Helping Jews and Christians to rediscover themselves as brothers, children of the same Father

01.01.2023 | Pope Francis

Address of His Holiness to Members of "Amitié Judéo-Chrétienne de France", Consistory Hall, Monday, 12 December 2022.

Dear friends,

I welcome you, members of Amitié Judeo-Chrétienne de France, celebrating the 75th anniversary of its founding.

I wish, first and foremost, to evoke the figure of one of your founders, Jules Isaac, who played a leading role in the rapprochement between Jews and Christians after the tragedy of the second world war. In particular, he participated in the famed Seelisberg Conference, which concluded its work with the famous “Ten Points of Seelisberg”, some of which were adopted in the Conciliar Declaration Nostra Aetate. When he was received in audience by Popes Pius XII and John XXIII, Jules Isaac advocated for the drafting of that prophetic text. A text that conserves all its relevance and recalls the “spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews”, seeking to “foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues” (no. 4).

Amitié Judeo-Chrétienne de France is resolutely and actively committed to this path of study and dialogue to help Jews and Christians to grow in mutual knowledge, understanding, respect and friendship. Thank you for this work you have carried out tirelessly for seventy years. It has amply contributed to helping Jews and Christians to rediscover themselves as brothers, children of the same Father, and to “serve him shoulder to shoulder” (Soph 3:9) (ibid.).

The path we have travelled together is therefore considerable – we must give thanks to God – given the burden of mutual prejudices and of the sometimes painful history that must be assumed. But the task is not complete, and I encourage you to persevere in this way of dialogue, fraternity and joint initiatives. Because this fine work, which consists of creating bonds, is fragile, always to be resumed – always to be resumed! – and consolidated, especially in these hostile times in which attitudes of closure and rejection of the other are becoming more common, also with the worrying reappearance of anti-Semitism, in particular in Europe, as well as violence against Christians. It is curious, this phenomenon.

I therefore assure you of my support for your initiatives, and for those of all people, Jews and Christians together, who strive for ever-greater fraternity. I pray that your work and your commitment may bear abundant and lasting fruits. I invoke the Lord’s blessing on you and I ask you, please, to pray for me. Thank you!

Source: Vatican.