The Controversy Surrounding the 2008 Good Friday Prayer in Europe: The Discussion and its Theological Implications

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Good Friday of the year 2008 has a unique place in the history of Catholic-Jewish relations. The Good Friday prayer “for the Jews” that was promulgated by Pope Benedict XVI and published in a note from the Secretariat of State on February 4, 2008 triggered significant controversy affecting Catholic-Jewish relations. The 2008 text of the intercession reads:

Let us pray for the Jews. That our God and Lord enlighten their hearts so that they recognize Jesus Christ, the Savior of all mankind. Let us pray. Let us kneel down. Arise. Eternal God Almighty, you want all people to be saved and to arrive at the knowledge of the Truth. Graciously grant that when the fullness of nations enters your Church, all Israel will be saved. Through Christ our Lord.[1]

Both the way the publication and communication were handled and the theological implications of the intercession generated this controversy.

This article records the basic themes of the European discussion on this matter, reporting on the political dialogue accompanying the controversy. It will also raise questions about whether the 2008 Good Friday prayer should be understood as an opening for further Catholic liturgical changes and about whether requests for Jewish reciprocity liturgically are relevant. Finally, this article will analyze the 2008 text, asking what criteria should apply to liturgical prayer; and it will present the coexistence of the two Good Friday prayers for the Jews – that of the 1970 missal and that of the year 2008 – as a challenge for further theological reflection.

I. The European Discussion: Differences in Intensity and Content in Various Countries

European communities have engaged this controversial discussion in various ways and with

differing intensities: in some places it continued actively for weeks in an argumentative or even polemical fashion among the religious communities and in the general public; in others it was reported in neutral terms, without bias towards one position or another.

A. Germany

In Germany, the controversy occupied the media and the general public for several weeks. There were many and various reactions, analyses and commentaries. Rabbis and Jewish representatives protested, saying that the Good Friday prayer "demeaned the Jews," and they lamented over a "rupture" in the mutual trust that had grown particularly under Pope John Paul II. The Central Council of Jews, representing the Jewish community in Germany, voiced the opinion that it was not possible to have dialogue with the Vatican as long as the 2008 Good Friday prayer was not withdrawn. In addition, Catholic voices, from the Church and theology faculties, also expressed criticism of the new Good Friday prayer. A declaration by the discussion group "Jews and Christians" of the Central Committee of German Catholics entitled *"Neue Belastung der christlich-jüdischen Beziehungen"* [A New Burden on Christian-Jewish Relations] received much attention. [2]

Right after the news broke that the Vatican Secretariat of State intended to permit the general use of the 1962 *Missale Romanum*, this discussion group declared on April 8, 2007 that the 1962 missal's language of the "blindness" of the Jewish people and of its "darkness" contradicted "the Conciliar Declaration *Nostra Aetate* in a glaring way."[3] Their 2008 statement on the new Good Friday intercession outlined the theological problematic it posed, raising the following issues:

Irritating questions are raised by this prayer. If the Tridentine rite of 1570 (last revised in the Roman Missal of 1962) spoke of blindness and darkness, and now, however, the new intercession prays for "enlightening," the question arises if this is not only a friendlier sounding phrasing of the same thing. If the Jews are to arrive at the realization and thus acknowledgement of Jesus Christ as the Savior of all humanity, do they have then to convert to believing in Jesus Christ – in the course of history or only at its end? Or will they *see* the Savior of the world, when history, which is the time of *faith*, has come to an end? Is the Jews' acknowledgement of Jesus Christ – when and however it takes place – a condition for their salvation? Or are there two ways of salvation: one for the peoples entering into the church, and another for Israel without the church? Does the church go on with her hoping and praying for Israel to be saved leaving it to God? Or must the church feel obliged to invite the Jews by the evangelizing message – certainly without any coercion and without any compulsion – to believe in Jesus Christ and the gospel?"

In the background, behind this statement, one could hear Catholic voices expressing dismay over the contents and effect of Pope Benedict's prayer of intercession.[4]

At first the German bishops refrained from public comment. They were certainly grateful to Walter Cardinal Kasper for his public statement concerning the criticism of the Good Friday prayer, published in the Holy Thursday edition, on March 20, 2008, of one of the most important German newspapers, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Cardinal Kasper wrote that the new wording was necessary "because parts of the old wording were found insulting on the Jewish side and were also found offensive by many Catholics." The cardinal primarily had Catholic readers in mind when he drew attention to the Jewish irritation over the new prayer of intercession, explaining, "The irritation on the Jewish side is to a great extent not rationally but emotionally based." He dedicated most attention to the question, "Should Christians pray for the conversion of the Jews? Can there be a mission to the Jews? In the reformulated prayer the word conversion is not to be found. But it is there implicitly – in the petition that the Jews be enlightened so that they recognise Jesus Christ."

In his analysis of the prayer, Cardinal Kasper emphasized that Pope Benedict was referring to

Romans 11, where Paul speaks of the salvation of all of Israel once the full number of the Gentiles has been saved. “So one can say that it is not on the basis of a mission to the Jews, but on the basis of a mission to the Gentiles that God, at the end, when the full number of the Gentiles has come in, will bring about the salvation of Israel.” He underlined his understanding of the prayer by means of a more focused theological statement:

Prayers for the coming of God’s kingdom and for the fulfilment of the mystery of salvation…respect the complete inscrutability of the hidden God. So with this prayer the Church does not take direct charge of the fulfilment of the unfathomable mystery. She just cannot do that. Rather, she leaves the when and the how wholly in God’s hands. God alone can initiate the kingdom of God in which all Israel is saved, and eschatological peace is granted to the world.

Of course, the eschatological interpretation of the Good Friday prayer does not exclude that Christians must witness “to their ‘elder brothers and sisters in the faith of Abraham’ (John Paul II).”[5]

Cardinal Kasper’s important commentary did not really succeed in calming public discussion in Germany. The critical voices did not cease, and so Karl Cardinal Lehmann finally saw the need to intervene. As president of the German Bishops Conference, he had written to the Secretary of State Tarcisio Cardinal Bertone on October 21, 2007 requesting that when revising the Good Friday liturgy of the 1962 *Missale Romanum*, the prayer of intercession for the Jews be copied from the ordinary rite. Now that the discussion of the 2008 Good Friday prayer was not calming down, he commented on the current controversy under the title: “Nicht grenzenlos belastbar” [Not to be burdened endlessly]. There he opined, among other things:

Even if it is to be regretted that there are now two versions (of the Good Friday prayer for the Jews), many interpretations not only express a misunderstanding, but are also expressed with vocabulary that really gives reason for criticism: “Ice Age,” “step backwards,” “unreasonable demand,” “burden”… many egregious reproaches (that are) absolutely unfounded. For example, try as I might, I find here no call, not even an indirect one, for mission to the Jews. Not one jot is taken away from our esteem for Judaism. Official voices are already saying that “without the withdrawal of the Good Friday prayer, no conversations with the Catholic Church” will be possible anymore. Walter Cardinal Kasper, who is also responsible in the Vatican for religious dialogue with Judaism, has said what is necessary concerning this reproach.[6]

Several contributions in a new anthology precisely on the new Good Friday prayer for the Jews nevertheless referred critically to Cardinal Kasper’s analysis.[7] In particular, some of the seven Jewish authors in the book expressed bitterness over the cardinal’s statement, “The irritation on the Jewish side is to a great extent not rationally but emotionally based.” The ten Catholic authors evaluated the current Catholic-Jewish relationship and discussed the theological questions raised by the Good Friday prayer; most of them were critical, but others presented a more positive reading of the 2008 prayer of intercession.

B. Austria

In Austria, the country’s *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde* [Jewish Religious Community] declared its objection to the 2008 Good Friday prayer by suspending official contacts with the Catholic Church. In light of this public protest, the Archbishop of Vienna, Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, repeated his understanding of the Good Friday prayer, which he had first published as “Judaism’s Way to Salvation” in the British periodical *The Tablet*, an article that was much discussed in Europe and beyond. In it, the cardinal linked the Good Friday prayer directly with the question regarding

mission to the Jews:

Again and again, most recently concerning the revised Good Friday Prayer for the ”Old Rite,” this question of the ”Mission to the Jews” keeps arising. Some theologians today are of the opinion that Christians should give up all attempts to missionise the Jews. Some go even further and think that there is no need to offer the Jews entry into the new covenant in Jesus Christ as God's covenant with the people of Israel was never revoked. The ”Old Covenant” is the way to salvation for the Jews and the ”New Covenant” the way to salvation for Gentiles, they say. This theory of ”Two Ways to Salvation”' is, however, rightly seen as incompatible with the Catholic belief in one salvation in Jesus Christ, as Avery Cardinal Dulles pointed out in the Jesuit journal *America* in October 2002.

