has been completed and started once again recommenced with the account of the Creation (Genesis), the Torah scrolls are taken from the Holy Ark and a procession is

formed with dancing and circling around inside the synagogue. This is continued outside in the town squares, and in Jerusalem also on the plaza in front of the Western Wall. One is struck by the fervor and simple joy of children and adults, by the concentration of the aged men who dance with little steps, their eyes closed, the Torah in their arms.

This fervour was present, too, in those Jews who, even when penned up in trains on their way to Birkenau, still danced on the eve of Simhat Torah. It could be observed, too, in those Jews in a death camp, who, having no Torah scroll to dance with, found a small boy and asked him to recite the Shema Israel (the Jewish declaration of faith in the One God of Israel – Deut. 6:4). After the boy had demonstrated he could recite it, they cried joyfully: “We have a Torah”, and, taking him in their arms, they danced!”

? The Seder (Passover Meal) which may last for three hours or more, where the father of the family is the celebrant at the head of the table, where the children are not bored because they play an active role. Each one takes a turn in reading, questioning or replying, and everyone sings. Each of the participants must “consider himself as actually, today, leaving Egypt and being delivered from slavery.” When a Christian has the chance to participate in the Seder, he is impressed by this relaxed and joyful family liturgy, one which feels like a religious act commemorating God’s great deeds. For us also it is a very expressive reminder of what the Last Supper of Jesus, with his disciples, must have been.

– The Shabbat rest (Saturday) which, starting late Friday afternoon, restores calm to the Jewish quarter, or, in Israel, to the whole country, the large cities included. The minute prohibitions of all ‘work’ – which many do not observe strictly ? should not obscure the beneficial results of the application of this rule: it permits true relaxation and frees one so that one can turn to God (prayer, study) or at least reflect on one’s life, and enjoy one’s family. On Friday evening, the family, dressed in festive clothing, is gathered round the table and the father says the kiddush, a benediction on the wine and bread: “Blessed are you [...] who has created the fruit of the vine; blessed are you [...] who has given bread from the earth.” This the Church has adopted[32] for the Offertory of the Mass in the recent liturgical reform.

Another noticeable characteristic of the Jewish people: the faithful transmission of the sacred treasure from father to son. This is one of the strengths of Judaism. It is this fidelity to the precept of the Torah: “You shall repeat[33] them to your children” (Deut. 6.7), which – aided by the living family liturgy recalled above – has kept this people true to its faith, to its conviction of being the people of the Covenant, through so many wanderings and persecutions. Recently, the film of an amateur reporter on North Yemen showed us a little Jewish community long lost from the public eye; we saw an old master holding the hand of a little child and chanting to him by heart long passages of the Torah in Hebrew, which the child repeated after him verse by verse.

Some other concrete examples will help us to grasp something of the behaviour of the faithful Jew:

– The aged Israeli writer Agnon, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, even in the emotion of that solemn moment, did not forget to recite a benediction of thanksgiving to God; he started by citing the Talmud: “One has no right to enjoy the good things of this world without having blessed the Most?High."

– This sense of blessing, of thanking God, is also found in a popular song. A well-known Israeli singer sings on the radio:

Thank you for all that you have created,
Thank you for all that you have given me,
Thank you for my eyesight,
For a friend or two,
For all that I have here below,
For a song which rings out,
For a heart which forgives,
Thanks to which I am alive.

Another well?known song also expresses the same sentiments:

Hallelujah, praise God to the world.
With this single word
The heart is filled
With an immense gratitude
For all that has been, O God,
And for all that will be.
Hallelujah!

– Even when everything seems to be crumbling, at the most tragic moments, there are the most beautiful testimonies. In an extermination camp, some staring Jews scarcely alive sent word around that one of them had remembered: “tomorrow is Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement, total fast)”, and the next day.. they fasted.

– Many were the Jews who went to the gas chambers singing Ani maamin (I believe) or the Shema’ Israel (Hear O Israel [...] the Lord is One).

– Before Yom Kippur, each person must, if possible, go and reconcile himself with those he has offended. This sense of forgiveness does exist, contrary to what Christians sometimes think. A woman interviewed on the radio, recounted how, while still a child, she was sent to a concentration camp. Four times she was destined for death by a ‘selection’ and sent to the gas chamber; four times she was sent back for one reason or another. She was asked: “What would you do if you were to meet Doctor Mengele (the terrible ‘selector’)?” She replied calmly: “Oh!... nothing. What I have experienced, one cannot wish on any other human being. I would simply take him to see our young people and say: ‘You see, you have not succeeded. We are still here’.”

Another domain where this spiritual vitality appears is, unquestionably, in biblical, philosophical and moral reflection. In these domains Jewish research and publications by Jews are increasing. Conferences of qualified professors in the Israeli universities, especially in Jerusalem, attract non?Jewish students each year. The Pontifical Biblical Institute of the Jesuits has integrated these into their study program. Cardinal Martini said in Vallombrosa: “I remember how I was able, when I was a rector of the Biblical Institute, to start such a cultural exchange between priests studying at the Biblical Institute from all parts of the world and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Some of our students went to the Hebrew University with Jewish scholars as their teachers. [...] It is necessary that such initiatives be extended to the greatest possible number of dioceses, to ecclesiastical communities and groups, so that the ignorance that has separated us, not without responsibility on our part, may in the future be gradually healed."

