The providential mystery of the friendship between Jews and Christians

01.09.2020 | Pierre d'Ornellas, Archbishop of Rennes

Archbishop Pierre d'Ornellas*, Archbishop of Rennes, received the Prix de l'Amitié Judéo-Chrétienne de France, which was presented to him on November 20, 2019 in Paris, during an evening event at the Collège des Bernardins. In his speech at this event, he reflected on the richness of the "providential mystery" of friendship between Jews and Christians.

May I tell you again of my surprise when I learned that you had awarded me the Amitié Judéo-Chrétienne de France award for this year of 2019? Indeed, I do not feel that I have worked much on the rapprochement between Jews and Christians. But your prize surely echoes a deep sensitivity that I have for this friendship. It invites everyone to live with such an awareness. Therefore, I thank you very much for it.

I would also like to thank everyone for the words that were addressed to me this evening at the Collège des Bernardins. I remember that right here, four years ago, on November 23, 2015, the Chief Rabbi of France, Haim Korsia, presented the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal André Vingt-Trois, with the "Declaration for the Upcoming Jubilee of Brotherhood." I personally received it with great gratitude. This Declaration expressed the "duty" of Jews: "To welcome Christianity as the religion of our brothers and sisters in synergy with Judaism." Now the stage is set: fraternity is acknowledged from the start. It is the product of a long journey.

That is why, in thanking you, I think of our predecessors, whose heirs we are, and who have tied the threads of Judeo-Christian friendship because of the brotherhood that binds Jews and Christians. To all these predecessors too, I wish to express my gratitude, or rather *our* gratitude, especially since they sometimes made their way in a solitary manner, facing indifference and even the hostility of their co-religionists.

Allow me to remember Jules Isaac of Rennes this evening. He was born in Rennes and the day before yesterday, November 18, was the anniversary of his birth in 1877. In accord with the light and suffering that lived in his conscience, he personally committed himself to demonstrating that a careful reading of the four Gospels verified that antisemitism has no reason to exist among Christians. Let me also remember Dr. Bernard Lobel, who welcomed me to the Synagogue in Rennes, and who had become a friend. He has just passed away. I remember meeting him on the TGV for Paris and he then told me that he was going here, at the "Tuesdays of the Bernardins." May peace be in his soul in the Kingdom of the Lord!

But the Collège des Bernardins also evokes Saint Bernard, the friend of Jews, without whom this College would not exist, and also, ten centuries later, Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, who wished for the present life of this College and whose efforts to forge just and fraternal relations between Jews and Christians are well known.

Enlightened by these and others, I perceive how much it is both enriching and destabilizing to be faced with what I will call the mystery of friendship between Jews and Christians. Indeed, this friendship does not avoid the deep difference that separates us, and at the same time one lives in it by a kind of certainty, which has just been recalled, and for which we are constantly seeking the

best way to express it and the right way of living by it.

Personally, I have the feeling that by presenting me with this award, you are once again putting me in front of our friendship and are somehow imposing on me the duty to study it in order to try to discern some light for my life and my mission. The further I go, the more I think that this friendship belongs to God's plan for the salvation of the world and for its peace, but I am very maladroit in finding the words to express it properly. However, I would like to sketch two reflections tonight: the first starting from the Gospel fact of the Twelve Apostles (1); the second from the biblical encounter of Esau and Jacob (2). I will conclude by pointing out that our friendship is providential (3).

1. Jewish tradition and Christian faith

This year, the award of the Amitié Judéo-Chrétienne de France is bestowed on a bishop who, along with the other bishops of the Catholic Church, belongs to what the Church calls the "College of Bishops." The word "college" expresses the permanence of this group (not its composition) over the centuries. According to the Catholic faith, this "College" directly succeeds the College of the Twelve Apostles who were twelve Jews "chosen" (cf. Jn 15:16) by Jesus, also a Jew.[1]

To evoke it tonight is to put us together before the challenge of understanding that the event Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and raised from the dead according to the Apostles' faith, was understood and reported by these same Apostles not only according to the faith that animated them but also according to the Jewish tradition by which they were nourished? If, according to St. Irenaeus, bishop of Lyon in the second century, Christ brought with him "everything that is new,"[2] this "novelty" could not have been said, transmitted and written (in any other way) than from the Scriptures of Israel, the sense of which was carried by both the Jewish oral tradition and given in the Resurrection of Jesus.