The cardinal emphasized that although according to the New Testament and the Christian view there is only one salvation in Jesus Christ, there are nevertheless two modalities for proclaiming and accepting this salvation, and they need to be distinguished clearly:

God's choice of the Jews in his plan for the world…calls for particular attention on the part of the Church regarding the way in which the Gospel message is proclaimed to the Jews by her children. The individual conscience must always be respected. Religious liberty requires this of everyone. But the vocation of the Jews requires Christians to recognise the mystery of the specific choice of those to whom belong ”the adoption [as children], the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah” (Rom 9:4-5). The fact that the Church has apologised for the diverse forms of compulsion which they have had to suffer throughout the Christian era implies that Christians have now irrevocably renounced all forms of proselytism.[8]

The cardinal repeated his position in another article, in which he explained again:

…that according to New Testament and Christian understanding, there is only one salvation through Jesus Christ, but there are two modalities for proclaiming and accepting this salvation, which must be distinguished clearly. In this sense it must also be made clear that the offer to the Jews to recognize in Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah of Israel cannot simply be equated with Jesus’ commission to make all (pagan) nations his disciples (cf. Mt 28:18-20).[9]

C. Switzerland

In Switzerland, the Jewish community’s public position was gentler than that in Germany and Austria. The *Schweizerische Israelitische Gemeindebund* [Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities] deplored the “clear setback” from the teachings of the Second Vatican Council.[10] Catholic voices took part by lamenting that the prayer contains “not one word about…God’s covenant with his people that was never revoked” and that “Christian sensibility about Judaism was sacrificed for the sake of other interests.”[11] In a carefully argued contribution that reconstructed the path towards the 2008 prayer, Nikolaus Klein, SJ underlined that “the present-day debate on the wording of the Good Friday prayer is not over a trivial matter; rather, it wrestles with the Church’s understanding of itself.” He sharpened his criticism with the point, “By omitting these themes (the irrevocability of God’s covenant with Israel, and the fidelity of the Jews to this covenant) from the prayer’s new wording, the fundamental thought process of the Council’s declaration *Nostra Aetate* falls from sight.”[12]

D. Italy

In Italy, as in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, well-known representatives of the Jewish community expressed disappointment at Pope Benedict’s Good Friday prayer. Riccardo Di Segni,

the Chief Rabbi of Rome, lamented a serious step backwards that represented a fundamental obstacle to progress in Christian-Jewish relations. Similarly, Giuseppe Laras, the former Chief Rabbi of Milan and current president of the Italian conference of rabbis, spoke in favor of a pause for reflection in dialogue with the Catholic Church. In contrast, other Jewish personalities defended the Church's right to define its own truth and thus also to desire the conversion of the Jews.[13]

These voices can be understood as an internal Jewish echo of Jacob Neusner's opinion, published in an article titled (in its English version) "Catholics Have a Right to Pray for Us," where he referred to the synagogue's praxis of praying for non-Jews. Consequently, he claimed, other monotheists, including the Church, should have the same right without anyone feeling offended. "Any other policy toward gentiles would deny their access to the one God whom Israel knows in the Torah. And the Catholic prayer expresses the same generous spirit that characterizes Judaism at worship." Neusner justified his opinion by pointing out that in the *Alenu* prayer, the synagogue liturgy thanks God for not having made his people like the other peoples, and it asks that the whole of humanity call upon God's Name and that every knee bow before him. Judaism's daily liturgy leaves no doubt as to Israel's request that God enlighten the hearts of the nations. These normative prayers in Judaism form "the counterpart to the Catholic one that asks for the salvation of all Israel 'in the fullness of time, when all mankind enters the Church'."[14] Nevertheless, the Amicizia Ebraico Cristiana [Jewish Christian Friendship Association] in Naples came out with a statement supporting Jewish criticism.[15]

More than four hundred Jewish and Catholic figures in interreligious engagement, theology, and ecumenism in Italy signed a statement on the Jewish-Catholic controversy "Regarding the 'Prayer for the Jews'." They summed up their assessment of the prayer of intercession by saying, "We could not fail to express our regret over a decision which places more than forty years of dialogue at serious risk, insofar as anything that can make people think of attempts at conversion is irreconcilable with recognizing and respecting the truth in another's faith."[16] Otherwise, theologians largely refrained from public comment – awaiting a scholarly liturgical reconstruction of the new prayer's sources.[17] Those who tried to transmit the Good Friday prayer's intentions in a positive way in Italy were representatives of the Church's teaching body or the papal Curia. Archbishop Gianfranco Ravasi, an internationally renowned biblical scholar and the president of the Papal Council for Cultural Affairs, drew attention to the text's form in a theological commentary:

The first is strictly a "textual" consideration: we should recall that the word *textus* refers to the idea of "textile," a fabric woven from different threads. The thirty-odd Latin words that make up the Oremus thus form a "fabric" woven exclusively of New Testament threads. It is thus a language that belongs to Sacred Scripture.

The archbishop reminded his readers that according to the Church's faith and hope, Jesus Christ is the source of salvation for everyone, and he continued, "It is neither a programmatic proposal of theoretical adherence nor a missionary strategy for conversion. It is the characteristic attitude of the prayerful invocation according to which a reality held precious and salvific is also desired for people considered as close, beloved and significant."[18] Cardinal Kasper's commentary on the Good Friday prayer was made available to the Italian public in the April 10 Italian edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*.[19] In his own way, he contributed towards calming the controversy in Italy.

E. France

In other European countries such as France or Poland, there were fewer original contributions to the controversy. Some newspapers and internet sites did report extensively on the discussions in Italy or Germany. In so doing, French accounts and articles assured the readers that the text of the 2008 Good Friday prayer was a pastoral concession to groups at the margin of the Catholic Church and that it in no way changed the attitude towards Judaism expressed in theology and

dialogue. French translations of the commentaries by Archbishop Ravasi and of Jacob Neusner's statement were also made available. In a letter to the editor of the newspaper *La Croix* on March 3, the president of the "Amitié judéo-chrétienne de France," Paul Thibaud, wrote:

To pray for someone means to enter into that person's life, but as far as possible not from our perspective but rather from the perspective of God, our common Father. To pray for others means to become free of our own wishes and decisions in order to seek the place where we can live with them in peace and can share the deepest longings. So there is an ethic of prayer, which is an ethic of *communio*, distinct from the ethic of dialogue, which identifies and explains differences.

According to Thibaud, the prayer for the Jews in Paul VI's missal preserves this ethic. But he continues critically, asking whether the 2008 Good Friday prayer, with its intention that the Jews recognize Jesus as the savior of all human beings, seeks this place of meeting and community.[20]

F. Poland

In Poland, important newspapers, such as the *Rzeczpospolita*, and agencies reported on the current controversy so that the Polish public was equally informed about the protests of Jewish representatives in various countries and about the theological commentaries by Cardinal Kasper or Archbishop Ravasi. They also highlighted Rabbi Jacob Neusner's statement with his statement that the Catholics have the right to pray for the enlightenment of the Jews. Furthermore, reports pointed to traditional Catholic groups that thanked and supported the pope for his Good Friday prayer by collecting signatures.[21]

