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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CARDINAL GLEMP MEETS WITH JEWISH LEADERS

WASHINGTON—In a meeting with representatives of the Jewish community, Jozef Cardinal Glemp, primate of Poland, recalled the "difficult and highly emotional events of the summer of 1989 and the 'regrettable misunderstandings' which occurred between our two communities at that time."

"Through dialogue, I have learned that certain of my own statements may have caused pain to the Jewish community and were seen as fostering stereotypes of Jews and Judaism but were in many aspects based on mistaken information," Cardinal Glemp said. "Similarly, the Polish Catholic community has experienced pain because of the situation. I regret sincerely that this unfortunate situation occurred, and re-commit myself to working with you now and in the future, in the spirit of our Pastoral Letter, to combatting anti-Semitism at its very roots," the Cardinal stated.

The meeting took place at the headquarters of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on the first full day of Cardinal Glemp's two-week pastoral visit to the United States.

The members of the Jewish delegation were Rabbi Jack Bemporad, Temple Israel, Lawrence, N.Y.; Rabbi Jerome K. Davidson, Temple Bethel, Great Neck, N.Y.; Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, Temple Israel, Great Neck, N.Y.; Rabbi A. James Rudin, Director, Interreligious Affairs, American Jewish Committee; Rabbi Jerome Epstein, Executive Vice President, United Synagogue of America; Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor, Director, Department of

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Interreligious Affairs, Union of American Hebrew Congregations; Rabbi Joel Zaiman of Baltimore; Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, New York; Mr. Philip Baum, American Jewish Congress; Jerome Chanes, National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council; Rabbi Henry Michelman of New York, and Mr. Gunther Lawrence.

Catholic participants in the meeting included Archbishop William H. Keeler of Baltimore, Moderator for Catholic-Jewish Relations, NCCB; Archbishop Adam Maida of Detroit, Episcopal Liaison for the Polish Apostolate of the NCCB; Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston; Dr. Eugene Fisher Director of the NCCB Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations; Most Reverend Szczepan Wesoly, a Vatican official charged with the spiritual welfare of Polish Catholics outside of Poland; Msgr. Stanley Dzuiba, secretary to Cardinal Glemp; and Auxiliary Bishop Alfred J. Markiewicz of Rockville Centre, a consultant to the NCCB Migration Committee

(The full text of Cardinal Glemp's statement follows, as well as the text of a statement issued by the Jewish leaders who met with Cardinal Glemp).

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STATEMENT OF CARDINAL JOSEF GLEMP

AT MEETING WITH JEWISH LEADERSHIP

I am grateful to Archbishops Maida and Keeler of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops for providing this opportunity for me to meet with American Jewish leaders at the start of my pastoral visit to Polish ethnic parishes here. And I am grateful as well to those of you representing the Jewish community for your willingness to meet with me.

This is truly an important occasion. It provides an opportunity for us to put behind us some unfortunate events of the recent past in order to begin to explore together the larger past we have shared together as Polish Catholics and Jews for the sake of a better future in our ancient relationship.

We Polish Catholics and Jews today share a sense of victimization at the hands of the Nazi death machine of World War II, yet also must acknowledge the differences between our historical and contemporary experiences. Thus it is today that both our memories and our means of preserving and passing on these sacred memories for future generations need to be reconciled. We are for all the world witnesses of those terrible, terrible events of the Shoah, the ultimate crime of genocide against the Jewish people, and also of the Nazi crimes against the Polish people.

Our own Polish Bishops' Conference issued for all Catholics on January 20, 1991, a Pastoral Letter that was read in all the parishes of Poland and published in newspapers and read on T.V. That letter was written in the spirit of repentance (teshuvah) on the part of Polish Catholics and reconciliation between the Catholic Church and the Jewish People. In our Pastoral, my fellow bishops and I unanimously condemned anti-Semitism in all its insidious forms and expressed "our sincere regret for all the incidents of anti-Semitism which were committed at any time or by any one on Polish soil" as well as "our sorrow for all the injustices and harm done to Jews" (Origins 20:36, 1991, 593).

It was in this profound spirit of reconciliation that I recalled in my letter to Archbishop Maida the difficult and highly emotional events of the

summer of 1989 and the "regrettable misunderstandings" which occurred between our two communities at that time. Through dialogue, I have learned that certain of my own statements may have caused pain to the Jewish community and were seen as fostering stereotypes of Jews and Judaism, but were in many aspects based on mistaken information. At the same time, the Polish Catholic community has experienced pain because of the situation. I regret sincerely that this unfortunate situation occurred, and re-commit myself to working with you now and in the future, in the spirit of our Pastoral Letter, to combatting anti-Semitism at its very roots.

In this context, for example, I will be visiting while in Chicago the Cardinal Bernardin Institute of the Spertus College of Judaica. This Institute had dedicated itself to studies and programs of significance for improving understanding between Polish Catholics and Jews, and has already proven beneficial in educating key Catholic seminary faculty in Poland in Jewish/Catholic dialogue.

It is also a positive sign that the crisis over the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz is on the way to a mutually satisfactory resolution. Construction of the new convent and study center is well underway and we look forward to the nuns moving into their new quarters as soon as possible.

Finally, I may say that we live in incredible times of almost miraculous and certainly portentous events: the break-up of an empire and the renaissance of freedom and democracy in Eastern and Central Europe. As the joint declaration of the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee meeting in Prague last year put it so well, there is a new spirit in the world today, a spirit that "would manifest itself in the work that (our) two faith communities could do together to respond to the needs of today's world. This need is for the establishment of human rights, freedom and dignity where they are lacking or imperiled, and for responsible stewardship of the environment. A new image and a new attitude in Jewish-Catholic relations are required" (Origins 20:15, 1990, 233).

I pray that this meeting may be of help in furthering that new image and attitude which we all seek.

STATEMENT FROM JEWISH LEADERS

Following Meeting with Cardinal Glemp

Our meeting between Cardinal Josef Glemp, the Primate of Poland, and Jewish representatives was a forthright, open and, we believe, a constructive conversation.

The meeting was held through the initiative of Archbishops William Keeler of Baltimore and Adam Maida of Detroit, representing the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Jewish representatives acknowledge with appreciation the strong, positive relations that exist between the Catholic and Jewish leadership and communities in this country, which were the context for this meeting.

The Jewish representatives discussed in detail major issues that disturbed the Jewish people raised by the homily of Cardinal Glemp at Czesochowa in August of 1989, and his recent statement made at the Warsaw airport containing anti-Jewish stereotypes.

The Cardinal acknowledged that these remarks were in many aspects based on mistaken information and said, "I regret sincerely that this unfortunate situation occurred and recommit myself to working with you now and in the future, in the spirit of our Pastoral letter, to combatting anti-Semitism at its very roots."

He also acknowledged the need to engage in serious joint studies that would prevent the repetition of stereotypes, and increase positive understanding of Jews and Judaism.

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