



The Heschel Center Inaugurated at the Catholic University of Lublin

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The Abraham J. Heschel Center for Catholic-Jewish Relations - a new scientific, educational, and cultural unit to deepen Catholic-Jewish relations internationally - began its activities at the Catholic University of Lublin on Monday, October 17th. Scientific research, publishing activities, student exchanges, as well as international symposia, conferences, debates and cultural events are the main tasks of the institution.

Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa was named an Honorary Committee member of the Center and he attended the event in person. Speaking at the University Archbishop Pizzaballa stressed that the Heschel Center is a very important for inter-religious dialogue, especially the dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Jewish communities. "This Center can be a very useful and wonderful legacy that Heschel to our generation - to be the ones ready to show that religions are not a problem, they can be part of the solution," he added.

"The inauguration of the Abraham J. Heschel Center for Catholic-Jewish Relations at the Catholic University of Lublin is a historic event, I am convinced that it is important not only for our university," Rector of the Catholic University of Lublin Rev. Prof. Mirosław Kalinowski stressed. "The pillars on which the Center's activities are based can be summarized in a motto: Common Bible – Common Past – Common Future. They also relate to shared biblical roots, to the community of the history of both societies, as well as to the need to a future based on dialogue and openness to multiculturalism" said the Rector of the University of Lublin.

The daughter of the Center's patron, Professor Susannah Heschel, a researcher at Dartmouth College in the US, recalled her father's most important ideas, including those concerning Christian-Jewish dialogue. "What you are doing is in line with my father's message not to be indifferent to each other," Prof. Heschel said.

In turn, the President of the Polish Bishops' Conference, Archbishop Stanisław Godecki stressed that the Heschel Center is the realization of the conciliar declaration "Nostra Aetate" and the teaching of the Church expressed by successive popes. He also recalled the role of the Patron of the Catholic University of Lublin, Pope John Paul II, who is a role model in Catholic-Jewish dialogue. "He was the first pope to pray together with a rabbi for peace, the first pope to enter a synagogue and to visit the German Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. John Paul II was the first pope to pray at the Western Wall, asking God for forgiveness and mutual brotherhood."

During the ceremony, which concluded with the presentation of appointments to the Board of Directors of Abraham J. Heschel Center for Catholic-Jewish Relations at the Catholic University of Lublin and a speech by Cantor Symcha Keller, the Honorary Committee and the Center's Scientific Council of the new institution were also introduced.

The Scientific Council and Honorary Committee included Rabbi Prof. Abraham Skorka of Argentina; Rabbi David Rosen, Director of Inter-religious Relations of the American Jewish Committee; New York University Professor Rabbi Prof. Lawrence H. Schiffman; Oxford University Professor of Hebrew and Jewish Studies Prof. Judith Olszowy-Schlanger; Prof. Amy-Jill Levine, a

specialist of New Testament Studies E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter at Vanderbilt University Divinity School in Nashville; Prof. Glenda Abramson of Oxford University; Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa; Prof. Slawomir Zurek, Director of the International Center for the Study of the History and Cultural Heritage of the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe; and Prof. Yagil Limore of Bar Ilan University in Tel Aviv.

Patriarchal Vicar of St. James Vicariate for the Hebrew Speaking Catholics in Israel, fr. Piotr Zelazko is a member of the scientific council of the Center.

The Abraham J. Heschel Center for Catholic-Jewish Relations at the Catholic University in Lublin is a scientific and educational unit whose mission is to build Catholic-Jewish relations on the scientific, educational, and cultural levels on an international scale. The center combines research work, commemorating the past, educating and engaging young people, as well as shaping public awareness through modern media on a global scale.

Source: [Saint James Vicariate For Hebrew Speaking Catholics in Israel](#).