G. England

In England, the Jewish scholar and director of the Cambridge Institute of Abrahamic Religions, Edward Kessler, raised a critical voice in a pair of articles. He expressed that "the main reason that the prayer has touched a raw nerve in Jewish-Christian relations is because it deals with the themes of mission and conversion. For Jews, Christian missionary activity conjures up images of centuries of Christian persecution." Since, in its new attitude towards Judaism since the Second Vatican Council, the Church has turned to modes other than that of mission, "the revised prayer" now opens up "…a new and difficult conversation between Catholics and Jews on the meaning of Christian mission."[22] Kessler pointed to the important statement in the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 839 that "the Jewish faith, unlike other non-Christian religions, is already a response to God's revelation," and he linked this with what is said in the Good Friday prayer in the ordinary missal of 1970 "that Jews will be deepened in the faith given to them by God." In his opinion, the language of the 2008 intercession cannot be made congruent with this. Rather, the latter intercession shows "that two divergent theological positions now exist." The first position is held by a minority and holds "that the Roman Catholic Church alone is the *verus Israel*, the true Israel, whose election is solely in Christ and grasped in faith." The other position is held by the Church's mainstream, that "Jews are still the elect of God, part of the one People of God… they remain in an irrevocable covenant and in a special sense beloved by God." Although the Catholic Church does not include any expressly approved groups whose intention is to convert the Jewish people to Christianity, he suggests that the new prayer of intercession creates ambivalence as to the relationship between mission and the Jewish people.[23]

II. The Handling of the Controversy around the 2008 Good Friday Prayer

The European discussion and controversy around the 2008 Good Friday prayer was most vehement in Germany. Two reasons for this can be identified. On the one hand, because of the burden of history of the *Shoah*, the Christian-Jewish relationship receives continuing heightened attention from the German public. On the other hand, the publication of the Good Friday prayer

occurred during the preparatory period for the 97th *Katholikentag* [Congress of Catholics], on the theme of “You set me free in the open (Ps 18:20),” held May 21-25 in Osnabrück. The weeks of preparation as well as the days during which this major event took place presented multiple opportunities for reports and commentaries on the Good Friday prayer. The *Katholikentag* is held every two years in changing locations in May or June, beginning on a Wednesday evening and continuing until noon on Sunday. Depending on the location, the number of participants varies from between thirty thousand to a hundred thousand. This year there were more than forty-five thousand. For almost forty years, the traditions of the *Katholikentag* have included a central and well attended programmatic element with Christian-Jewish biblical dialogue, lectures and round table discussions as well as a celebration of community in which Catholics and Jews gather to pray. After the publication of the Good Friday prayer, a number of Jewish guest speakers and rabbis who had agreed to collaborate on the 2008 *Katholikentag* withdrew in protest. Each withdrawal resulted in reports in the press and the media.

The controversy around the Good Friday prayer was discussed at individual events during the *Katholikentag* itself. Jewish participants had the opportunity freely to express to Catholic listeners their critical queries regarding Pope Benedict’s prayer. The gathering for prayer attended by almost one thousand faithful drew the most attention. Rabbi Henry Brandt functioned as the Jewish liturgist. Using the theme of the *Katholikentag*, “You set me free in the open,” he asked whether, after the Christian-Jewish relationship had been brought out into the open through the Second Vatican Council and during the pontificate of John Paul II, a time of frightening narrowing was now following. It had taken the *Shoah* to generate “the church’s alarmed awakening” and “a dramatic change” in the relationship between Christians and Jews. Through the new Good Friday prayer “the Jewish soul, particularly in Germany, was wounded; people felt insulted.” Rabbi Brandt asked, “Is this a change to the change?”

The Catholic liturgist, Archbishop Robert Zollitzsch, president of the German Bishops Conference, responded to this question in his homily. He said that Christians had had painstakingly to learn that the Jews are “the people of the covenant that was never revoked.” This remains the teaching. “There will be no change to the change. The path leads forwards, and I stand here in order to guarantee that!” The participants in the celebration applauded enthusiastically. And when at the end the rabbi and the archbishop spontaneously exchanged the kiss of peace, the applause burst forth again and went on forever.[24]

This as well as many reactions, questions, opinions and contributions from the participants in other events in Osnabrück, showed the Jewish guests that there exists among German Catholics a strong acceptance of the Second Vatican Council and its attitude of respect towards the Jewish people and Judaism. This was perceived in the wider German public as well, leading rabbinic conferences and Jewish scholars to declare that they wanted to continue the dialogue with the Catholic Church. As of the fall of 2008, it is clear that the controversy around the 2008 Good Friday prayer in Germany has been calmed through political dialogue, even if the optimism of the past years has sobered. Something comparable can surely be said for the situation of Catholic-Jewish dialogue at the world level.

As of the fall of 2008, it appears that there has been a double-faceted calming of the controversy around the 2008 Good Friday prayer “For the Jews:”

First, with the Secretary of State Tarcisio Cardinal Bertone’s letter of May 14, 2008 to the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, the crisis has been worked through at the level of the official political dialogue. The Secretary of State’s letter explicitly confirms “the Catholic Church's firm commitment, especially in the wake of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, to promote and develop relations with the Jews through dialogue marked by profound respect, sincere esteem and cordial friendship. This commitment remains unchanged, especially in view of the spiritual links that exist

between Jews and Christians."[25] In its wording, this is a clear declaration of commitment to the epoch-making progress in the Catholic-Jewish relationship in recent decades. The explicit statements by the Vatican granting a high degree of authority to Walter Cardinal Kasper's commentary on the new Good Friday prayer makes this general confirmation concrete and applies it to this particular controversy. Cardinal Bertone explicitly cited as the main point in Cardinal Kasper's interpretation that "the new *Oremus et pro Iudaeis* is not intended to promote proselytizing among Jews…and it opens up an eschatological perspective." The double assurance, that the Catholic Church does not intend any proselytizing missionary activity and that the theological statement about recognizing Jesus Christ is a statement of eschatological faith, apparently gave the Chief Rabbinate of Israel a basis for reopening the possibility of official contacts with the Catholic Church. It also seems that the irritation caused by the 2008 Good Friday prayer does not weigh heavily enough to cause the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations, the partner in the official Catholic-Jewish dialogue, to desist from this dialogue.[26]

Secondly, though, this important process of political dialogue has not clarified all of the theological questions raised by both Jews and Catholics about the Good Friday prayer. Some of these questions were quoted above and are a task for ongoing Catholic theological discussion as well as for Catholic-Jewish dialogue. They concern the worry that the 2008 Good Friday prayer might replace the prayer of intercession in the 1970 *Missale Romanum*. But they also address the problems presented by upholding two theologically inconsistent forms of the liturgical rite as well as those presented by the text of the 2008 intercession itself, its relationship with Scripture and with *Wirkungsgeschichte*, the lived history of this Scripture and liturgy. Reflection on these and other issues superimposes internal Church matters on aspects of the Church's relationship with the Jews and Judaism.

III. Does the 2008 Good Friday Prayer Open the Door for Other Liturgical Changes?

Initially, Catholic theologians involved in Catholic-Jewish dialogue reacted spontaneously to the publication on February 4, 2008 of the new prayer of intercession with the concern that this revised prayer of intercession might be just a first step. Some asked worriedly whether the Good Friday prayer of the 1970 missal would be changed so as to be closer to the 2008 Good Friday prayer.[27] As a theologian for whom the prayer of intercession in the 1970 missal represents the heart of an ecumenically determined new post-conciliar "theology of Judaism," I shared this initial concern. But I reminded myself of the essential features in Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger's/Pope Benedict XVI's theological view of Israel. This 2008 Good Friday prayer, which Benedict himself formulated, does not express the entirety of his theological view of the relationship between the Church and the Jews and Judaism.

