

NOT FOR RELEASE BEFORE THURSDAY,
MARCH 16, 1967 (A. M. 'S)

Washington -- American Catholics were exhorted today "to advance the cause of Catholic-Jewish harmony throughout the world" in guidelines issued by an agency of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The U. S. Catholic Bishops' Sub-Commission for Catholic-Jewish Affairs set forth ten general principles and ten recommended programs by which Catholics can respond to the Second Vatican Council's historic statement on the Jews.

The guidelines recommend heightened relationships on all levels and encourage prayer in common.

Pointing out that "the largest Jewish community in the world" lives in the United States, the sub-commission declared that "the Church in America is faced with a historic opportunity" to foster mutual understanding.

The sub-commission, headed by Bishop Francis P. Leipzig of Baker, Oregon, is part of the U. S. Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs.

The guidelines point out that the Second Vatican Council's "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" -- which includes a section on the Jews -- "speaks from the highest level of the Church's authority to serve notice that injustices directed against the Jews at any time from any source can never receive Catholic sanction or support."

The guidelines note that "the general aim of all Catholic-Jewish meetings is to increase our understanding both of Judaism and the Catholic faith, eliminate sources of tension and misunderstanding, initiate dialogues or conversations on different levels, multiply intergroup meetings between Catholics and Jews, and promote cooperative social action."

(MORE)

The sub-commission warns that " proselytizing is to be carefully avoided in the dialogue."

It continues: "Prayer in common with Jews should, whenever it is feasible, be encouraged, especially in matters of common concern, such as peace and the welfare of the community. Needless to say, such prayers should meet the spiritual sensibilities in our common faith in the One God."

Programs recommended by the sub-commission include advancement of Catholic-Jewish relations on all levels, such as "grassroots programs" and more formal dialogues, open houses and cooperation in social action.

The sub-commission also suggests that "school texts, prayerbooks, and other media should, under competent auspices, be examined in order to remove not only those materials which do not accord with the content and spirit of the (Council) statement, but also those which fail to show Judaism's role in salvation-history in any positive light."

It was recommended that in dioceses with a considerable Jewish population an agency or person be assigned to Catholic-Jewish affairs.

In a letter accompanying the guidelines sent to all of the U.S. bishops, Bishop Leipzig stated: "In keeping with the spirit and direction opened to us by the Second Vatican Council, we are now happy to present these 'Guidelines for Catholic-Jewish Relations.' It is our sincere desire that in these days the realization of true fraternity may grow between Catholics and Jews, already united in their acknowledgment of one Heavenly Father. It is in that spirit that these guidelines are offered, both as a source of encouragement to the American Catholic community in seeking more positive relations with the Jewish community and as a sign of Catholic esteem for the faith and religious traditions of the Jewish people whereby we have all been enriched."

Members of the Bishops' Sub-Commission for Catholic-Jewish Affairs are as follows: Bishop Leipzig, chairman; Bishop Aloysius J. Wycislo of Chicago, vice chairman; Msgr. George G. Higgins, Washington, D.C. secretary; Msgr. Raymond Bosler, Indianapolis; Rev. Donald Campion, S.J., New York City; Rev. Edward J. Duff, S.J., Washington, D.C.; Msgr. Daniel M. Cantwell, Chicago; Rev. Edward H. Flannery, South Orange, N.J.; Msgr. Mark J. Hurley, San Francisco; Msgr. Francis J. Lally, Boston; Msgr. John M. Oesterreicher, Newark; Rev. Elmo L. Romagosa, New Orleans; Rev. John B. Sheerin, C.S.P., New York City; Rev. Gerald F. VanAckeren, S.J., St. Mary's Kans., and Msgr. Philip J. Dowling, Philadelphia. and Rev. Roland Murphy, O. Carm., Washington, D.C.

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GUIDELINES FOR CATHOLIC-JEWISH RELATIONS

Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs

The Most Reverend John J. Carberry,
Bishop of Columbus, chairman

Prepared by the

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Perspectives

In its Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions of 1965, the Second Vatican Council issued a historic Statement on the Jews and summoned all Catholics to re-appraise their attitude toward, and relationship with the Jewish people.