Every morning on the radio there are commentaries on the Bible and the Mishnah, and on Friday afternoon one hears the commentary on the portion of the Torah which will be read in the synagogue on the following day.

We should also mention the many contemporary Jewish writers and thinkers such as Abraham Heschel (God in Search of man, and others works), Elie Wiesel (Cardinal Lustiger, Archbishop of Paris, underlines in a recent article the theological dimension of his work[34]) , André Neher, the psychoanalyst Viktor FrankI (The unconscious God), the philosopher Levinas, a personal acquaintance of Pope John?Paul II, etc. There is also René Cassin, a moral figure, who drew up the universal Declaration of the Rights of Man. And we cannot forget the Jews who struggled so often in history for the rights of the oppressed, such as Ruth Fried, the heroine of the film A World Apart; she was imprisoned several times and finally died, the victim of an attack by those opposed to her struggle for the Blacks of South Africa; and many others. Nelson Mandela recently said to a group of Jews in his country, “With you, I never felt that you saw me as black.”

Israel today

After such a positive ? if all too brief ? picture of Jewish spirituality, an obvious question presents itself... given the behaviour of the State of Israel in the recent past: Isn’t our view of the Jewish people far too idealized and theoretical?

We can only regret the violence shown, especially over the years since 1967, both in Israel and in the occupied territories. There have been dead on both sides. Yet it remains true that Israel, as the occupying power, bears the greater responsibility – and that far more Palestinians have died.

Nevertheless, before we judge, we must remember the political and historic context both recent and ancient; the wound borne by a people who saw the world stand by as they were systematically exterminated,[35] the hundreds of terrorist attacks launched from neighbouring countries, even before the 1967 occupation of the territories; the fear of rising Islamic fundamentalism, which has as its explicit goal the destruction of the Jewish state. The murders carried out by the Hamas in February 1996 and since, even once the peace process was well under way, only serve to reinforce this fear. Such acts encourage people to retreat to hard?line positions, which seem to them more likely to bring security.

But “there is no such thing as a clean occupation”, and “occupation (other than the suffering caused to the occupied population) is morally damaging to the occupier”, are among the slogans quoted by those Israelis opposed to the occupation and who struggle for peace.

There are numerous Israelis who find the situation unbearable, and who react and demonstrate. Newspapers and television constantly show the public an uncensored picture of current events.[36] This often generates a certain amount of soul?searching, which may lead to concrete action to redress past injustices or to prevent future ones.

A few examples:

– Known authors speak out against injustice, and remind the public of the moral questions involved – as did the prophets of the Bible. Popular singers call for peace, with lyrics evoking the dramatic (and often tragic) situations familiar to their audience.

– Recently, after a news broadcast on the tension with Syria, the radio played a Hebrew song:

> Your enemy is a man, just like you,
> He’s afraid, like you,
> He wants to live, like you,
> If you hold out your hand, he could become your friend,
> For your enemy’s a man, just like you...

– Doctors and lawyers form organizations to help Palestinians in difficulty. Soldiers, protest injustices seen during their service in the territories.

– The father of a young man who was kidnapped and murdered by Palestinians later sought out the father of his son's murderer. He wanted to meet him and effect a reconciliation. Ever since, he has been active in attempts to bring the two peoples closer together.

– A rabbi told his congregation before Passover: During the Passover meal we drink four cups of wine, of which one is the "cup of redemption" – which celebrates our redemption from slavery in Egypt and our entry as a free people into our country. But this entry led to a situation where another people is still waiting to live free, in their own country. So I suggest that we only drink half the cup until they attain that freedom."

And as the peace process continues, in spite of ups and downs and all?too?frequent setbacks, there is increased willingness shown on both sides to work together to build a new reality. It is clear that those opposed to the peace process, on both sides, feel the need to struggle yet harder against what they perceive as a tragic mistake. Yet there are also many signs of hope on an individual level, in small organizations formed to work towards peaceful coexistence.

All this, and countless other examples, show that a sense of the moral question involved remains (even if not as widespread as one could wish), and that it leads to concrete results.[37]

The Jewish people, who have received from God a mission and values to transmit to the world, may not always live up to his task – yet we have to learn from its existence and its struggle to remain faithful to God's call.[38]

The sufficiency of our Tradition

An objection may arise in the mind of the Christian believer: "Do we not have the ultimate revelation in the New Testament? What have we still to receive from our predecessors? Have we not understood the Bible until now?"

Assuredly, the Christian who could assimilate the entire contents of the Old and New Testaments (does such a person exist?) would possess incomparable riches. Yet when God opened to pagans the treasure which had first been revealed to Israel, he took each nation and each man in their primitive state, and made them progress patiently from age to age. He takes each one at the point where he is, and leads him by stages to a higher moral and spiritual level.

Today, the same thing is happening for many members of so?called 'Christian' nations. Is not the Christian in our modem world, who hears the Sunday gospel, very often one who has remained pagan in attitude, and whom God is trying to form gradually by means of his Word and his grace? The French writer Peguy has said: "An entire life is necessary for the baptismal waters poured on our heads to reach our feet." By analogy, the same thing could be said of nations.