As is apparent in Cardinal Ratzinger's writings, his interest in the Church's relationship with Jews and Judaism grew during the 1990's. His reflection rests on the fundamental conviction that Jews and Christians should accept one another, not by ignoring their specific faith or denying it, but from the center of that faith itself. Thus, in the encounter of Jews and Christians, faith encounters faith – and this in the sense of the famous paragraph 839 of the Catechism: "the Jewish faith, unlike other non-Christian religions, is already a response to God's revelation." Hence, Jewish faith is not a lack of faith or a heretical faith. Pope Benedict's admonition to Christians to "acknowledge God's decree, according to which God apparently gave Israel its own mission during the 'time of the pagans'," indirectly informs the theological problem posed by the Good Friday prayer. "The Fathers say that the Jews, to whom Holy Scripture was first entrusted, must remain alongside us as a witness to the world."[28] The acknowledgment of the abiding reality of the Church and Israel as alongside one another is in its content close to the text of the 1970 intercession. That the highly respected 2001 document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*, was written under Cardinal Ratzinger's chairmanship, is

also important in understanding the pope's view of Israel. This document insistently highlights the abiding theological dignity of post-biblical Judaism.[29] Finally, in his book on Jesus, Pope Benedict reaffirmed a hermeneutically significant fact through his literary conversation with Rabbi Jacob Neusner's understanding of Jesus: Jewish voices have authority in Christian theology's search for understanding, and that applies even when the latter is occupied with and developing its Christology. Moreover, by characterizing Jesus Christ as "God's living Torah" in his book on Jesus, Pope Benedict laid a foundation of continuity between the Church and Israel. He calls on Christian theology to reflect further on this.[30]

This evidence allows me to conclude that the 2008 Good Friday prayer will not open the door for further changes, and that Benedict will not replace the intercession in the 1970 missal with his 2008 wording, but rather that the former will remain the ordinary liturgical form. The problem remains that two very different forms of the Church's liturgical prayer give expression to a serious ambivalence in public ecclesial prayer for the Jews. This problem is an important aspect of the fundamental question regarding the co-existence of a double custom, the "ordinary" and the "extra-ordinary" form of the liturgy. Catholic liturgists argue among themselves about this problem and the considerable ambivalence it creates.[31]

IV. "Catholics have a Right to Pray for Us" – On Reciprocity and Asymmetry in the Christian-Jewish Relationship

Reports on the European discussions about the Good Friday prayer pointed out that Rabbi Jacob Neusner, unlike numerous critical Jewish voices, expressed understanding for Pope Benedict's Good Friday prayer. He pointed to the synagogue's praxis of praying for non-Jews and referred to the *Alenu* prayer in which the Jewish community implicitly asks God to enlighten the hearts of the nations. This prayer is "the counterpart to the Catholic one that asks for the salvation of all Israel 'in the fullness of time, when all mankind enters the Church'."[32]

In rejecting Jewish criticism of Benedict's Good Friday prayer, Rabbi Neusner presupposed that reciprocity is at issue. The Vatican's Secretary of State Tarcisio Cardinal Bertone in a subsequent interview in Baku, Azerbaijdan, called for "reciprocity" in the matters causing irritation between the Jewish and the ecclesial faith communities. He said that, as highly respected Jewish representatives had written, there are prayers on both sides that could be changed and that also possibly should be changed. What was required was an attitude of reciprocity and of respect while strengthening one's own identity, and performing this without any desire for forced conversion whenever speaking of one's own faith with the greatest possible respect for the other faith.[33] However, it does seem that in his call for reciprocity, Cardinal Bertone lost sight of the asymmetry that reigns both in the present case and in the fundamental relationship between Christianity and Judaism – because of their differences in age, in identity structure, and in the burdens of history they carry. Consequently, his expectation that the Jewish side might change an old prayer seems not to take several things into account. Already in the Middle Ages and into the 18th century, the *Alenu* prayer of which Neusner spoke was associated with significant Christian-Jewish controversy. It was sung by the martyrs as they died in the persecution of the Jews of Blois in 1171, and it caused astonishment among the persecutors, who had never heard a melody like that of the *Alenu* prayer.[34] A Christian guest at a Jewish service will hear or read this prayer with the congregation with respect and a component of shame when he or she remembers that this prayer was recited as a confession of faith in a situation of persecution. In contrast to this, in the history of Christian piety, Good Friday with its prayer for the conversion of the Jews goaded misguided Christians at the end of the Middle Ages and at the beginning of modern times into expressing their compassion for the crucified Lord by inflicting suffering on Jews and by persecuting them. A further asymmetry between the *Alenu* prayer and the new Good Friday prayer lies in the fact that a present-day change is the cause of the current irritation.

V. The 2008 Good Friday Prayer: According to Scripture – The Only Norm for Liturgical Prayer?

Once one ceases to focus on reciprocity, one can turn to analyzing the actual text of the 2008 Good Friday prayer. In the course of the current controversy, many have taken this path. In discussing the wording of the 2008 Good Friday prayer,[35] they have repeatedly suggested a reading that focuses on the extent to which its theological statement is in accord with Scripture or uses New Testament language. This reliance on Scripture is evident already in the invitation to prayer: "We pray for the Jews. That our God and Lord enlighten their hearts so that they recognize Jesus Christ, the Savior of *all mankind*." II Corinthians 4:6 and Ephesians 1:18 speak of the light's shining in the hearts or of the enlightenment of (the eyes of) the hearts. The call to prayer here speaks of the "savior of all mankind" – the Gospel according to John speaks similarly of Jesus Christ as the "savior of the world" (Jn 4:42; cf. also 1 Jn 4:14) – and this seems to be inspired by 1 Tm 2:4, where it teaches that God "wills everyone to be saved." This invitation to prayer does not make Israel's unique significance within salvation history explicit, but rather uses a wording – corresponding in its content with such texts as Acts 4:12 or Rom 1:16 and other passages in the New Testament – that is universal and that includes Israel in this universality.

Those interpreting the body of the prayer have noted other biblical or New Testament connections: "Eternal God Almighty, you want all people to be saved and to arrive at the knowledge of the Truth. Graciously grant that when the fullness of nations enters your Church, all Israel will be saved. Through Christ our Lord."[36] God's will to save all human beings alludes to Old Testament statements, like those about the covenant with Noah (Gen 9:1-17, especially 15-17) or the covenant with Abraham (Gn 12:3 and 18:18), or in prophetic visions (Is 25:6-8; 45:21-24 and others), but like in the invitation to prayer, more understand it as an explicit quotation of 1 Tm 2:4 and its statement: "(God) wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth."

The prayer's continuation alludes to Rom 11:25 and 26, without of course quoting that text verbatim: "[… a hardening has come upon part of Israel,] until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved." Regarding this allusion, many have pointed out that where the New Testament speaks about the pagans or the full number of the Gentiles *attaining salvation*, the 2008 prayer speaks of the *entry* of the fullness of nations into *your Church*. It thus presents the pagans or Gentiles as oriented towards the Church. But Rom 11:25 does not express such a correlation between the Gentiles and the Church. Most have understood the prayer's statement "when the fullness of nations enters your Church" as pointing to the end of time, so that the request that "Israel will be saved" looks towards the eschaton. According to the explicit wording of the 2008 Good Friday prayer, the salvation of all Israel will not occur because of an initiative taken by the Church, but is to be understood as an action of Christ of the *Parousia*. Thus the intercession is not to be understood as a missionary approach by the Church towards the Jewish people, – what Cardinal Kasper particularly emphasized in his interpretation.

The 2008 Good Friday prayer is close to Scripture and accords with Scripture. But does this mean that the uneasiness bemoaned by many is misguided? Might biblical statements have lost their "innocence" through their *Wirkungsgeschichte*, through the effect they have had throughout history? Some Catholic voices have insisted that the new prayer of intercession indeed only expresses in friendlier language what was prayed for centuries until the 1970 liturgical reform. The 1962 missal and its Good Friday prayer for the Jews speaks of the "blindness" of the Jews and of the "darkness" from which they had to be removed – definitely a severe insult and humiliating to the Jewish people. According to several opinions, while Pope Benedict did not explicitly repeat the earlier insulting language when speaking in his new formulation about the enlightenment of the hearts of the Jews, he did still evoke it through association.[37] Jewish voices responded by saying that not only Jews need God to enlighten their hearts; but that Christians and all human beings also need this.