Therefore, in presenting me with this award, you invite me as a bishop to enter further into the faith of the Apostles without failing to incorporate the teachings of the Jewish oral tradition, the "Oral Torah," on which Peter Lenhardt, of blessed memory, meditated so much.[3] This tradition cannot be absent from the living Tradition of the Church whose origin was in the faith of the Apostles—twelve Jews. More than that, this oral tradition is indispensable to the Tradition of the Church, although the *New Testament* was written before the Mishna.

Indeed, Jesus did not choose twelve pagans, but twelve Jews. With this gesture, made after a whole night of prayer on the mountain (cf. Lk 6:12), he deliberately inscribes faith in Him—the faith of the Apostles and that of the Christians of yesterday and today—in the tradition of which he, the son of Israel, claims himself. By this choice, he suggests that it is impossible to understand [faith in Him] without calling on the tradition from which the "Twelve" are kneaded (cf. Mt 10:5; Mk 3:16) whom he "called" and "instituted" (cf. Mk 3:13-14) to be "his witnesses" (cf. Lk 24.48; Ac 1:8).

There are many words of Jesus that demonstrate that he himself lives by the Jewish oral tradition, starting with his assertions about the resurrection of the dead (cf. Mt 22:31), which is also expressed for example by Martha in the Gospel of John (cf. Jn 11:24) and by Paul (cf. 1 Co 15:4). In addition to these references to the resurrection of the dead, it is in this oral tradition, and not elsewhere, that the treasure of the "newness" of which St. Irenaeus speaks is hidden. The Messiah reveals it because he is Messiah of Israel, "filled with the Holy Spirit" (cf. Is 11:2; Lk 4:1). Christians recognize this Messiah in Jesus of Nazareth because, without any merit on their part, they claim that they were "visited" by him and by His Spirit.

Recognizing the vital presence of the Jewish oral tradition in the living Tradition of the Apostles does not only draw upon a vast historical science which is very valuable and from which we can all benefit, but also and above all to a state of mind which comes from the "heart of flesh" inhabited

by “a new spirit” and not the “heart of stone” (cf. Ez 36:26). Thus, Christians will enter further into their faith if they know how to stand in front of Israel, the Jewish people whom God chose first, and if they consent to receive from this People “treasures of wisdom.”[4] Then Christians will perceive better the figure of Jesus as savior, they will read the Gospels better, which, in a privileged way, bear witness to him, they will turn more resolutely to the fulfillment of the promise that was made to Abraham and which will be fulfilled at the end of history. Then they will meditate more insightfully on Jesus’ [words] “it is finished” (Jn 19:30) and discover that the Church is receiving the grace to walk alongside Israel, our “beloved brothers in faith,”[5] who remind her that in historical time all is not yet accomplished.

Thus, in a more resolute way, the “disciples” of Jesus will engage in history and its dramas alongside their Jewish brothers and sisters in order to sow together the blessed hope, as sure as the night, of the coming of the messianic times of the Kingdom that we will all enter. Our friendship of Jews and Christians is entirely oriented towards the fulfillment of the promise, originating in Abraham and present in “the descendants of Abraham.” And it is this orientation that compels us to work in history to prepare for the advent of the desired Kingdom. Thus Cardinal Lustiger suggested that we Jews and Christians together make our own this verse of the Psalter: “My eyes are awake at each watch of the night that I might meditate on your promise” (Ps 118:148). We are invited together as brothers who, from the very heart of their otherness, have their eyes fixed on the eschatological realization of the promise—of which Marie-Odile has just spoken.

2. Esau and Jacob, the twin brothers

In order to best live out this commitment in history, the narrative of the famous encounter between Esau and Jacob (cf. Gen 33:1-17) inspires, it seems to me, a mutual stance that promotes our otherness. It indicates why and how this otherness is a source of blessing for each of us. This evening, I do not simply want to characterize Jacob and Esau in relation to Jews or Christians, according to the classical interpretation of this biblical text, which is echoed in the Declaration of the Orthodox Rabbis “Doing the Will of Our Father of Heaven” of December 3, 2015. I am only trying to discern what is hidden in their fraternity.