Have we not sometimes skipped stages, when we read the words of Jesus without previously assimilating into our lives the basic teachings of the Old Testament? Undoubtedly, this is what happened to all those baptized people who became Nazis in spite of a traditional Christian education. The time?honoured meditation of the Hebrew scriptures by the Jews can help us to better understand what God requires of man, so that he may be 'more human' and better able to situate the person of Jesus and his teachings. This unique contribution explains the insistent tone of recent Church documents which make it a duty to know the Jewish scriptural tradition.[39]

The very refusal to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, Son of God, which astonishes us, is

presented with understanding by Orientations, with the remark, “(Catholics) will strive in the same way to understand the difficulties that the Jewish mind, justly impregnated with a very high and very pure notion of divine transcendence, experiences before the mystery of the Incarnate Word.”

This refusal of Jews to accept what appears to them idolatry and polytheism can even be a reminder to us of God’s uniqueness. In the New Testament, it is clear that Christ, the Son of God, the image of the invisible God in our midst (Col. 1.15), wishes to lead us to the Father: “I am the Way”, (John, 14.6). St. Paul expresses the final aim of Christ’s work as follows: “He will hand over the Kingdom to God the Father; [...] the Son Himself will be subject to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.” (I Cor. 15, 24, 28).

We are often surprised to see how faith in the divinity of Jesus leads people to make a quasi?mathematical equation and say “Jesus = God, thus God is Jesus”, which seems to exempt Christians – this is found even in devotional books – from addressing God the Father and from giving Him the central place in their prayer and in their relationship with God.[40]

In many other domains, Jewish thought can help, not only towards a better understanding of the Bible, but also to reflect on the great problems of human life: genetics, euthanasia, etc... Recently a young Christian doctor wrote his doctoral thesis at Paris on “medical ethics according to the Jewish tradition”. Also, the ethical commission of the Faculty of Medicine of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem insists on having Christians among its members. Such a collaboration between Jews and Christians, which Cardinal Martini called for at Vallombrosa, and which is recommended by the Notes (par. 11), may well prove to be enriching for both parties.

Christian Identity

From what has been said, it is understood that this work has no intention of making the Christian forget his own spiritual richness. It is simply a matter of completing or correcting the picture. Indeed:

? knowledge of the painful past, which we called for in the first section is a necessary first step, in order to place us in a genuine position vis?a?vis our elder brother; but it cannot make us forget all that Christians, faithful to Christ’s message, have done throughout the course of human History. We are conscious of this and rightly proud of it.

– likewise, the desire to at last recognize the spiritual riches of our Jewish brothers, and what we can learn from their example, does not mean that we should underestimate our own treasure. It is noteworthy that after such a past the official Church and Christian groups, which are becoming more and more numerous, are striving for a radical change in their outlook and their attitude in this domain and in others. Such renewal is translated into various initiatives, and seems to us proof of both spiritual vitality and of the activity of the Spirit of God.

Conclusion

Paul said to the Ephesians (2.14.16): “He has made the two nations one, breaking down the wall that was a barrier between us, the enmity (between Jews and pagans); he killed the hostility.” As we have seen, the history of Christianity has shown a very poor response to this Jesus’ desire. We must now try to fulfill it, each in his on way: to discover Jesus’ brothers, his people; to express our regret for the past and the firm resolution to do all that is possible to prevent the repetition of such errors; finally to repair past wrongs by a fraternal attitude.

The openness to the spiritual and intellectual treasures of our Jewish brother, proposed by the foregoing texts, is the best way to put these good intentions into practice.

It will require a sustained effort and much patience on both sides. Are we capable of it? Nothing is impossible for God." (Jer. 32.17, 27) – "What is impossible for man is possible for God." (Lk. 18.7). He alone can realize in us and among us this hope. He alone can open our hearts and teach us to love the other by understanding him.[41] We must pray for this, and set about our task.

If we are united in a common effort of fidelity to God's will for all of us, and in a common witness to the One God, our common Father, and his love for mankind (each of us created in His image), we can hope that God will make His kingdom come, as we all ask in the Kaddish or in the Our Father:

May the Great Name be magnified	Our Father who art in heaven,
and sanctified	Hallowed be thy Name,
May he establish his Kingdom	Thy kingdom come.

APPENDIX

I. The word "Jews" in the Gospel of St John

The problem of the word "Jews", or rather of the Greek word Ioudaioi in St John, is central. In fact, it is mainly John's words about "the Jews" which have nurtured ? and still nurture ? the stereotypes and negative generalizations about the Jewish people. There is here, basically, a very serious error in translation. Specialists[42] have written on this subject and their conclusions may be summarized as thus:

In John's Gospel Ioudaioi does not designate the whole people. Thus the crowd (7, 13) does not dare to speak openly "for fear of the Ioudaioi" ? who then is this crowd? And the parents of the man born blind do not dare to reply "for fear of the Ioudaioi". So the crowd, and the parents of the man born blind are certainly Jews,, in the sense that we understand this word today, but they were not Ioudaioi.

This latter term, as is clear here; designates the group of adversaries of Jesus, more especially the Sadducees, the religious authorities of the Temple, with their partisans and their servants. This comes out still more clearly in the comparison of the following texts:

In Matt, 21,23, the chief priests and the elders asked Jesus by what right he acted thus; in the parallel text in John 2:18 it is the Ioudaioi who asked this question.

In John 11, 47?49, Caiaphas speaks to the chief priests and the Pharisees, and John 18, 14 recalls his words saying "this is what Caiaphas said to the Ioudaioi".