Without a doubt, with its requests for Jewish (ac)knowledge(ment) of Jesus Christ, its prayer for the enlightenment Jewish hearts and its hope that Jews will come to knowledge of the truth, the 2008 Good Friday prayer touched a raw nerve among Jews, arousing a response that Christians must grant its own authority. This nerve includes the Jewish memory of a long history in which they faced social and economic limitations, endangerment, persecution and even death by Christian hands, especially during the second millennium CE. In his discussion of the prayer, Cardinal Kasper said, “The irritation on the Jewish side is to a great extent not rationally but emotionally based.” This characterization led to bitter Jewish commentaries and gave rise to the rabbinic query, “Are we all nothing but [oversensitive] mimosa plants?”[38] For this so-called “emotional” reality is actually the rational one and an important indication of history’s obstinacy. This history’s hermeneutic authority expresses itself emotionally, especially around Good Friday. Experiences of Christian contempt, humiliation and hostility on that day are burnt deeply into the Jewish memory over generations, a memory that the 2008 Good Friday prayer evoked. When this memory became active, it included a sense of being threatened. This arose from an intuitive knowledge of the danger arising from Christian pious responses to the passion and the memory of experiences of persecution and suffering. Cardinal Kasper knows this, of course, for he added, “One should however not dismiss [this emotional response] as an expression of oversensitivity. Collective memories of forced catechesis and forced conversions are still alive even among Jewish friends who have been involved for decades in intensive conversation with Christians.”[39]

When in today’s Church, the words of a prayer call to mind negative experiences in Christian-Jewish history, they should not be used as the Church’s prayer, even if they are in accord with Scripture. Their scriptural grounding is an insufficient criterion. Liturgical prayers are not the same thing as liturgical readings. When a reading, say from the New Testament, contains texts with an anti-Jewish *Wirkungsgeschichte*, the preacher has the opportunity, even the obligation, to interpret these texts and recall their ill-fated effect. Public prayer on the other hand is an act of affirmative proclamation that presents no opportunity for restrictive interpretation. It must have its own immediate integrity.[40] Prayer has integrity when its effect is to bless the one for whom the prayer intercedes.[41]

The Good Friday prayer of intercession in the 1970 Roman Missal has such integrity and it functions as a blessing from all perspectives. Both in its invitation to prayer – “Let us pray for the Jewish people, the first to hear the word of God, that they may continue to grow in the love of his name and in faithfulness to his covenant” – and in the prayer itself – “Almighty and eternal God, long ago you gave your promise to Abraham and his posterity. Listen to your church as we pray that the people you first made your own may arrive at the fullness of redemption”[42] – this prayer turns away from the historic rejection of Judaism and signifies “turning towards Judaism with love and care.”[43] The 1970 Good Friday prayer implements in worship the Second Vatican Council’s acknowledgment of Israel’s dignity in the history of salvation and in theology, as expressed in its declaration Nostra Aetate. This prayer is the liturgical heart of the attitude and teaching of the Church’s respect for Judaism and the Jewish people. It expresses great esteem for the Jewish people as the people chosen by God. The 2008 prayer of intercession lacks an explicit and unequivocal confirmation of Israel’s theological dignity *post Christum*.

Pope Benedict obviously sought to bring the faithful who celebrate the liturgy according to the 1962 rite from the margin of the Church to its center, and he did not want to overtax them with a prayer that does not explicitly name Jesus Christ. He presumably feared that these faithful would not accept a prayer without this mention, and he thus gave rise to a crisis in Catholic-Jewish relations. If this indeed was the pope’s inner-ecclesial wish, it is puzzling that, before promulgating this prayer of intercession, he did not discuss his intention to introduce a new Good Friday prayer with Jewish partners in the official Catholic-Jewish dialogue. Equally, one might ask why he did not promulgate alongside the prayer either his own interpretation or one written by the person in the Curia who is responsible for this area, Cardinal Kasper. Such an interpretation would have clarified

the prayer's intention; it would have taught explicitly that the attitude of respect towards Jews and Judaism that has been taught since the Second Vatican Council remains valid, and it would have indicated how the new prayer's text allows this. Without this clarification, even Cardinal Kasper's subsequent interpretation was not received immediately by all as credible and convincing. Pope Benedict's gestures of good will on April 17, 2008[44] during his visit to the United States similarly seemed to fall short, as the commentary by James Rudin entitled "Symbolism, Yes. Substance? Not Yet" showed.[45]

These words are harsh. I do not want to make them my own. And yet, Pope Benedict's addresses since the beginning of his pontificate concerning the Church's relationship to Jews and Judaism (and Israel)[46] can lead one's theological thinking in this direction. Hardly any recent pope has presented himself as a theologian as clearly as Benedict. Without question, he understands the Church's relationship to Jews and Judaism as faith facing faith and thus as a fundamentally theological relationship. It is thus all the more surprising that in his discourses he does not approach the astonishing breadth of theological horizon demonstrated by Pope John Paul II. In his address to a delegation of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations on June 9, 2005 in the Vatican and during his visit to the Cologne synagogue on August 19, 2005, Benedict reassured his listeners that he would "continue to advance" on the road of Pope John Paul II of improving relations with the Jewish people.[47] So far, he has not honored this promise theologically. In his words at Catholic-Jewish encounters, Benedict's remarks have only addressed parts of John Paul's theological horizon. On such occasions he articulates most strongly the moral aspects of the ecclesial-Jewish relationship, such as the behavior of Christians – but not of the Church as Church. However, he refrains from speaking of the theological relationship of the Church to Jews and Judaism. This corresponds indirectly with the (American) Orthodox Jewish restriction of Christian-Jewish dialogue to social and ethical issues, excluding more specifically dogmatic theological issues.

VI. The 2008 Good Friday Prayer: A Challenge for Further Theological Discussion

The crisis created by the 2008 Good Friday prayer teaches us that the Catholic-Jewish relationship is still one prone to disturbances. But in spite of this, the emerging relationship has generated structures and involved people from both sides who can address the disturbances, controversies, and conflicts that arise and who can sometimes resolve them constructively too. This itself is a major step forward, not to be discounted. As we address the present crisis, sobriety demands that we presume that the 2008 Good Friday prayer will remain the "Tridentine" form of ritual. So under these circumstances, what is necessary for the Catholic-Jewish relationship to continue to move forward?

First of all, the Church's commissions for religious relations with Jews, internationally and locally, will have to prove themselves as forums in which the implications of the controversy around the 2008 Good Friday prayer can be discussed freely. This process has already begun. In Germany, representatives of the Orthodox and Reform rabbinical conferences had a productive meeting in September 2008 in Cologne with the Bishop's Commission for Religious Relations with Judaism. The final day of the November 2008 meeting in Budapest of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee also provided a forum for serious dialogue about this issue.

Secondly, any further discussion of this issue will need to take account of the inner-ecclesial status of the 2008 Good Friday prayer. This prayer is only valid for the exceptional form of the Catholic rite and is celebrated by a very small number of faithful. The overwhelming majority of Catholics celebrate the ordinary form in conformity with the 1970 missal that was promulgated by Pope Paul VI. Its Good Friday prayer remains the Catholic Church's "main prayer" for the Jews; it is marked by the acknowledgment that the Jews stand in fidelity to God's covenant and in the love of God's Name, and it prays that they may progress in this according to God's will. It is the particular

responsibility of the bishops to see that this is and remains the “main prayer.”

However and thirdly, the specific and unique task of discussing the problem of upholding the two contradictory Good Friday prayers for the Jews alongside each other, that of 1970 and that of 2008, belongs to the realm of theology. Resolving this is not the task of liturgists.[48] In my opinion, the key issue is not that of mission to the Jews. Here, Cardinal Kasper’s analysis and interpretation of the 2008 prayer is convincing. The issue is rather the question of salvation or, more precisely, the tension between the fact that God’s covenant with the Jewish people has not been revoked[49] and the universal salvific significance of Jesus Christ.

The discussion group “Jews and Christians” of the Central Committee of German Catholics, that which had expressed itself so clearly in the controversy around the 2008 Good Friday prayer, had previously addressed precisely this theological tension. The group not only decidedly rejected mission towards the Jews, but it also discussed whether it is possible to create a Christian-Jewish bridge by referring to Jesus Christ. The answer given by the group to this question was affirmative with two conditions:

1. According to Christian faith, Jesus Christ is the “Yes” and the “Amen” (2 Cor 1:20) of God's irrevocable fidelity to Israel and to the whole world;

2. Nevertheless, there is salvation for Jewish people who do not believe in Jesus as the Christ because of God's covenant with them.[50]

This position caused Cardinal Kasper to enter into dialogue and respond critically to the discussion group. He underlined that the main point in the question is the uniqueness and universality of salvation in Jesus Christ. He said that theology has developed various theories in order to solve the seeming contradiction “that on the one hand, salvation is only possible through Jesus Christ, and on the other hand, it is also possible without (explicit) faith in Jesus Christ.” Cardinal Kasper expressed his surprise over the fact that the discussion group had “tacitly broadened the axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* in such a way as to make salvation also possible *extra Christum*.” According to Christian conviction, “the old covenant continues because of its Christological confirmation and fulfillment.”

