Reconciliation and Hope: A Reflection on the occasion of Pope John Paul II's historic pilgrimage to Israel

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RECONCILIATION AND HOPE:

A REFLECTION ON THE OCCASION OF POPE JOHN PAUL II"s HISTORIC PILGRIMAGE TO ISRAEL

by the members of the Ongoing Consultation Between the National Council of Synagogues (NCS) and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB)

Meeting on March 13 in Baltimore, the members of the

Ongoing Consultation between the National Council of Synagogues and the Bishops" Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the NCCB send warm greetings to Pope John Paul II on the occasion of his historic pilgrimate to Israel. He follows the Jewish tradition as the Catholic tradition. He will visit sites that will evoke great emotion among Jews and Christians because they underscore both what binds Judaism and Christianity as well as what separates us.

As Jews and Catholics, we applaud his desire to visit Yad VaShem, the memorial to the victims of the Shoah. His presence at the Western Wall (Kotel) in Jerusalem will be especially significant to us. These visits reveal Pope John Paul"s emphasis on God"s continuing covenant with the Jewish people – a covenant, in his own words, "that has never been

revoked."

We also affirm the Pope"s continuing exhortation to the Christian community to reflect on the past and repent for the sins of violence, antisemitism, and racism. We wish the Pope a good journey – a pilgrimage of Shalom.

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