In John 19, 6, the chief priests and the guards argue with Pilate. He answers them, then : then these same people, now referred to in short as Ioudaioi, answer him (John 19:7).

We can see that it was a conventional word used for a well?defined group. Originally this word perhaps may have the Judeans, as shown in John 11, 8, where Jesus said: "Let us go back to Judaea (Ioudaia)". His disciples were astonished: "The Ioudaioi wanted to stone you, and you are going back there?"

The Jewish historian Josephus Flavius, contemporary of the Gospels, sometimes uses this word in this sense of Judaeans' in opposition to the rest of the people. The adversaries of Jesus were mainly the Sadducees, the religious authorities, guardians of the Temple of Jerusalem, and the local term Ioudaioi may have become a synonym for this hostile group. Likewise in the language of the Essenes, in the Damascus Document, we find these terms Ioudaioi and 'country of Judaea'

indicating the adversaries, the party opposed to the sect of Qumran.

There is, however, a different usage where Ioudaioi means ‘Jewish’ in general; non-Jews use it speaking about the Jews, and the Jews employ this word to speak about themselves when speaking to strangers (they use the vocabulary of the strangers): Pilate, the Samaritan woman, Jesus answering her, the Roman soldiers, John when explaining Jewish rites to his non?Jewish readers, etc.

The same usage is found in the first book of the Maccabees: the leaders of the nations address their letters to “nation of the Jews” (10, 23; 11, 30; 13, 36; etc.) and Judas Maccabeus himself uses this term when writing to the Romans (8, 20). But the book constantly refers to Israel and the Israelites (1, 30; 1, 53; 13, 26; 13, 41; 14, 26; etc.).

Likewise Jesus designates the righteous Nathanael as “a true son of Israel”, a typical “true Israelite” (John 1, 47).

In the following centuries, the Nations projected the negative sense of the word Ioudaioi – which we find in John – on the whole Jewish people. To give an example: on Palm Sunday the Byzantine Liturgy says: ‘The children sang for you, but the Jews insulted you”, and on Good Friday in the Philippines a scenic play passes through the streets, Jesus is approached by various groups, the Jews who insult or accuse him, and the pious women who comfort him.

In using these stereotypes one forgets:

– that Jesus himself, Mary his mother and the Apostles were all Jewish;

– that the people who followed Jesus, Mary and the Apostles, the children on Palm Sunday, the pious women, the first 8,000 disciples, and Gamaliel who defended the Apostles before the Sanhedrin, were all Jews (in the present-day sense of the word).]

– that many Jews living at that time were already dispersed in the Mediterranean countries before the Passion (of which they had no knowledge).

It is therefore inexact to translate Ioudaioi of the Gospel of John by the word ‘Jews’ when it clearly indicates not all the people, but rather a group of adversaries. Certain translations have tried to draw attention to this special meaning by writing Jews in italics, or by adding a footnote. Unfortunately, neither the italics nor the notes are heard in a public reading! Therefore certain recent translations have at last taken the initiative of using an appropriate rather than a word?for?word translation.[43]

It is to be hoped that in public readings and sermons a way will be found which will break with this century?old custom. The very serious consequences which it has had for so many Jews make it a duty for us to make this effort.

II. What does the cross symbolize?

The recent developments surrounding the Auschwitz Carmelite monastery (June 1989) show that Christians need a clearer understanding of what the cross means to Jews.

We already mentioned the number of persecutions which took place under the sign of the cross – the Crusaders’ cross, the cross in Inquisition torture chambers, the cross in the hand of monks around the stake, and again the cross used as a symbol of Nazi-linked fascist movements (the cross of the Hungarians, the white cross of Lueger’s Christian-socialist party in Austria, St Michael’s cross in Rumania, the fascist cross in Lettonia).

The cross, used as a sign of the "'Jews' guilt", thus became a sign of Jewish suffering. We also see this expressed in art, such as the Rhenanian stained?glass window (luckily moved from the church to the city museum), showing a crucified Christ holding a lance which stabs a Jew through the heart (!); the Jew's "punishment" for the crucifixion.

A recent story will best serve to illustrate the instinctive Jewish reaction to the symbol of the cross. A few years ago, a nun working in Christian?Jewish relations went to a meeting, and sat next to the American Rabbi Tannenbaum. She wore a necklace with a cross and, guessing what this might mean to her neighbour, she asked, "Rabbi, I hope this doesn't bother you?". The Rabbi gently answered, "Sister, let me tell you a story: when I was a child in Eastern Europe, one Good Friday the Christians were walking in their holiday procession. They seized my uncle, who was appropriately thirty?three years old, forced him to walk in front of the cross, and so pushed him to the river, and into the river, until he drowned... do you see what the cross means to me, sister?"

There's also the story of a Jew who was asked "what's that scar on your arm?" – "It was broken, he said, by blows with a cross!"

For the Jewish people, the crucifixion and the symbol of the cross are both, over the centuries, tied to the same accusation of "killing Christ" which was the pretext for much suffering.

The large cross recently placed at the entrance to Auschwitz (near the Carmelite convent), and the expression used by Pope John?Paul II when he called Auschwitz "the Golgotha of the world" – both of these remind the Christians of the link between human suffering and that of Christ. Unfortunately, many Jews see these references as a reminder of their "guilt", as if one were saying, "What happened to you here was because of the crucifixion!" Christians will be astounded by this, but the wound is so deep, after all the centuries, that it is hardly surprising to see such a reaction.