In the account of the preparations for the meeting, it is stated five times that Jacob considers Esau to be his “brother” (cf. Gen 32:4,7,12,14,18) but, five times in a row, it prefers to present Esau as his “servant” (cf. Gen 32:5,19,21; 33:5,14), while it was [earlier] specified that “the older will serve the younger” (Gen 25:23). However when they meet, Esau exclaimed to Jacob: “My brother” (Gen 33:9).[6] This is the affirmation of brotherhood! Rashi, from the beginning of the story, makes Jacob say through the messengers he sends to Esau: “I seek your friendship.”[7]

Of course, the meeting is preceded by the double mention of “fear” and also of the “anxiety” that Jacob feels (cf. Gen 32: 8,12) at the idea of meeting Esau, as if a foreshadowing of the fear Jews had of Christians who—alas!—have understood to much their faith and their Church as a “substitution” for Jewish worship and the Jewish people destined for wandering and insecurity. This meeting is also preceded by the description of the exceptional gift that Jacob is preparing for Esau (cf. Gen 32:14-16), to the point of “surprising” him,”[8] says Rashi, and which Esau eventually accepts (cf. Gen 33,11),[9] as if it were foretold that Christians would finally recognize the priceless treasure that the Jewish people brings them by bequeathing to them the Revelation of the One and Only God, the Patriarchs, the Covenant, and the wisdom of their way of living the Torah over the centuries, as well as all their scriptures united with their “Oral Torah.”

But the story also points out that Esau, too, “has affluence”(Gen 3:9), as if Jews were called to recognize the riches of Christians that could be listed here with the expressions contained in the Declaration of European Rabbis “Between Jerusalem and Rome” of February 10, 2016: Christians “worship the Creator of heaven and earth, Who liberated the people of Israel from Egyptian

bondage and Who exercises providence over all creation," they have "reverence of the Hebrew Bible," "faith in the Divine origin of the Torah and in an ultimate redemption," they seek a life of "moral righteousness," they have respect for "religious freedom," "the sanctity of life" and the "significance of the traditional family."

To understand the account of this meeting, Rashi tells us that one of the brothers — in this case Jacob — seeks to "appease" the "face" of the other brother — in this case Esau — whom Rashi, according to tradition, calls "the wicked"—that is to say, his "anger" so that "your covenant with death is annulled."[10] It is that between two brothers, there is always a "birthright" that is at stake and which, instead of being received as a free gift, is claimed as a right over the younger. Thus this meeting could have become similar to that of the two brothers, Abel and Cain, where the elder was fratricidal.[11] So how will the "covenant with death" cease?

The answer comes at the time of the meeting between Esau and Jacob. It goes admirably well thanks to the sublime and daring style with which Jacob addresses Esau: "To have seen your face is like seeing the face of God and you have accepted me" (Gen 33:10). Now, it is normally impossible to see the face of God without dying (Ex 33:20).[12] Therefore, the Septuagint alleviates the matter by translating: "As one might see the face of God." As for the Targum, it prefers to write that Jacob saw the face of an "angel," or a "Mighty One." Rashi commented: "It is for me as if I had seen the face of the angel, for I saw your angel; and moreover, because you have agreed to forgive my transgression; and why does he mention to him the sight of the angel? In order for Esau to fear him and say: He saw angels and survived; I can do nothing against him from now on."[13] Jacob's fear is compounded by Esau's fear, as if Rashi was sensing a Christian fear, a source of antisemitism and anti-Judaism!

However, our friendship does not make us turn away in the time of fear or fright, it draws us to the future, which is the time of daring. What kind of daring? Daring to see the brother "as one sees the face of God."

The biblical narrative is rich in meaning. As we have seen, it is a matter of "appeasing" the "face" of Esau's wrath, as Moses will appease the wrath of God (cf. Ex 32:11). For this, Jacob prepares a "gift" (*min?ah*) (cf. Gen 32:32,41). This word refers directly to Abel's and Cain's offering since it is only used there in all of the preceding book of Genesis.[14] Now God accepted Abel's "present"! Will Esau be like God by accepting Jacob's "present"? Or will he just behave like Cain?