In his answer to Cardinal Kasper’s objection, the president of the discussion group, Hanspeter Heinz, stated, “For the Christian members of the discussion group, the uniqueness and universality of salvation in Jesus Christ is beyond question, whereas the Jewish members oppose this claim of our faith.” However, the Christian and the Jewish members agree that the disagreement about the confession of Christ definitely has a place in their theological dialogue.

That has consequences for our interpretation of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. Of course the Church maintains that Jesus Christ brought about the salvation of the whole world, including the Jews, and that the Church as the Body of Christ participates in this salvific event. But the thrust of our declaration heads in another direction. The question we are dealing with is whether *faith in Jesus Christ* is the universal prerequisite for attaining salvation. In this, we advocate for the view that the decisive condition is to fulfill God’s will, which the Jews know from the Torah and their faith tradition, and which we Christians recognize in addition and above all in Jesus Christ, according to the New Testament and the Church’s tradition. In his universal desire to save, God also grants the hope for salvation of those who direct their lives according to his will, without their being members of the Catholic Church or sharing its faith in Jesus Christ.

Is there anything more to be said regarding the Christian conviction expressed here that Jews who direct their lives according to the will of God as revealed in the Torah will be granted God's salvation? The Bible in both the Old and New Testaments testifies to God as the one who makes human beings, and especially the children of Israel, his covenantal partners and who wants to grant them his salvation. God takes the initiative, and his grace and mercy always lead humans on the way. Jesus of Nazareth was born as a son of the covenanted people Israel and he lived according to this covenant. Because he lived according to this covenant and in conformity to the Torah of this covenant, he confirms the covenant and the Torah. Thus Pope Benedict can speak of Jesus as the "Torah…in person," as "God's living Torah" or as the "Torah itself." Only through and out of God's covenant with Israel, can Jesus be recognized and understood as the Christ. Faith in Jesus Christ, who is God's "Yes" and "Amen" and thus the personification of God's fidelity to his promises, would also lose its foundation were God's covenant with Israel revoked, finished, or enfeebled. On this rests the Christian conviction that Jewish life according to Israel's Torah has God's blessing and brings about salvation. For that which is salvific for Jews – life according to the Torah, trust in God's Word, faith in his promise – is in an inner contact with Jesus Christ and is embodied in him, and he confirms and affirms it. For Jesus Christ is obedient to the Torah and fulfills it. He does not abolish it, but performs it and fulfills it. He teaches the Torah, his way and his life are lived Torah, he is the Torah become a living form, he is Torah incarnated. Because of Jesus Christ's link with the Torah, from the Christian point of view, the person who as a Jew follows the Torah goes his or her way in communion with him who is Torah incarnate.

In this way, Christian theology's trust in salvation can be anchored in the faith that God's Torah makes it possible for the Jew to respond to God's teaching in a way that works salvation, without explicit faith in Jesus Christ. Thus one can also say: Jewish faithful witness to Torah and Christian witness of lived discipleship to Jesus Christ (the Torah incarnate) do not stand opposed and disconnected from one another; from a Christian perspective, they intersect and are not parallel and independent ways of salvation. When Christians speak of the fulfillment of the Torah through Jesus Christ, they have no right to claim superiority over Jewish performance of Torah. Rather, in speaking thus, they can affirm the tension between their hope of salvation that is grounded in Christ and between Jewish salvation "without explicit faith in Jesus Christ." The reflections presented here as an *opinio theologica* are accompanied by the deep conviction that the Church can pray without any inner reservations and with complete affirmation, "Let us pray for the Jewish people, the first to hear the word of God, that they may continue to grow in the love of his name and in faithfulness to his covenant." This prayer remains the Church's primary prayer for the Jews. It belongs at the heart of a Christian theology of the Church's relationship with Jews and Judaism.

1. "Nota della Segreteria di Stato – 4 febbraio 2008," *L'Osservatore Romano – Giornale Quotidiano Politico Religioso*, CXLVIII n. 31 (Wednesday, February 6, 2008), 1; in German: "Note des Staatssekretariats – February 4, 2008," *L'Osservatore Romano. Wochenausgabe in deutscher Sprache*, 34, No. 6 (February 8, 2008), 1; quoted (with some changes) according to: Reformulated Tridentine Rite Prayer for Jews, in: http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/ cjrelations/news/Prayer_for_Jews.htm.
2. Dated 29 February 2008. The declaration was repeatedly published – for example in: *Christ in der Gegenwart* 60:11 (March, 16, 2008): 122; *Kirche und Israel* 23 (2008): 86-88 and *Freiburger Rundbrief* NF 15 (2008): 193-196 – and was rapidly translated into English as well. See "A New Burden on Christian-Jewish Relations – Statement of the Discussion Group 'Jews and Christians' of the Central Committee of German Catholics on the Good Friday Prayer 'For the Jews' in the Extraordinary Rite Version of 2008," at: http://www.jcrelations.net/en/?item=2937. The following quotation is according to this translation.
3. Statement of the discussion group "Jews and Christians" of the Central Committee of German Catholics (ZdK), *"Störung der christlich-jüdischen Beziehungen – Zur Wiedereinführung des tridentinischen Ritus"* [Disturbance of Christian-Jewish Relations –

on the Re-Introduction of the Tridentine Rite], Easter/Pesah 2007 (manuscript).

4. Johannes Röser, “Neue ’tridentinische‘ Karfreitagsfürbitte,“ *Christ in der Gegenwart* 60:8 (February 24, 2008): 83f., writes, “Ich sehe eine deutliche Kurskorrektur.“ See also the theologian Albert Gerhards on the changed Good Friday prayer in *Schwäbische Zeitung* (Thursday, February 28, 2008); Hanspeter Heinz, “So darf die Kirche nicht beten! Eine neue Karfreitagsfürbitte im alten Geist,“ *Herderkorrespondenz* 62 (2008): 228-231 and *Freiburger Rundbrief* NF 15 (2008): 196-202; and “Ernste Störungen der christlich-jüdischen Beziehungen,“ *Kirche und Israel* 23 (2008): 54-57; Heinz-Günther Schöttler, “Die neue Karfreitagsfürbitte und ihre Theologie: Eine nachhaltige Störung der christlich-jüdischen Beziehungen,“ *Bibel und Liturgie* 81 (2008): 145-152; Hanspeter Heinz, “Wenn ein Gebet zum Ärgernis wird: Zur neuen Karfreitagsfürbitte Benedikts XVI. im tridentinischen Ritus,” *Concilium* 44 (2008): 368-372.
5. Walter Cardinal Kasper, “Das Wann und Wie entscheidet Gott,“ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 68 (Thursday, March 20, 2008): 39; republished with slight changes and many added footnotes as ”Zur Diskussion um die geänderte Karfreitagsfürbitte,“ L’Osservatore Romano: Wochenausgabe in deutscher Sprache 38:16 (April 18, 2008): 11. Quotations here according to the English translation, “God Decides the When and the How,“ pdf available from: http://billcork.wordpress.com/ 2008/04/08/walter-kasper-on-christians-and-jews/ (April 8, 2008).
6. Karl Cardinal Lehmann, “Nicht grenzenlos belastbar: Zur Diskussion um die Karfreitagsfürbitte im jüdisch-christlichen Dialog, Gastkommentar,” *Glaube und Leben: Kirchenzeitung für das Bistum Mainz* 64:14 (April 6, 2008): 9.
7. “… damit sie Jesus Christus erkennen.“ Die neue Karfreitagsfürbitte für die Juden, ed. Walter Homolka, Erich Zenger (Freiburg: Herder, 2008).
8. Christoph Schönborn, “Judaism’s Way to Salvation,” *The Tablet* (March 29, 2008), http://www.thetablet.co.uk/articles/11223/.
9. “Karfreitagsfürbitte: Israelitische Kultusgemeinde beendet Dialog - Kardinal Schönborn veröffentlicht Klarstellung,” *Katholische Nachrichten* (April 17, 2008), http://www.kath.net/detail.php?id=19574. In a series of articles in their editions from March 22–26, the Viennese daily newspaper *Der Standard* (Vienna: Standard Verlagsgesellschaft) commented on the controversy. They began with a polemical article by the editor Alexandra Föderl-Schmid, who spoke of a “ridiculing of the Jews,” a “relapse into the anti-Judaism that was believed to have been overcome,” and of a “Crusade” by the pope. Others contradicted this assessment, or supported it, albeit in toned down form. On the one hand, Paul Schulmeister reproached it as showing “a lack of knowledge regarding the Catholic position on the place of the ‘Old Covenant’ (that was never revoked) in salvation history.” Kurt Appel raised the corresponding necessity to understand the new Good Friday prayer against the background of “the awful passages about the blindness of the Jews” in the earlier prayer of intercession. On the other hand, Bert Rebhandl wrote, “The new Good Friday prayer for the extraordinary rite...shows that the Christian relationship to the Jews had been defused over the past decades frequently for reasons of political correctness.” Barbara Coudenhove-Kalergi remarked critically concerning the new Good Friday prayer, “Whoever knows how to read symbols will understand its language: discussion with the religious other is not the goal, but rather their conversion.” An Austrian theological journal enabled a Jewish voice to join the conversation. See Walter Homolka, “Von der Versöhnung zur Eiszeit? Katholische Kirche und Judentum entzweien sich über Judenmission,” *Theologisch-Praktische Quartalsschrift* 156 (2008): 247-258.
10. Cf. Michael Maier, “Juden aufgebracht über geändertes Gebet zu Karfreitag” *Tages Anzeiger* (March 18, 2008), http://sc.tagesanzeiger.ch/ dyn/news/ausland/852861.html.
11. Jan-Heiner Tück, “’Für die Juden:’ Irritationen über die abgeänderte Karfreitagsbitte,” *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, (Friday, February 8, 2008), quotation according to: http://www.nzz.ch/nachrichten/kultur/aktuell/fuer_die_juden_1.667488.html; Christian M. Rutishauser SJ, “Unverständ-liches als Anlass für tieferes Verstehen - Karfreitagsfürbitte

