



No change in the Church's attitude toward the Jews

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Statement on April 4, 2008

Following the publication of the new Prayer for the Jews for the 1962 edition of the Roman Missal, some groups within the Jewish community have expressed disappointment that it is not in harmony with the official declarations and statements of the Holy See regarding the Jewish people and their faith which have marked the progress of friendly relations between the Jews and the Catholic Church over the last forty years.

The Holy See wishes to reassure that the new formulation of the Prayer, which modifies certain expressions of the 1962 Missal, in no way intends to indicate a change in the Catholic Church's regard for the Jews which has evolved from the basis of the Second Vatican Council, particularly the Declaration *Nostra Aetate*. In fact, Pope Benedict XVI, in an audience with the Chief Rabbis of Israel on 15 September 2005, remarked that this document "has proven to be a milestone on the road towards the reconciliation of Christians with the Jewish people." The continuation of the position found in *Nostra Aetate* is clearly shown by the fact that the prayer contained in the 1970 Missal continues to be in full use, and is the ordinary form of the prayer of Catholics.

In the context of other affirmations of the Council - on Sacred Scripture (*Dei Verbum*, 14) and on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*, 16) - *Nostra Aetate* presents the fundamental principles which have sustained and today continue to sustain the bonds of esteem, dialogue, love, solidarity and collaboration between Catholics and Jews. It is precisely while examining the mystery of the Church that *Nostra Aetate* recalls the unique bond with which the people of the New Testament is spiritually linked with the stock of Abraham and rejects every attitude of contempt or discrimination against Jews, firmly repudiating any kind of anti-Semitism.

The Holy See hopes that the explanations made in this statement will help to clarify any misunderstanding. It reiterates the unwavering desire that the concrete progress made in mutual understanding and the growth in esteem between Jews and Christians will continue to develop.