Jacob therefore seeks the "face" of Esau to find grace (*?én*) in his eyes (cf. Gen 33:8,10). But Esau is in front of Jacob who knows he is "too small" (cf. Gen 32.11). However, the "little one," according to Jewish tradition, is the one from whom one receives and learns a word from the Torah.[15] Jacob is also the blessed son of God, as has just been recalled: God blessed Jacob at the Yabboq (cf. Gen 32:30). Jacob is finally the one who saw God face to face at the place called "Penuel" (cf. Gen 32.31). It is in this memory of the Yabboq event that the face of Esau is considered the face of God. However, with the meeting having just taken place, it seems that Esau's face is soothed as he says to Jacob, "I will walk by your side" (Gen 33:12), "with an equal step to yours," Rashi comments. It is as if the affirmation of the signatories of the "Declaration for the Upcoming Jubilee of Brotherhood" was foretold, since it reads that Jews and Christians must "work together, more than ever, hand in hand."

Then Jacob concludes the meeting with two statements addressed to Esau that manifest the bond that now unites the two "brothers": on the one hand, "Take my blessing (*berkâh*)"(Gen 33:11); on the other, "I just have to find grace (*?én*) in the eyes of my lord," that is, Esau (Gen 33:15). This blessed encounter between the two "brothers" was announced by Rebekah, who had the hope as soon as Esau "wept" when he realized that Jacob had "captured his birthright" (cf. Gen 27:38,36).[16] This hope, clothed in patience according to the reading of Ambrose of

Milan,[17] underlies our entire biblical narrative, as if the hope of our friendship was foretold in spite of the long vicissitudes of history.

Thus, the meeting between the two “brothers”—Esau and Jacob—gives our fraternal friendship a daring and realistic meaning. Since I am looking for what is hidden in this fraternity, let me express this daring in a simple way. In the light of this biblical account, each can say of the other: in the worship that my brother gives to the “Lord, the God of Israel” (Ex 5:1; 34:23; Lk 1:68) and in its way of life according to the Torah which, for Christians, is “holy” (cf. Rom 7:12) and is not “abolished” (cf. Mt 5:17-18), I can receive a blessing and see it as a reflection of the face of God. Each can rejoice that the other sanctifies the Name of the Lord. And this joy, mixed with gratitude, is the sign of the blessing of the Most High.

What will that reflection be? In the multiplicity of its various flashes, it is and it will be that of love. Have Christians not received as “great and first commandment” (cf. Mt 22:36-39) the “*Shema* Israel” which invites God’s love and energizes the prayer and worship of our Jewish brethren (cf. Dt 6:4-5)? Have they not similarly received the commandment that is “like” him, the injunction of the Code of Holiness that guides Israel in his practice of justice: “You will love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev 19:18)? It is interesting to recognize here the fourth of the so-called Ten Points of Seelisberg, which was not present in the eighteen points that Jules Isaac had prepared for the famous meeting of the summer of 1947.[18]

Our friendship is now sealed to make heard the hope that love proclaims, according to these prescriptions from the Torah and repeated in the Gospels. Through this friendship, the light that comes from this love, in its many expressions towards the most vulnerable, can seep into the darkness in which our brothers and sisters in humanity lock themselves. This love is an echo of the wisdom of the Torah in the one who, because he is “small,” knows how to receive it, live it and communicate it. This love promotes brotherhood in the recognition of the equal dignity of every human being, perceived as the image and likeness of the Most High (cf. Gen 9:6). This love, which protects the rights of the weakest and poorest, shines the light of justice (cf. Is. 58:6-8). This love enlightens and promotes the beauty of the family according to the Creator’s plan. This is how this love is a harbinger of peace.

Neither of us is able to do it alone. We Christians bear divisions that greatly weaken our witness. In addition, the Catholic Church was able to take haughty postures imbued with “clericalism,” in the words of Pope Francis,[19] which dictated the behavior that sorely lacked respect for the freedom of the children of God. Jews, you have returned to the “land of Israel” that the Scriptures speak of, and you are experiencing a bitter political conflict that also weakens your witness in the midst of nations. Together as brothers living forth towards each other the attitude revealed by the meeting of Esau and Jacob, we free ourselves from these weaknesses and can carry the hope that springs from love. In this respect, our friendship is providential.

3. A providential friendship

Friendship is always filled with meaning. But here, between Jews and Christians, it has particular weight because it places us in front of God’s plan and engages us in the world in which we live.

Of course, it is more than legitimate to suffer and feel regret that this friendship has not been lived in past times. It is right that we Christians ask for forgiveness. But in view of the “Declaration for the Upcoming Jubilee of Brotherhood,” let us look at our present. It appears to be an immense blessing of divine providence.

