



Pope Francis receives historic World Jewish Congress delegation to strengthen Jewish-Catholic ties

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22 Nov 2022 WJC President Ronald S. Lauder announces launch of 'Kishreinu' (Our Bond) Initiative.

VATICAN CITY – Pope Francis Tuesday welcomed the World Jewish Congress' launch of an historic initiative known as “Kishreinu” (Hebrew for “Our Bond”), intended to strengthen Jewish-Catholic ties around the globe, explaining that “in light of the religious heritage that we share, let us regard the present as a challenge that unites us, as an incentive to act together.”

“Our two communities of faith are entrusted with the task of working to make the world more fraternal, combating forms of inequality and promoting greater justice, so that peace will not remain an otherworldly promise, but become a present reality in our world,” he added.

The Jewish communal leaders from more than 50 countries, who were received by the pontiff on Tuesday in Apostolic Palace, were gathered for a World Jewish Congress Executive Committee meeting – the first ever formal event held by a Jewish organization at the Vatican since the founding of the Catholic Church. Kosher food was served.

The Kishreinu initiative, when finalized, will serve as the Jewish community's response to the Nostra Aetate Declaration of the Second Vatican Council, which in 1965 modernized the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the Jewish people.

WJC President Ronald S. Lauder, in his earlier address in the Vatican's Synod Hall, said, “Those of us here today are eager to promote our bond with the Catholic Church. Today, we launch the process of ‘Kishreinu,’ [which] reinforces the common future of our two people. It presents a new stage in the Catholic-Jewish bond.”

Amb. Lauder also expressed gratitude to the Catholic Church during a time of increased Jew-hatred worldwide. “We don't ignore it. We don't forget. But we look forward, together. And what could possibly be better for all the children of God to live together in peace, harmony and in the house of the lord, forever,” he said.

Cardinal Kurt Koch, head of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, said, “With our shared heritage, we have a common responsibility to work together for the good of humankind, refuting antisemitism and anti-Catholic and anti-Christian attitudes, as well as all kinds of discrimination, to work for justice, solidarity and peace, to spread compassion and mercy in an often cold and merciless world.”

For decades, the World Jewish Congress has successfully worked toward deeper relations between world Jewry and the Catholic Church, with a focus on improved understanding and the resolution of differences. Toward that end, Amb. Lauder said, WJC will work both to enhance the level of cooperation between the global Jewish community and Holy See in international forums

and to assist those in need worldwide, including those affected by the war in Ukraine.

Clarifying the significance of the occasion, WJC Commissioner for Interfaith Relations Claudio Epelman said, “Hundreds of Jewish leaders from all around the world are starting a process that will change the way Jews and Christians relate and share their daily lives in every town and city they live in. We are grateful to Pope Francis for the invaluable symbolic gesture of being our host here today, and we are confident that working together we will create a better future for everyone.”

Noemi di Segni, president of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities and member of the WJC Executive Committee, said in her remarks to the Executive Committee: “For our 2,000-year history – in Rome and in every other locality of Italian Jewish community – the majestic walls of this Vatican City have always had a meaning of insurmountable limit.”

“We are here to affirm that the bond is a bond of life, of living communities with thousands of years to be used as experience for our young generations,” she added.

The WJC Executive Committee meeting commenced Monday evening at the historic Great Synagogue of Rome, which was built in 1904 and serves as the home of the city’s Jewish Museum.

For the full address of Pope Francis see [here](#).

Source: [World Jewish Congress](#).