Christians tend to see all human suffering as tied to that of Christ crucified; suffering borne in courage and faith is often heroism – and, above all, rather than being a failure, it leads to resurrection. This whole aspect of the crucifixion is not obvious to non?Christians, and "casual", or unexplained, references to human suffering in such Christian terms are often misunderstood by others. In any case, it may well be true that Christians all too often forget to affirm that suffering in itself is evil, that God does not wish it, and that Jesus too did not seek it. Job's cry of rebellion against his incomprehensible suffering remains true for us all.

All these painful misunderstandings may well prove an opportunity for us to reconsider – not the essential value of this our faith, but its possible distortion, and a problematic way of speaking of suffering, specially that of others.

The cross was not a symbol used by the first Christians; in those first centuries, it was too much the specific instrument of torture and death. The cross remains, to us, the symbol of ultimate love and of that love's triumph over death – but this does not mean that we can ignore its harsher aspects.

III. The Uniqueness of the Shoah

When one speaks of the Shoah today, one thinks at once of other genocides perpetrated in the past, and in the last few years in particular. And, indeed, it is true that the Shoah is viewed today as one case of genocide among others. This requires some explanation.

Firstly, it is true that the Shoah is not the first case of wholesale massacre of human beings in history; nor, alas, will it be the last. Every generation has known these horrors. A mother cradling her son after his throat has been cut experiences the same heartbreak, no matter what period or

what country she is living in. It's not a matter of numbers – so many thousands, so many millions.

We cannot compare different incidences of indescribable suffering, we cannot weigh up the number of dead.

Nevertheless, an in-depth examination of the circumstances of the Shoah obliges us to emphasize its unique character. Let us repeat: it's not a matter of numbers, nor of the degree of suffering undergone by the tortured victims, or of the grief experienced by the family members who survived them.

So what is it a matter of?

1) The plan to exterminate the People of the Covenant

The Nazi plan went beyond the extermination of a population, as Pope John-Paul II notes: "Racism is the negation of human identity at the very deepest level [...] To the moral spite which attends every genocide is added, in the case of the Shoah, the malice of a hatred which challenges God's plan for Man's salvation." (31.10.1997).

Father Dujardin develops these ideas in two articles from which the following extracts are drawn:[44]

"If one considers [...] the motives, the Shoah has its own distinctive characteristics. Nazi anti-Semitism has no political, economic or social basis. This does not mean that political, economic and social factors were not used as excuses for persecution; they belong to the traditional forms of anti-Semitism, and the Nazis revived and re-used them."

"A racial struggle, or a religious conflict? Nazi anti-Semitism is indisputably racial in nature, as it fits in with a racial perception of the world, but it is more than that. Hitler actually perceived the Jewish religion, which is identified with the Jewish race, to be a mortal danger for the Aryan race, quite independently of purely racial considerations. He reproached Judaism with having invented and introduced into Western civilization an ethic of total respect for human life, of the equality of human dignity, of fraternity. The Jews, he says, invented "conscience". This morality is totally incompatible with the notion of a racial hierarchy and the plan for eventual Aryan domination. From this point of view, the Shoah is not just one genocide among others: it is a deliberately anti-ethical act. Jewish ethics are founded upon monotheism."

"One may therefore ask oneself if the conflict is not religious rather than racial in nature. Here we have two opposing religious and philosophical conceptions of the universe: on the one hand, the vision to which Judaism and the Judeo-Christian tradition subscribe; and on the other, the Nazi vision, that is, an attempt to reconstruct humanity in the image of animality by the application of natural selection as defined by Darwin. This conception results in a different type of morality, a different values system which carries violence, instinct and war to extremes, as natural and spontaneous expressions of human existence.

There is a multitude of texts which can be quoted in support of this view of the world. 'We shall stop humanity on the road it has travelled after taking a wrong turning. There is no truth in the domain of morality any more than there is in that of science. The word crime is a relic from an outmoded world. One must trust one's instincts.' Or: 'Those who believe National Socialism to be nothing more than a political movement know very little about it. National Socialism is more than a religion: it is the desire to create a new man.'"

"Rauschning quotes Hitler as saying:[45] 'There cannot be two chosen peoples. We are God's

people. [...] Two worlds are in confrontation, the men of God and the men of Satan. The Jew is the anti-man [...], an unnatural being. We must create a new type of man, who knows and feels that God is within him.'"

"Hitler's view of the significance of Jewish existence meant that children had to be killed because they were the future, women had to be killed or sterilized because they produced life and conferred identity; and the old, too, had to be killed, because they embodied memory. Such a logic of death could not help but lead to the decision to deprive the Jews of any form of burial, and to the desire to wipe out every trace of their existence."

And so even the traces of the communal graves had to be obliterated by planting forests over them, so that humanity would forget that there had even been such a people, with their ideas of God and the Bible and their strict moral demands.

For Hitler, if the Slavs were Untermenschen (sub-humans), the Jews were Unmenschen (non-humans). They were "a poison, the germ of an epidemic", a view which led to the use of insecticide gas, and to the Nazis' conviction that they were engaged in purifying humanity. And they did this without any qualms: "My crime is no crime, because the man I kill is not a man."