Our friendship was born. It is lived, it is celebrated. It is called to grow. It obliges friends, who are brothers, to remember the reasons that gave birth to each other, so that they may be faithful to

them, both in times of trial and times of joy. There are many reasons for this. They have often been forgotten throughout history. Contextualization by historical events is not enough to justify this oversight. The religious practice of Christians has not always revealed the purity of their faith as shown by the Holy Scriptures. This practice, Cardinal Lustiger said, “paganized” Christ by “disfiguring” him.[20] It failed to consider that the Word became flesh in Israel and that Jesus, the true son of Israel, chose Twelve Apostles who lived by the tradition of Israel. Despite this, Christians forgot that Jesus makes the Word of the Father of Heaven heard by revealing the fullness contained in “The Torah, the Prophets and the Psalms,” in the words of Luke’s Gospel (24:44).

In return, Jewish criticism of Christians became scornful, accusing them of being sacrilegious. This dismissive criticism did not allow Christians to see the splendor of the Torah of Moses to which Jews wanted to be faithful thanks to the calls of the prophets. Such criticism obscured for the Jews that pagan “peoples,” according to the prophets, will receive “a pure language so that they may call upon the name of the Lord and serve Him with one heart,” as Zephaniah proclaims (3.9), quoted in the “Declaration for the Upcoming Jubilee of Brotherhood.”

Disdain on one side and contempt on the other, with specific and non-symmetrical tones, have thus settled on both sides over the centuries. Repairing this history is an additional reason to live out this friendship between Jews and Christians, in esteem for each other, based on Revelation. This friendship anticipates the “repair of the world.” In view of this overlong history of contempt or disdain, this friendship is surprising and beautiful if we remember that each one, each in his own way, prays to “the Lord, the God of Israel,” that is to say, to the One who has revealed himself to Israel, the One for whom Israel is the “apple of his eye” (cf. Dt 32:10; Zech 2:12; Ps 17:8), his people whom he “chose from among all peoples”(Dt 7:6-8) and for whom the election remains (cf. Rom 11:29). He constantly “visits” (Ex 3:16) his People and, in Jesus, he also “visits” the assembly of Christians (cf. Lk 1:68,78; 7:16). For this reason, Christians are the first, alongside their Jewish brothers and sisters, to fight against antisemitism, which is, in fact, an attack on God and God’s choice.[21]

Today, this friendship is evident when, on the one hand, Christians recognize that they are grafted onto the “root” of Israel, namely the Patriarchs of Israel who belong to the descendants of Abraham, and when, on the other hand, several Jewish authorities publicly acknowledge that Christianity, in accordance with the Holy Scriptures of Israel, is not heresy or idolatry. This double recognition appears as a free and unexpected gift from God! Indeed, not so long ago, we were blinded on the one hand by the memory of the anti-Jewish diatribes of some Fathers of the Church, our teachers in the Christian faith of the 2nd-10th centuries, and, on the other hand, by the teaching of rabbinical texts in this same period, where the figure of Jesus is identified with an “idolater,” a “seducer” or a healer-sorcerer, and Christianity, with “prostitution” or “heresy.”[22] For this century of ours, God has opened our eyes and our blindness has ceased. Blessed be it!

Our friendship invites us to look beyond a simple neighborhood of social conveniences for mutual tolerance and republican coexistence. This friendship now holds us side-by-side, facing each other in a purely attentive listening, ready together to receive from this face-to-face or side-by-side posture an unexpected light, a word not yet articulated, a new hope that is an overgrowth of joy. While being a mystery, our friendship establishes itself as a wisdom because it does not come from us but from a divine design that preceded us and which carries us away, despite our infidelities for which we ask forgiveness every year.

Together, we believe that God is fulfilling his plan of salvation and peace for the world, but we differ on how to achieve it because of Jesus. For Christians, he is the promised Messiah who has come into the world, while Jews are still waiting for the coming of the Messiah. Yet this difference is not a separation. Not only does it direct us together towards the hope of the Kingdom that comes to fullness at the end of history, but it also invites us, within historical time, to look at the other to

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receive a “blessing”! The meeting of Esau and Jacob tells us this. If, Jews and Christians, we have to prepare for the coming of the Kingdom and to prepare ourselves to receive it, each will do so all the better if he accepts to receive a “blessing” from the other, that is to say, an additional hope to confess: “Eternal is his faithfulness!”