The Statement was, in effect, a culminating point of initiatives and pronouncements of recent Pontiffs and of numerous endeavors in the Church concerned with Catholic-Jewish harmony. It was also the point of convergence of many insights opened by Pope Paul's Encyclical Ecclesiam Suam and the Council's Constitution on the Church and Decree on Ecumenism.

The call of the Council to a fraternal encounter with Jews may be seen, further, as one of the more important fruits of the spirit of renewal generated by the Council in its deliberations and decrees. Was it not indeed the Council's response to Pope John XXIII's famous words in which he embraced the Jewish people: "I am Joseph your brother"? (Gen 45:4)

More specifically, the Council's call is an acknowledgment of the conflicts and tensions that have separated Christians and Jews through the centuries and of the Church's determination, as far as possible, to eliminate them. Well does it serve both in word and action

as a recognition of the manifold sufferings and injustices inflicted upon the Jewish people by Christians in our own times as well as in the past. The Statement speaks from the highest level of the Church's authority to serve notice that injustices directed against the Jews at any time from any source can never receive Catholic sanction or support.

The message of the Council's statement is clear. Recalling in moving terms the "spiritual bond that ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham's stock," the Fathers of the Council remind us of the special place Jews hold in the Christian outlook, for "now as before God holds them as most dear for the sake of the patriarchs; He has not withdrawn His gifts or calling." Jews, therefore, the Fathers caution, are not "to be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from holy scripture." The Passion of Jesus, moreover, "cannot be attributed without distinction to all Jews then alive, nor can it be attributed to the Jews of today." The Church, the Statement declares, "decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and by anyone."

In light of these principles the Fathers enjoin that "all see to it that nothing is taught, either in catechetical work or in the preaching of the Word of God that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ."

Rather should Christians and Jews "further their mutual knowledge of and respect for one another, a knowledge and respect deriving primarily from biblical and theological studies and fraternal dialogues."

Responding to the urgency of the Conciliar Statement on the Jews, our American Bishops have established, as part of their Commission for Ecumenical Affairs, a Sub-commission for Catholic-Jewish Relations, with Bishop Francis P. Leipzig of Baker, Oregon, as chairman, Bishop Aloysius J. Wycislo of Chicago, Illinois, as vice-chairman, and Right Reverend George Higgins as secretary. This Sub-commission will devote itself exclusively to Catholic-Jewish affairs. The guidelines which follow, composed by the Sub-commission, are designed to encourage and assist the various dioceses of the country in their efforts to put into action at all levels of the Church the Council's directives.

The Church in America is faced with a historic opportunity to advance the cause of Catholic-Jewish harmony throughout the world -- an opportunity to continue the leadership taken in that direction by our American bishops during the great debate on the Statement at the Council. In the United States lives the largest Jewish community in the world. In the United States, a land that has welcomed immigrants and refugees from persecution, the Church has committed herself without reserve to the American ideal of equal opportunity and justice for all. In such a setting the Church in America today is providentially situated to distinguish itself in pursuit of the purposes of the Council's Statement.

It is our prayerful hope that the norms and recommendations of these guidelines will prove helpful to American

Catholics in attaining this noble objective.

General Principles

1. It is recommended that in each diocese in which Jews and Christians live a commission or secretariat, or some member thereof, be assigned to Catholic-Jewish affairs.

2. In keeping with the spirit of the Council's Declaration on Ecumenism, Catholics should take the initiative not only in Catholic-Protestant and Orthodox affairs, but also in fostering Catholic-Jewish understanding. Public and formal projects, however, should have the approval of the Ordinary of the diocese.

3. The general aim of all Catholic-Jewish meetings is to increase our understanding both of Judaism and the Catholic faith, eliminate sources of tension and misunderstanding, initiate dialogues or conversations on different levels, multiply intergroup meetings between Catholics and Jews, and promote cooperative social action.

4. These meetings should be marked by a genuine respect for the person and freedom of all participants and a willingness to listen and to learn from the other party. They should be jointly planned and developed.

5. In order to avoid possible apprehensions concerning the objectives of these meetings, their scope and confines should be mutually agreed upon in advance.

