



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATEMENT ATTACKING JUDAISM CONDEMNED BY BISHOPS' AIDE

WASHINGTON--An official of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops denounced the statement by Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan calling Judaism a "gutter religion."

"Catholic Americans believe with all Americans that such language simply has no place in the public forum," said Father Donald Heintschel, NCCB Associate General Secretary. "It must be condemned for the hate-filled evil it is."

"To attack Judaism, as Mr. Farrakhan has done, is to go beyond the bounds of political rhetoric, however widely construed," Father Heintschel said. "We Catholics, then, will join with those of other faith communities whether Christian, Jewish or Muslim, who would, out of respect for our dearest values, resist and denounce such pernicious characterizations of other religions."

Following is the full text of Father Heintschel's statement:

"Our country is a nation which rightly prizes the religious and ethnic plurality of the people who make it up. Indeed, the respect due to the religious beliefs of all citizens is essential to the nature of the American

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experiment in religious pluralism. Catholic teaching likewise supports and seeks to foster religious freedom and interreligious respect.

"It is this basic value of interreligious harmony that Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam has so deeply violated in calling Judaism, the first of the three great monotheistic religions of the world, a 'gutter religion'. Catholic Americans believe with all Americans that such language simply has no place in the public forum. It must be condemned for the hate-filled evil it is.

"The Christian Church is linked by a spiritual bond to the Jewish people. It is part of our essential teaching, as the Second Vatican Council proclaimed, to respect the Jewish faith. To attack Judaism, as Mr. Farrakhan has done, is to go beyond the bounds of political rhetoric, however widely construed. We Catholics, then, will join with those of other faith communities, whether Christian, Jewish or Muslim, who would, out of respect for our dearest values, resist and denounce such pernicious characterizations of other religions."

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