Our friendship seems providential to me providential in this century of ours. Pervaded by secularism and technology with its insolent pride in actions that seduce and enslave, many seek or will be driven to seek the way of Wisdom, the spiritual path of freedom and peace of the heart in covenant with their Creator and Father. “Indeed, the creature without Creator vanishes,”[23] teaches the Second Vatican Council, which at the same time promulgated the Declaration *Nostra aetate* that accelerated the recognition of our friendship. Hasn’t our friendship come about in this century so that we can bear witness together that the Law of Sinai engages an ethical fidelity to the incredible beauty of the creature precisely because of the Creator, recognized as wise and good?

Today, bioethical drift and the ecological crisis ring as alarms that point to the new idols on whose altars many people are sacrificed. These idols subject our contemporaries to the cult of ultraliberalism and individualism that dramatically obscure the sense of belonging to a common family, the one that God wanted, that accompanies and loves today, and for which he promises “peace like a river” (cf. Is 66:13). Our friendship opens a space that attests that brotherhood is possible, that all humans are brothers in the one human family of which God is the Father. It can lead us to find new paths of justice where hearts will open to the recognition of the Creator who, in his Wisdom, entrusts all humans to take care of the planet and of humanity.

On the earth and in historical time, only the meeting that goes without fear from person to person in mutual admiration establishes brotherhood by making this encounter a source of mutual blessing, that is, a source of hope and peace. Our friendship, illuminated by the meeting of Esau and Jacob, undoubtedly has a mission to serve the world in this way. This is our hope!

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[1] See Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium* (November 21, 1964), Chapter III.

[2]*Adversus Haereses*, IV, 34, 1.

[3] See for example, Peter Lenhardt, «À l’origine du mouvement pharisien, la tradition orale et la résurrection »,*Le judaïsme à l’aube de l’ère chrétienne*, coll. Lectio divina, n. 186, Cerf, 2001, p. 123-176.

[4] See Francis, Apostolic Exhortation The *Joy of the Gospel, Evangelii Gaudium*, November 24, 2013, No. 249.

[5] See Benedict XVI, meeting with representatives of the Jewish community of France, in Paris, September 12, 2008.

[6] It is a full expression because it is preceded by “Esau ran to meet [Jacob], hugged him, threw himself at his neck and kissed him” (Gen 3:4). That [Rashi] tradition, despite the discussion of the Hebrew way of writing “kissed,” thus interprets: “It is known that Esau hates Jacob but his compassion was warmed (awakened) at that time and he kissed him with all his heart.” In *Commentaire de Rachi sur la Torah. Berechit/Genèse,* Éditions Ness, 2000, p. 335. Voir *Midrach Rabba, Genèse*, tome 2, coll. Les Dix Paroles, Verdier, 2010, p. 182.

[7] Cf *Commentaire de Rachi..., op. cit*., p. 322.

[8] Cf. ibid., p. 328.

[9] The Midrash Rabba on Gen 33:11 states: “An ignorant man asked R. Hocha’ya, ‘If I said a good word to you, would you repeat it in public on my behalf?’ ‘What is that word?’ ‘All the gifts Jacob made to Esau will be returned to Messiah by the Nations of the world: *The kings of Tarshish and islands will pay tributes* (Ps 72:10). It is not said to *bring* but *will repay (ya-chiv-u)*.’ ‘By your life!’ exclaimed R. Hocha’ya. ‘You just said a beautiful thing, and I will repeat it on your behalf.’” In *Midrash Rabba*, Op. cit., 185. This is a great eschatological perspective!

[10] Cf. *Commentaire de Rachi*..., op. cit., p. 329. Rashi quotes here Isaiah 28:18.

[11] According to the Midrash Rabba On Gen 27:41: “What does it mean *Esau says in his heart*? He thought: Cain killed his brother and the Holy, Blessed-be-He, did nothing. His father had other children; they shared the world with him. I will kill first my father Isaac, then my brother Jacob, and I will take sole possession of the world. *The days of mourning my father are approaching*. He does not say, “My father is dying, “but *my father’s days of mourning are approaching* thinking: I will first hasten my father’s mourning, and then I will kill my brother. But the Holy, Blessed-be He, did not allow it: *YHVH, does not fulfill the wishes of the villain*. » In *Midrash Rabba, Op. cit*., p. 164.