2) The methods used

The Shoah is exceptional also in terms of the means employed by the Nazis in order to carry out their designs. This was not an outburst of hatred by one people against another, a massive slaughter designed to ensure sole rights to an area of territory, to the exclusion of another people or another race. This was a case of methodical planning, carried out coldly over a period of years, on a national scale. "Never before had methods reached such a degree of perversity: all the wheels and mechanisms of a legally recognized state were used, its administration, its bureaucracy, its public and private services (railways and travel agencies)."

The result: Six million people exterminated, including one million children, year after year, in various European countries, "quietly", with little opposition from the Great Powers and no attempt at rescue from abroad.

The traumatic effect of this on Jewish consciousness, already bruised and battered by so many centuries of humiliation and massacre in the Christian world, can scarcely be overemphasized. Many years must still pass before the Jewish heart can free itself from its fears and regain confidence.

3) A unique case, an exemplary case

Despite the exceptional nature of the Shoah as emphasized above, it is clear that it also shares points in common with other cases of genocide in the past and present. An extreme case, the Shoah has to be seen as a reference point, a warning for all humanity that nothing of this kind must ever happen again. It helps us to "hear better what the other genocides do not tell us". It should show us the eventual outcome of racism, contempt for human life and the crazed exaltation of a superman who dominates others and defies God and His love for every human being created in His image.

IV. John-Paul II's Prayer for the Jewish People

On the afternoon of Friday, 11 June 1998, Pope John-Paul II went to meditate at the monument to the victims of the Holocaust erected in 1988 on the site from which 300,000 inhabitants of the

Warsaw ghetto were sent to the concentration camps in 1942-43. The Pope, surrounded by members of the Jewish community, remained silent for a long while before pronouncing the following prayer:

> “God of Abraham, God of the Prophets, God of Jesus Christ, in You everything is to be found; towards You, everything gravitates; You are the limit to all things.
> Answer our prayer for the Jewish people whom You continue to cherish for the sake of their forefathers
> Awake in them an ever keener desire to penetrate more deeply Your truth and Your love.
> Help them so that, in their striving for peace and justice, they be sustained in their great mission of revealing Your blessing to the world.
> May they encounter respect and love among those who do not yet understand their suffering, as they do among those who sympathies with the piercing wounds which have been inflicted upon them; and may mutual respect prevail.
> Remember the new generations, the children of all ages: may they continue to be faithful to You in what constitutes the exceptional mystery of their vocation. Inspire them so that humanity understands, with the help of their testimony, that all peoples share a single origin and a single end: God, who intends His salvation to extend to all humankind. Amen.”

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[1] A French historian who lost his family in the Shoah. His meeting with Pope John XXIII had a decisive influence on the Church’s new approach to the Jews. See Bibliography.
[2] The word Holocaust is quite inappropriate, since in the Bible it means a burnt offering, a voluntary sacrifice offered to God to please Him! The Hebrew word Shoah (literally “catastrophe” is used in Israel and it seems better to keep it for this terrible event, which was surely neither voluntary nor pleasing to God. As to the uniqueness of the Shoah, see *Crime contre l’humanité,* by André Frossard, Laffont, Paris 1987; and Appendix III.
[3] Edward Flannery is an American priest, a former delegate of the American Episcopate for relations with Judaism. His book, the subtitle of which is “23 centuries of anti- Semitism”, is a serious and well-balanced historical study. The contradictory criticisms which reproach him either his severity to the Church authorities, or, on the contrary, his tendency to excuse them, are undoubtedly a proof of his effort at objectivity. This objectivity is a reason that many of the facts quoted here are taken from his book.
[4] A major centre of Aramean Christianity, now Urfa in Southern Turkey
[5] Yet, some years later, in 1496, Pope Borgia congratulated him, and wrote that he “cherished him from the depth of his heart for the immense work