6. It is recommended that in order to maintain the dialogue on the highest possible level its organization be accomplished in consultation with those experienced in the structural, doctrinal, and inter-personal skills which the

dialogue requires.

7. It is understood that proselytizing is to be carefully avoided in the dialogue, the chief aim of which, as Cardinal Bea has pointed out in his The Church and the Jewish People, "is not specifically concerned with the differences between Christianity and other religions, that is to say, with the characteristic features of the former, but rather with the points which it has in common with other faiths."

8. Prayer in common with Jews should, whenever it is feasible, be encouraged, especially in matters of common concern, such as peace and the welfare of the community. Needless to say, such prayers should meet the spiritual sensibilities of both parties, finding their inspiration in our common faith in the One God.

Recommended Programs

1. Catholic-Jewish relations should be advanced on all levels; clerical and lay, academic and popular, religious and social.

2. A favored instrument is the dialogue, a form of group conversation in which competent participants discuss assigned topics or themes in openness, candor, and friendship. Those not well versed in inter-religious affairs run the risk of unwittingly offending by inaccurate portrayal of each other's doctrine or way of life.

3. Diocesan and parochial organizations, schools, colleges, universities, and especially seminaries should organize programs to implement the Statement.

4. The pulpit should also be used for expounding the teachings of the Statement and exhorting participation in programs fitted to the parochial level.

5. School texts, prayerbooks, and other media should, under competent auspices, be examined in order to remove not only those materials which do not accord with the content and spirit of the Statement, but also those which fail to show Judaism's role in salvation-history in any positive light.

6. It is recommended that Catholic-Jewish understanding be fostered effectively at the popular level by means of so-called "open houses" in places of worship, mutual visits to schools, joint social events, and "living room dialogues."

7. Catholic-Jewish cooperation in the field of social action designed to promote public welfare and morality should be encouraged.

8. Orientation and resource material for the foregoing recommendations may be sought from the various Catholic and Jewish organizations that have been active in the field of Christian-Jewish relations. It is also suggested that contact be made with Protestant agencies and leadership experts in this area of endeavor.

9. While popular "grassroots" programs to improve Catholic-Jewish relations must be pressed forward without delay, slower and deeper explorations of pertinent issues by

Catholic and Jewish scholars must also be given a high priority. Since many of the problems in this area of Catholic-Jewish relations are intellectual in nature, research in history, psychology, sociology, and the Bible by individual Catholic and Jewish scholars as well as collaborative scholarly enterprises are to be highly commended.

10. The following themes which, among others, are viewed by Christian and Jewish dialogists as important issues affecting Christian-Jewish relations merit the attention and study of Catholic educators and scholars.

a. Scholarly studies and educational efforts to show common historical, biblical, doctrinal and liturgical heritage shared by Catholic and Jews, as well as their differences.

b. As the Statement requires, the presentation of the Crucifixion story in such a way as not to implicate all Jews of Jesus' time or of today in a collective guilt for the crime.

c. In keeping with the Statement's strong repudiation of anti-Semitism, a frank and honest treatment of the history of Christian anti-Semitism in our history books, courses, and curricula.

d. A study of the life of Jesus and of the primitive Church in the setting of the religious, social, and cultural features of Jewish life in the first century.

e. An explicit rejection of the historically inaccurate notion that Judaism of that time, especially that of Pharisaism, was a decadent formalism and hypocrisy, well exemplified by Jesus' enemies.

f. An acknowledgment by Catholic scholars of the living and complex reality of Judaism after Christ and the permanent election of Israel, alluded to by St. Paul (Rom 9:29), and incorporation of the results into Catholic teaching.

g. A full and precise explanation of the use of the expression "the Jews" by St. John and other New Testament references which appear to place all Jews in a negative light. (These expressions and references should be fully and precisely clarified in accordance with the intent of the Statement that Jews are not to be "presented as rejected or accursed by God as if this followed from holy scripture.")

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This Sub-Commission for Catholic-Jewish Relations remains available to individuals or groups in the various

dioceses for further information and for practical aids and suggestions for their efforts in the area of Catholic-Jewish affairs.

Please address correspondence to :

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