



NEWS

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FROM: Sr. Mary Ann Walsh

O 202-541-3200

H 301-587-4762

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**VATICAN CONCERT NOTES THAT JEWS, CATHOLICS
SHARE HOLOCAUST PAIN TOGETHER**

WASHINGTON--Jews and Catholics share the pain of the Holocaust together, said Archbishop William H. Keeler, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, in a statement noting an April 7 Vatican concert. The concert is slated for the eve of Yom Hashoah, the annual Holocaust Memorial Day to commemorate Jewish suffering during World War II.

This commemoration at the Vatican "is very significant," said Archbishop Keeler. "It is a statement that the pain of the Holocaust must be acknowledged and shared by Jews and Catholics together."

Archbishop Keeler, who is Archbishop of Baltimore, issued his statement March 24, and said that today society has some perspective on the horrors of the Holocaust.

"We realize that we must do whatever possible to ease the pain resulting from this crime against humanity. We also must work to prevent such an enormous tragedy from recurring -- a tragedy which was uniquely genocidal for Jews and which brought great suffering for many others, including Catholic Poles, at the hands of the Nazis," he said.

The concert, which will feature Jewish prayers and works by Jewish composers, "shows that the Church takes seriously not only the need for Catholics and Jews together to honor the memory of those who died, but also for Catholics and Jews to work together for understanding and peace," he said.

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"The recent opening of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Israel permits work through inter-government relations," he added. "The recent establishment of interfaith centers, such as those near Auschwitz and at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut, witnesses other efforts for mutual understanding between Catholics and Jews. The April 7 concert encourages a union through the arts, which can bring us together on still another, perhaps even deeper, level."

Archbishop Keeler's statement follows:

This commemoration of Yom Hashoah at the Vatican is very significant. It is a statement that the pain of the Holocaust must be acknowledged and shared by Jews and Catholics together.

Almost 50 years from the end of World War II, society has some perspective on the horror of those years. We realize that we must do whatever possible to ease the pain resulting from this crime against humanity. We also must work to prevent such an enormous tragedy from recurring -- a tragedy which was uniquely genocidal for Jews and which brought great suffering for many others, including Catholic Poles, at the hands of the Nazis.

This commemoration at the Vatican shows that the Church takes seriously not only the need for Catholics and Jews together to honor the memory of those who died, but also for Catholics and Jews to work together for understanding and peace. The recent opening of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Israel permits work through inter-government relations. The recent establishment of interfaith centers, such as those near Auschwitz and at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut, witnesses other efforts for mutual understanding between Catholics and Jews. The April 7 concert encourages a union through the arts, which can bring us together on still another, perhaps even deeper, level.

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