accomplished for the exaltation of the faith" (Lea, 1, 1220).
[6] On 11 January 1998, Father Michel Kubler, editor of *La Croix*, wrote, in a courageous examination of conscience with regard to this unenlightened past: "The editors [of *La Croix*] had at that time a totally inexcusable attitude [...] which must not be forgotten, and for which we must repent."
[7] Only 46 years had passed since the Mortara affair: a Jewish child was baptized secretly by his governess and taken from his family in 1858 by the Papal police. His parents were never able to get him back. Raised as a Christian, he became a priest.
[8] The recent declarations of Paul VI and of John-Paul II are written in another tone. John-Paul II repeated at Miami on 11.9.1987: "For the Jews living in the State of Israel we should implore (from God) security and a just tranquility, which are the prerogatives of every nation." We can only applaud the December 1993 agreement between the Vatican and Israel, which finally rectified an abnormal situation greatly resented by citizens from all walks of life.
[9] The Jews who were saved remember with great thankfulness those who helped. But these cases are drowned in the mass of horrors which led to the death of 6 million Jews and left so many survivors traumatized for life; so much so that the Jewish public as a whole are often unaware of the extent to which there was help. It is understandable, for the negative happenings were terrible, and injured people recall the blows received rather than the rare smiles. Besides, good is often inconspicuous, and crime resounds more loudly than good actions.
[10] Quotation from John 8, 44. Concerning the word 'Jews' in the Gospel of John, see Appendix I at the end of the book.
[11] Such a reaction, sadly, was not uncommon. An additional case is reported by Rabbi Safran, Chief Rabbi of Romania during this period: when he asked a Catholic priest in Bucharest for help, the priest refused because "the Jews' misfortune is the consequence of their sin in killing Jesus."
[12] The reader who would like a more detailed view can refer to specialized historical works. We thought it useful to give a very condensed general view, to provide a basis for the reflections developed afterwards. It must also be stressed that we are addressing Catholics, therefore we have spoken principally of Catholic countries; and hence the absence of references to anti-Semitism. in Orthodox countries. Also, due to the lack of documents, or so as not to make this text too long, we have limited our description to certain countries, omitting Austria, Lithuania, Ukraine, etc.
[13] Father Dujardin, secretary of the French Episcopal commission for relations with Judaism, presented this document to the recent Oxford colloquium on the Shoah in 1988. He emphasizes, among other things, the *unique nature* of the Shoah. This is discussed further in Appendix III.
[14] There are, of course, many other reasons for anti-Semitism: sociological and economical circumstances, popular superstitions, rivalry and jealousy, etc., as in every society where different groups are in opposition. Moreover, it can be understood that the Jews often collaborated with those who had a more liberal attitude towards them than that of the Church, and who fought against her influence. However, these habitual factors of tension and rivalries could never by themselves explain the violence and the abundance of the reactions. They have often been orchestrated and intensified, as we have seen, by theological arguments justifying the worst treatments.
[15] We could quote other similar steps: Mgr Calvet, archbishop of Numea, New Caledonia, spoke of the suffering and injustice inflicted on the Melanesian people, who were forced by missionaries to abandon part of their culture. "The Gospel requires of us that we ask for forgiveness" (January 1994).
[16] Among other things, the diffidence of many expressions in the document is regrettable, for example: "anti-Jewish sentiments in *certain* Christian circles" – "this culminated *sometimes* in expulsions and sometimes even in massacres" – "one can *ask oneself* whether or not Nazi persecution was perhaps facilitated by anti-Jewish prejudice engrained in *certain* Christian minds [...] these cases should be answered *individually*." This serious question is not addressed. But emphasis is laid on the assistance provided by *so many* brave men, while it is conceded that others did not rise to the occasion.
On the subject of Christian attitudes to Jews in the past, it is "the prevalent attitude toward *minorities"* which is emphasized, with the added observation that "the Jews remained faithful to their religious traditions, and were, in consequence, an object of suspicion and distrust." Was this simply a case of tension between *the people* and a minority which *behaved* differently, such as we encounter today in various countries throughout the world? The role of the Christian hierarchy and of the official Christian teaching of deicide is never mentioned, nor is the connection between these teachings and the "mob" violence in both the Nazi period and in the periods which preceded it. This link, which we have taken pains to emphasize throughout this book, is generally recognized today.
Apart from this, in the Rome text *We remember,* the attitude of the German Church during the Holocaust is presented only in a positive light. This is in contrast to the courageous declarations made by the German bishops after the war, acknowledging the grave failings of the German Church during the extermination of the Jews. The text has many other weak points, and it is understandable that many Jews were disappointed, but let us, nevertheless, try to see everything in it that is positive and which can serve as a basis for reflection for Christians throughout the world, since this text is directed at them.
[17] An expression which is not in the New Testament.
[18] For chapter 9-11 of the Epistle to the Romans, refer to the works of Fr. Lovsky, Michel de Goedt, Michel Remaud, etc. (see Bibliography). We will speak of it later.
[19] This seems evident to those who know how Judaism is lived. And yet how often is this casual opposition of the First and the New Testaments found in certain commentaries and missals, and a good number of sermons. This is sadly reminiscent of the attitude which Jesus reproached in the religious man who said:: "I thank you God, that I am not like the rest of mankind..." (Luke 18, 11).
[20] In fact, there is progress and increasing depth as we go from one text to the next, even if a particular sentence from a recent text seems to regress in comparison to preceding ones. Michel Remaud describes this process with the aid of a parable: "When the tide is rising on the shore, each wave goes a little further than the preceding one. But the front of the wave is never really in a straight line: it can happen that in one spot or another, the water stops lower don than the line already marked by the preceding wave. This line is not erased, it remains as an indication of a point already attained. Elsewhere on the shore the same wave will mark a new advance."
[21] Romans 11, 17-24. This image of the olive tree, of certain branches cut off and others grafted on, is not to be interpreted in a simplistic and global manner. If the branches which have been cut off represent for Paul "hose who did not believe", can we say which, in the history of the Jews, have been faithful and which unfaithful in the light of God? Also, in the same Epistle, Paul passes from one image to another, from one set of words to another: the whole section gives the impression of contradiction, while in fact the different passages complete and correct one another.
[22] Published on 24.6.1985. A text that every catechist should have read. From now on it is impossible to teach Christianity without having assimilated this basic text as in paragraph 2 of the *Notes* "Because of the unique relations that exist between Christianity and Judaism [...], Jews and Judaism should not occupy an occasional and marginal place in catechesis, but their presence there is *essential* and should be organically integrated."
[23] "The people [...] are tending [...]"; the French text, which is the original, says: "Le Peuple tend (is tending), est divisé (is divided)..." in the singular.
[24] The word "Old" means also 'antique' and the *Notes* use the word 'Old Testament' because it is traditional, and because 'old' does not necessarily mean lapsed or exceeded
[25] And without doubt many other upright and sincere men "whose faith is known to God alone" (Missal). But this other aspect, explicitly mentioned by the Council, is not the subject of this study.
[26] In fact, it seems that Jesus repeatedly conveyed this same message to his disciples. He tells that which they need to know for *themselves. "*It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has fixed..." (Acts 1:7). "Lord, will those who are saved be few? – Strive to enter by the narrow door!" (Luke 23:23-24). When Peter asks him about John, Jesus answers, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? (As for you,) follow me!" (John 21:22). The French *Traduction œcuménique de la Bible* comments, "Peter should concentrate on his own mission, without worrying about that which Jesus chose to leave unsaid." By analogy, one could say the same thing with regard to God's plan for Israel – which Paul, moreover, called a mystery -: "What God wants from this people and when and how He will fulfill his design is not for you (Christians) to decide. As for *you*, be faithful to me in your own life."
[27] "If the Lord has chosen you, it was not because you outnumbered other peoples; you were the least of all peoples [...]. Be sure that it is not for any goodness of yours that the Lord gives you this rich Land to possess" (Deut. 7.7-9.6).
[28] In countries as in France where there is a large Moslem minority, there is a tendency to put 'the three monotheistic religions' on the same plane without noticing this essential difference. It is comprehensible that fraternal acceptance is a duty for all men, and it is also exact that the Christian faith has common points with the belief of Islam in one God. But the desire of universal love must not make us lose sight of the unique place of Judaism for Christians.
[29] In *Entretiens d'Automne* Y.M. Congar, Cerf, Paris 1987, p. 52, 551. A Jewish friend of mine reacted to Congar's idea of a 'renewed vitality' by saying: 'What is new is really the Christians' discovery (partially due to new translations) of a vitality which Judaism never lost."
[30] About the role of the Jewish people, see also John-Paul's prayer in Appendix IV.
[31] The notes in certain editions of the Bible still reflect this conception, even if is only by using the past tense of verbs: "The Jews used to pray, used to recite the Hallel at the Passover meal [...]". It is as if one were speaking of an ancient people who no longer exist. Certainly there has been notable progress made in books of Catholic teaching since Vatican II, but there is still much room for improvement.