für die Juden," *tachles, das jüdische Wochenmagazin* (March 7, 2008): 12.

12. Nikolaus Klein, "Israels Glaubenszeugnis und die Kirche," *Orientierung* 72 (2008): 82-84; quotations on p. 84.
13. Luigi Accattoli, "Nuova preghiera per gli ebrei I rabbini: il problema resta - Il Papa cambia. Di Segni e Laras: no alla conversione," *Corriere della Sera* (February 6, 2008): 25, http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2008/febbraio/06/Nuova_preghiera_per_gli_ebrei_co_9_080206022.shtml.
14. Jacob Neusner, "Monotheistische Logik," *Tagespost* (February 23, 2008), http://www.die-tagespost.de/Archiv/titel_anzeige.asp?ID=38204; in Italian as "Un vescovo e un rabbino difendono la preghiera per la salvezza degli ebrei," chiesa (March 7, 2008), http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/193041; and in English, "Catholics Have a Right To Pray for Us," *The Forward* (February 28, 2008), http://www.forward.com/articles/12787/. Quotation according to Jacob Neusner, "Catholics Have a Right To Pray for Us," (March 5, 2008) at http://www.jcrelations.net/en/?item=2936.
15. Cf. Letter of the Jewish-Christian Friendship Association [Amicizia Ebraico Cristiana] of Naples, in: http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/pdf/Naples_Prayer_Jews.pdf.
16. "A proposito della "preghiera per gli ebrei," *Mosaico* (March 25, 2008), http://www.mosaico-cem.it/article.php?section=intervento&id=67.
17. Anthony Ward, "Sources of the New Good Friday Intercession for the Jews in the 1962 'Missale Romanum'," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 122 (2008): 250-255; the article ends by remarking, "It is difficult to know what the sequel to this latest development might be. Since, however, the recent choice was not that of integrating into the 1962 edition of the Missale Romanum the text found in the 1970-2000 editions, it might well be that it, too, is not destined for a long time."
18. Gianfranco Ravisi, "Preghiamo per il fratello maggiore," *Il regni documenti* (March 10, 2008), 129ff. Quoted according to: Archbishop Gianfranco Ravasi, "Oremus et pro Iudaeis of the Good Friday Liturgy. Theological Commentary," *L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English*, March 12, 2008), 4.
19. Walter Kasper, "La discussione sulle recenti modifiche La preghiera del Venerdì Santo per gli ebrei," *L'Osservatore Romano* – Giornale Quotidiano Politico Religioso CXLVIII: 84 (Thursday, April 10, 2008), 1f.
20. For French responses including the French translation of Jacob Neusner's statement, cf. the file at: http://www.sion.org/liturgie%20tridentine.htm and the contribution by Michel Remaud, "Dialogue et profession de foi," at http://www.sion.org/juifsvendredisaint.htm .
21. See reports like the following, posted on the website *Polska Rada Chrzescijan i Zydów*: "Rabini protestuja, a katoliccy tradycjonalisci zbieraja podpisy: Rabini przeciw nawracaniu Zydów" (February 21, 2008), http://www.prchiz.free.ngo.pl/prchizrabiniaTrydpopup.html; Romuald Jakub Weksler Waszkinel, "Odwrotu od dialogu nie bedzie," (no date)http://www.prchiz.free.ngo.pl/prchiztekstksWekslerapopup.html; "Rabin Jacob Neusner, profesor historii i teologii judaizmu w Bard Colleg w Nowym Jorku, broni papieza przed krytyka ze strony zydowskiej," (March 4, 2008), http://www.prchiz.free.ngo.pl/prchizrabinNeusnerpopup.html; or Archbishop Ravasi, "modlitwa za Zydów nie wyraza strategii nawracania" (no date) http://www.prchiz.free.ngo.pl/prchizabpRawasipopup.html.
22. Edward Kessler, "More Than Mere Satchel Bearers," *The Tablet* (February 16, 2008), 11f.
23. Edward Kessler, "A Church That Looks Both Ways," *The Tablet* (February 23, 2008), 10f.
24. Cf. the articles, "Im Gespräch bleiben, Katholikentag: Juden und Christen wollen Dialog fortsetzen," *Domradio* (May 22, 1008), http://www.domradio.de/includes/katholikentag_2008/artikel_41431.html; "Frust über Vatikan: "Welcher Teufel reitet Benedikt?" *Spiegel on line* (May 23, 2008), http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,554908,00.html; "Zollitzsch und Brandt umarmen sich" *Deutscher Katholikentag Osnabrück 2008 Pressezentrum Nachrichtenredaktion* Meldung Nr. 146 (22. Mai 2008), linked from http://www.katholikentag.net/2008/presse/nachrichten/ergebnis.php?sf0=datum&sf1=refere

nt&sf2=veranstaltung&so0=contains&so1=contains&so2=contains&sc0=and&ss0=&ss1=&ss2=&bs=20&_ds=1&bn=6&do=Suchen; "Der ergreifendste Moment des Katholikentags," *Christ in der Gegenwart* 60 (2008): 245; Alwin Renker, "'Du führst uns hinaus ins Weite,' 97. Deutscher Katholikentag in Osnabrück," *Freiburger Rundbrief NF* 15 (2008): 284-289.

