



# Pope: Rabbi Skorka shows that 'faith and human rights are not in conflict'

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**May 10, 2023 - As the Department of Theology of the University of Trnava, in Slovakia, confers an honorary doctorate on Argentinean writer and biophysicist Rabbi Abraham Skorka, Pope Francis sends his long-time friend a letter to congratulate him and recall his commitment to interreligious dialogue.**

In a letter released on Wednesday, Pope Francis has congratulated Rabbi Abraham Skorka, from Argentina, who was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Faculty of Theology of the University of Trnava, in Slovakia, run by the Jesuits, for his contribution to the advancement of Jewish-Christian and interreligious dialogue and for promoting tolerance in the fields of science and education.

In the missive, read during the ceremony, the Pope expressed gratitude to his long-time friend for his commitment and for having positively influenced, in his 42 years of pedagogical and academic activity, "two generations of rabbis, as well as Catholic and Protestant theologians, fully respecting the academic aspects of theology."

### **Encounters between Christians and Jews open up fruitful relations**

"I too have experienced your gift of friendship and wisdom, for which I thank the Lord," the Pope wrote to Rabbi Skorka, who is the Rabbi Emeritus of the Latin American Rabbinical Seminary in Buenos Aires.

The Pope also recalled moments spent together in fruitful conversations and reflections on friendship in interreligious dialogue.

Pope Francis' thoughts also went "to the memorable visit to Slovakia in 2021 and the meeting with the Jewish community in Rybné Square in Bratislava, where many Catholics were also present" - events that "open the door to the development of fruitful reciprocal relations," said the Pope.

He also noted the significance of the recognition of high academic honours by the University of Trnava, a city "with a painful history for the Jewish people". Pope Francis added that he views the presence of his rabbi friend at the Slovak university as "a welcome symbol of a new chapter in history, which our world desperately needs."

### **Living one's faith authentically and respecting human rights**

The Pope pointed out that "over the centuries, faith has often been instrumentalized to achieve political or economic ends, which can only serve to diminish the appreciation of religious values."

He noted that Skorka has "always tried to emphasize that living one's religious tradition authentically and respecting human rights should not be in conflict."

Moreover, he concluded, "you have rightly sought to show that people of faith can and must defend human rights in all situations."

Source: [Vatican News](#).