[32] Due to the common claim that the Church had replaced Israel, who had been rejected, our Jewish friends at times consider this habit of borrowing their texts as an intention to appropriate their heritage, once more a sign of this 'replacement'. Let them know that, henceforth, it is a desire to associate ourselves with the praise of the elder brother, to whom the Holy Spirit inspired such beautiful prayers, beginning with the Psalms.
[33] Literally: You shall sharpen them, polish them up/keep on repeating them.
[34] Article in the *American Review* (19.11.1988): "The Absence of God? The Presence of God?"
[35] In Israel there are survivors from the Shoah who, forty years later, remain obsessed by a tremendous fear on account of the horrors of those years, for some their childhood years. here are also children of these survivors who are emotionally afflicted by the accounts of their parents; or, on the contrary; by their heavy, obstinate silence, sometimes worse than the worst accounts: the impossibility to evoke events, for it would be to live them over again. This is sometimes shown suddenly in the drawings of a child, to whom "nothing has been said".
[36] Foreign visitors are often astonished at this frankness and remark: "In our country this would be unthinkable". This freedom of speech also displeases certain Israelis who protest: "We are up against a hostile press."
[37] The majority of Palestinians who are suffering from the situation will probably say that they scarcely see these fruits in the Territories. Yet we have heard Palestinians testify positively of concrete facts which show that our on hope is not imaginary.
[38] Do we need to be reminded that from the beginning God's message was transmitted in the turbulent history of a people, sometimes sinful, sometimes repentant, never perfect, but in spite of everything 'chosen'? Is this not also the prototype of human behaviour and God's response? Need we also recall to other peoples their ways of acting which were far worse in similar conflicts?
[39] A few apparently commonplace comparisons will perhaps be of help in understanding opened at random to find a recipe. The reader of a Dostoyevsky novel does not begin in the middle of the book; and the knowledge of a Russian friend can even help to a deeper understanding of the book...
[40] This is not the case, of course, for Liturgical texts which are a good expression of the Christian faith: the Collects and the Eucharistic Prayer are addressed to the Father through the mediation of Christ. Of course, this does not exclude the possibility of addressing Christ, who stands at God's right hand and pleads for us (Rom. 8.34).
[41] The disciples of a Rabbi often used to tell him that they loved him: One day he asked them: "Do you know what makes me suffer?" They were astonished and asked: "How can we know?" Then he said: "How can you say that you love me if you don't know what makes me suffer?"
[42] Lovsky, G. Baum, and others. The *Guidelines* too mention this point: "The formula The Jews in St John sometimes, according to the context, means 'the leaders of the Jews", or "the adversaries of Jesus', terms which better express the thought of the Evangelist and avoid appearing to accuse the Jewish people as such."
[43] The Canadian Conference of Bishops was the first to order a change, in 1987, in the liturgical use of St John's Gospel.
[44] "Shoah" in *1938-1948 – les années de tourmente de Munich a Prague – Dictionnaire critique*, Jean-Pierre Azéma and Francois Bédarida, Flammarion 1995, pp. 1047-1058; and "Réflexions sur la Shoah" – Episcopal documents (French bishops).
[45] Quoted in his book *Hitler m'a dit*, Livre de Poche (coll. Pluriel), 1979, p. 321.

For more information about the author, Yohanan Elihai, please see here.