25. Quoted according to "Letter of Card. Tarcisio Bertone in Response to Concerns on the Revised Good Friday prayer," (May 15, 2008), http://www.sidic.org/en/docOnLineView.asp?class=Doc00604.
26. Thus some members of the IJCIC in personal correspondence.
27. See the cautious note by Anthony Ward, "Sources…," 225: "It is difficult to know what the sequel to this latest development might be." Similarly, Albert Gerhards, "Die Fürbitte für die Juden in ihrem liturgischen Kontext," in *"… damit sie Jesus Christus erkennen"…*, 115-125, 124: „Man fragt sich, ob diese Modifikation der letzte Eingriff gewesen ist." ["One wonders whether this modification will have been the last intervention."]
28. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Many Religions, One Covenant: Israel, the Church and the World, trans. Graham Harrison (Ignatius, 1999), 104.
29. Available at: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/pcb_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20020212_popolo-ebraico_en.html. On the German discussion, see *Eingebunden in das Volk Gottes: Jüdisch-christliche Blickpunkte zum Dokument der Päpstlichen Bibelkommission "Das jüdische Volk und seine Heilige Schrift in der christlichen Bibel,"* ed. Chr. Dohmen (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2003).
30. Joseph Ratzinger/Benedikt XVI., *Jesus von Nazareth. Erster Teil von der Taufe im Jordan bis zur Verklärung* (Freiburg: Herder, 2007); the pope's conversation with Jacob Neusner's book *Ein Rabbi spricht mit Jesus. Ein jüdisch-christlicher Dialog* (Freiburg: Herder 2007) can be found on pp. 131-160.
31. *Ein Ritus – zwei Formen. Die Richtlinie Papst Benedikts XVI. zur Liturgie*, ed. Albert Gerhards (Freiburg: Herder, 2008).
32. Jacob Neusner, *"Catholics Have a Right…"*.
33. Card. Tarcisio Bertone, "Reciprocità sulla preghiera degli ebrei," *Rinascimento Sacro: Blog del movimento liturgico benedettiano per la promozione della liturgica Romana nella forma straordinaria* (March 19, 2008), http://www.rinascimentosacro.com/2008/03/bertone-reciprocit-sulla-preghiera.html.
34. For more on this, see the articles "Aleinu Le-Shabbe'ah" in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, Keter Publishing House, 1971), 2:555-559; „Alaynu", in Macy Nulman, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Prayer: Ashkenazic and Sephardic Rites* (Northvale/London: Jason Aronson, 1996), 24-26; and „Alénou le-chabbéah", in: Alan Unterman, *Dictionnaire du Judaïsme. Histoire, mythes et traditions* (Paris: Thames & Hudson, 1997), 22.
35. For the discussion, see the anthology *"… damit sie Jesus Christus erkennen"…*
36. Quoted (with some changes) according to "Reformulated Tridentine Rite Prayer for Jews," http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/cjrelations/news/Prayer_for_Jews.htm.
37. Erich Zenger laments: "I would not have thought it possible that precisely a German pope would make a decision in such a historically forgetful way," in his contribution: "Das Nein heutiger Juden zu Jesus als ihrem Retter ernst nehmen", in *"… damit sie Jesus Christus erkennen"…*, 207.
38. Thus Rabbi Jonah Sievers in: *"… damit sie Jesus Christus erkennen"…*, 74-77, but see also the uncharacteristically sharp refutation by Micha Brumlik, 28-35.
39. Cf. Kasper, *"God Decides the When and the How."*
40. Paul Thibaud's thinking in his statement on the Good Friday prayer was similar when he spoke of the difference between the ethic of prayer and the ethic of dialogue; see the untitled file of French responses posted at: http://www.sion.org/liturgie%20tridentine.htm (April 11, 2008).
41. This is in agreement with Michael A. Signer's expectation that prayer have the nature of a

blessing; see his "Wenn ein Gebet kein Segen ist," in *"… damit sie Jesus Christus erkennen"…*, 78-90,especially 87f. Of course, this generalization applies only in reference to the close link between the Good Friday prayer for the Jews and the burden that Good Friday represents for the Catholic-Jewish relationship. If it were to apply universally, questions would arise for example regarding the Jewish prayer concerning heretics, the *birkat haminim*, which is not a text of blessing.

42. Quoted from: http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/cjrelations/news/Prayer_for_Jews.htm. For the German translation, see *Die Kirchen und das Judentum. Band I: Dokumente von 1945 bis 1985*, eds. Rolf Rendtorff, Hans Hermann Henrix, (Paderborn-Frankfurt: Bonifatius - Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 20013), 57; this includes a diagram, pp. 56-60, of how the Good Friday prayer for the Jews developed since 1570. On the interpretation and analysis of the Good Friday prayer in the 1970 missal, see for example: Albert Gerhards, "Universalität und Toleranz. Die Großen Fürbitten am Karfreitag als Maßstab christlichen Glaubens, Betens und Handelns," *Gottesdienst* 24 (1999): 41-43 and Hans Hermann Henrix, *Gottes Ja zu Israel. Ökumenische Studien christlicher Theologie* (Berlin/Aachen: Institut Kirche und Judentum/Einhard, 2005), 15-18.
43. Zenger, 205.
44. His message to the Jewish community for the feast of Passover: "Our Easter and Your Pesah, While Different and Distinct, Unite Us in Our Common Hope Centered on God and His Mercy," *L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English*, 38:17 (April 25, 2008): 11. The picture of the pope with the rabbi of the Park East Synagogue on April 17 – on the first page of the New York Times, for example – "reconfirmed the commitment of the Catholic Church to the dialogue inspired by *Nostra Aetate* of the Second Vatican Council more vividly than words alone could." Thus Robert Imbelli, "He Won the Hearts of the Multitudes Pointing to ‚Christ our Hope'" *L'Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English* 38:18 (April 30, 2008): 8; in German: "Überwältigendes Medieninteresse am Papstbesuch," *L'Osservatore Romano. Wochenausgabe in deutscher Sprache*, 38:18 (May 2, 2008): 2.
45. New York Times blog "A Papal Discussion" (April 21, 2008), http://thepope.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/04/20/symbolism-yes-substance-still-waiting/#more-73.
46. On this, see also the assessment by John T. Pawlikowski, "Wir müssen die Stagnation im katholisch-jüdischen Verhältnis überwinden!," in *"… damit sie Jesus Christus erkennen"…*, 149-158, 151f.
47. See Pope Benedict's the addresses of June 9 and August 19, 2005 at: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/ benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/june/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20050609_jewish-committee_en.html as well as at: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/august/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20050819_cologne-synagogue_en.html and http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/ speeches/2005/august/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20050819_cologne-synagogue_ge.html .
48. Thus Pawlikowski, " Wir müssen," 153, 156f.
49. On the matter of the covenant that has not been revoked, see for example: Norbert Lohfink, *Der niemals gekündigte Bund. Exegetische Gedanken zum christlich-jüdischen Dialog* (Freiburg: Herder, 1989); Albert Vanhoye, "Salut universel par le Christ et validité de l'Ancienne Alliance," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 116 (1994): 815-835; *Der ungekündigte Bund? Antworten des Neuen Testaments*, ed. Hubert Frankemölle (Freiburg: Herder, 1998); Hans Hermann Henrix, *Judentum und Christentum – Gemeinschaft wider Willen* (Regensburg: Pustet, 2008, 2nd edition), 85-109.
50. Discussion group "Jews and Christians" of the Central Committee of German Catholics, Jews and Christians in Germany, "Responsibility in Today's Pluralistic Society," *Coming Together for the Sake of God: Contributions to Jewish-Christian Dialogue from Post-Holocaust Germany*, eds. Hanspeter Heinz, Michael Signer (Collegeville: Liturgical Press,

2007), 112-131, 123.

51. Kardinal Walter Kasper, Hanspeter Heinz, “Theologische Schwerpunkte im christlich-jüdischen Gespräch,” *Freiburger Rundbrief NF* 14 (2007): 18-21 and 21-25, quotation: 21. Cardinal Kasper repeated his position in his new book with Daniel Deckers, *Wo das Herz des Glaubens schlägt. Die Erfahrung des Lebens* (Freiburg: Herder, 2008), 279-296.
52. “Theologische Schwerpunkte…,” 23.
53. Joseph Ratzinger/Benedikt XVI, *Jesus von Nazareth*, 144, 206 and 364.
54. See also Hans Hermann Henrix, “A Christian Theology of Salvation and Redemption”, *Face to Face* XIV (Spring 1988): 12-15.
55. The Pontifical Biblical Commission affirmed an analogous tension when they described the interface of Christian and Jewish readings of the Bible in their 2001 document, *The Jewish People…*, No. 22 as follows: “Christians can and ought to admit that the Jewish reading of the Bible is a possible one, in continuity with the Jewish Sacred Scriptures from the Second Temple period, a reading analogous to the Christian reading which developed in parallel fashion. Both readings are bound up with the vision of their respective faiths, of which the readings are the result and expression. Consequently, both are irreducible.”

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