[12] This statement deserves to be nuanced by Ex 24:10; Is 6:1; Am 9:1.

[13] Cf. *Commentaire de Rachi*…, op. cit., p. 337. The Targum translates in this way Gen 33:10: “I saw your face as I saw the face of the angels from before

YHWH." Or: "I have seen your face and it seems to me to see the face of your angel." In *Targum du Pentateeuque, I Genèse*, coll Sources Chrétiennes, n. 245, Cerf, 1978, p. 312-313. On the idea of forgiveness, Ambrose of Milan, referring to the word of Jesus in Mt 18:21-22, considers that Jacob prostrated himself "seven times" for, "inspired by the spirit of prophecy, he would order to forgive his brother not only up to seven times but up to seventy times seven times. So much so that on the occasion of this meeting, Esau forgave his brother," in Jacob et la vie heureuse, coll. Sources chrétiennes n. 534, Cerf, 2010, p. 445. Rashi also believes about Esau that "his compassion was awakened when he saw him prostrate all these times," in Op. cit., p. 335.

[14] Cf. Gen 4:3; 4:5. There is also the use of min?ah In Gen 43:11,15,25,26 in the story of Joseph who meets his brothers with the youngest, Benjamin.

[15] See Jean Massonnet who quotes *Sifré* on Dt 11:13 as well as a passage of *Dt Rabbah* (1:19), "Les pharisiens et le sens communautaire," *Le judaïsme à l'aube de l'ère chrétienne*, coll. Lectio divina, n. 186, Cerf, 2001, p. 189-191. Rashi interprets Jacob's smallness by having him pray thus: "Since You promised me, I have been defiled by sin and it will be worth it to me to be delivered into the hand of Esau," *Commentaire de Rachi…, Op. cit*., p. 325.

[16] The biblical account tells us at the same time the will to murder (Esau says in himself: "[...] I will be able to kill my brother Jacob" in Gen 27:41) and the hope that it will not take place ([Rebekah said to Jacob: "...] until your brother comes back from his anger. [...] When your brother's fury has turned away from you" in Gen 27:44-45). This hope is that of a woman, Rebekah, as the hope of salvation is carried by a woman from the beginning of the book of Genesis (cf. Gen 3:15,20).

[17] Saint Ambrose thus evokes Rebekah: "Let Rebekah come, that is, let us take on the patience, sure guardian of innocence, that she persuades us to give way to anger." In *Jacob et la vie heureuse, op. cit*., p. 429.

[18] Cf. Norman C. Tobias, *Jewish Conscience of the Church. Julius Isaac and the Second Vatican Council*, Salvator, 2018, pp. 156-171.

[19] See Pope Francis, *Letter to the People of God* (August 20, 2018).

[20] Cf. Jean-Marie Lustiger, *La promesse*, coll. Essais de l'école cathédrale, Parole et silence, 2002, p. 81.

[21] Pope Francis's repeated appeals against antisemitism are numerous. Among others, I offer four quotes. (A) November 13, 2019: "Today is beginning to reborn, here and there, the habit of persecuting Jews. Brothers and sisters, this is neither human nor Christian. Jews are our brothers! And they should not be persecuted. (B) March 8, 2019: " I am thinking in particular of the barbaric resurgence of antisemitic attacks in different countries. Today, too, I would like to reiterate the need to be vigilant about this phenomenon. 'History has shown us that even the most imperceptible forms of antisemitism can lead to the human tragedy of the Holocaust that claimed the life of two-thirds of the Jews of Europe' (*The Gifts and Calling of God Are Irrevocable*,47). I repeat that, for a Christian, any form of antisemitism represents a denial of his own origins, an absolute contradiction." (C) 23 September 2018 in Lithuania: "Let us ask the Lord to give us the gift of discernment in order to discover in our time all new germs of this pernicious attitude, any atmosphere that atrophys the hearts of generations who have not experienced it and who could run behind these siren songs anti-Semitism. (D) April 20, 2015: "Antisemitic tendencies and certain acts of hatred and violence are currently of concern in Europe. Every Christian can only deplore all forms of antisemitism, by showing the solidarity with the Jewish people.

[22] See Thierry Murcia, *Jésus dans le Talmud et la littérature rabbinique ancienne*, Brepols, 2014.

[23] See the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium and spes*, December 7, 1965, 36.

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