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As Chairman of the International Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC), I went to Rome this January for conferences with a Catholic committee appointed by the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews.

Our committee consisted of representatives appointed by the following organizations: the Synagogue Council of America, the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League, the Israel Council for Interreligious Relations.

I confess that I went with hesitation and doubt. Hesitation, because in more than four decades in the rabbinate this was my very first experience in the area of interfaith activity. Doubt, because I was wondering whether there could be any positive outcome of the consultations and discussions that were to take place. After all, there is an almost unbroken record of frustration and disappointment that characterized Catholic-Jewish relations for nigh two millennia.

I must admit that once I entered the building where our sessions took place — The Secretariat for Relations with Non-Christians — my hesitations weakened and my doubts began to fade.

Why? For several reasons. I was impressed by the quality and caliber of the Catholic representatives with whom we were to meet. The head of the representation was the highly respected Cardinal Willebrands who is the President of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. Regrettably, because of

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an accident, he could not attend the sessions. But he was present at a reception tendered in our honor.

Among the other members of the committee was Roger Etchegaray, Archbishop of Marseilles, a liberal churchman with a fine record of pro-Jewish sentiments; Francis J. Mugavero, Bishop of Brooklyn, who is the Moderator of the U.S. Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations. As a Brooklynite he is no stranger to Jews and their concerns. Another was Msgr. Charles Moeller, a recognized Belgian philosopher and an intimate of the good and gentle Cardinal Bea, who initiated the effort that resulted in the Conciliar Declaration on the Jews by the Second Vatican Council.

Fr. Pierre M. de Contenson, Secretary of the Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews, was another member of the committee. He is an enthusiastic French Dominican scholar with a sympathetic understanding of the Jewish problem. In addition, his several visits to Israel developed in him an admiration for the land and its people.

Fr. Bernard Dupuy was yet another member of the committee. He is a Catholic scholar with a knowledge of Hebrew. His earnestness and sensitivity were apparent to all of us.

The delegation also included Professor C. I. Rijk, head of an institution in Rome called SIDIC. This institution teaches Judaism to Catholics. It has a fine collection of Judaica and a permanent exhibit of Holocaust archives.

Fr. Edward H. Flannery served as co-chairman with me. He is the Director of the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations established by the U.S. Conference of Bishops. He is a Bible scholar and a historian. Some ten years ago he wrote a book entitled *The Anguish of the Jew*, which is a scholarly review of twenty-three centuries of anti-Semitism.

These were the people with whom we met and they constituted an impressive company. Their caliber was an indication that the Vatican was deeply interested in our consultations.

The Pope, in his address to the audience with our delegation, gave concrete expression to that interest. His words were very significant:

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We formulate, gentlemen, the sincere wish that, in a manner appropriate to our age . . . a true dialogue may be established between Judaism and Christianity.

. . . The terms with which we express it, the presence of the devoted Cardinal, President of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, that of our brothers in the episcopate, the Archbishop of Marseilles and the Bishop of Brooklyn, are clear indications to you of the sincerity and the collegial decision with which the Catholic Church desires that there should develop at this time that dialogue with Judaism to which the Second Vatican Council invited us by its declaration "Nostra Aetate."

In the light of all that, our presence in Rome was not only proper but essential. "He who comes to be cleansed should be helped," says the Talmud. This applies to non-Jews as well as to Jews.

Original doubts and hesitations about the conference were further dispelled by an additional factor. It had to do with the atmosphere that prevailed at the conference itself and with the conditions under which it took place. The sessions were held in a room that had been cleared of all Christological symbols. There was only one reminder that we were in the Vatican and that was a photograph of Pope Paul VI on one of the bare and severe walls of the conference chamber. To me the Pope looked rather forlorn in his solitariness.

There were no prayers, invocations or benedictions at the openings or closings of the sessions. There were no moments of meditation or religious silence; no Psalms or other biblical readings. Opponents of the consultations in America and in Israel who were concerned lest we might be inveigled to engage in common prayers with our Catholic confreres had nothing to fear. Religious earnestness did, indeed, prevail but that was induced by the very nature of the conference and by the climate of reverence and mutual respect that all present felt.

The participants took their meals together. They were kosher meals, under the supervision of the Chief Rabbi of Rome. They were served in the Home of the Sisters of Mercy with nuns acting as waitresses. The wine, from Israel of course, was poured by the *mashgiach*. Everyone sat in a *yarmulke*; *netilat yadayim*

before meals and *birkat ha-mazon*, sung in the traditional melody, were observed by the Jewish members, with the Catholic members in reverent attention.

The discussions around the table were interesting and in a measure rather revealing. One of the subjects on which information was sought by a priest at my table, who, incidentally, spoke Hebrew and spent some time in Israel, was *yayin nesech* and the reason why it was prohibited. I must admit that, sensitive as that subject is, the explanation was sympathetically received.

It can, therefore, be understood why I and my Jewish colleagues on the committee felt relaxed and at ease. The background against which our conversations were conducted was congenial and respectful. Our Catholic hosts seemed anxious to please. To be suspicious of intentions under these circumstances would be unbecoming and unjust.

In order to better understand the possibility for improved Catholic-Jewish relations, a look in depth at the Church as it is today will prove helpful.

To begin with, the Catholic Church is today the largest faith community in the world. There are more than half a billion Catholics in the world. They represent a religious empire of universal dimensions. There is hardly a continent on the face of the globe in which the communicants of Catholicism do not predominate. Numbers are invariably associated with power and the Catholic Church is, therefore, one of the most powerful organizations in the world.

There were periods in history when Popes made kings and deposed them, dictated to monarchs or punished them for insubordination. Those days are no more. Yet the influence of the Church remains strong and the web of its diplomatic relations continues to be firm and intact. Apostolic delegations exist everywhere and papal nuncios travel far and wide. They are the eyes and ears of the Holy See and the channels of communication between the outermost reaches of the world and the Vatican in Rome.

An interested observer can, however, detect that all is not as it was with the Catholic Church. It does not seem to be the

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tight, highly disciplined and monolithic organization that it has been through the ages.

New and fresh winds seem to be blowing in Rome in recent years. Currents of progressivism are flowing round about the ancient citadels of Catholicism. Priests and nuns are campaigning for the right to marry. And seventy-nine per cent of Catholics questioned in a recent survey in the United States are opposed to celibacy and favor a married clergy (*Time*, January 13, 1975).

In the general field of what is now called sexuality, there are open dissatisfactions with traditional doctrine. Contraception is no longer disapproved. In the survey cited above, eighty-three per cent were in favor of it. The attitude towards abortion has changed dramatically as has also the attitude towards divorce and remarriage.

Even in the area of dogma the old authority is not uniformly honored. Almost seventy per cent of U.S. Catholics no longer subscribe to the doctrine of papal infallibility. In countries like Holland one hears of radical challenges to hallowed doctrines and practices. Occasionally, rumblings against papal authority are heard that would have been unthinkable even a half century ago.

The late Pope John XXIII helped to initiate this liberal trend in Catholicism. To a large extent he changed the spiritual climate of the Vatican and left a heritage of progressivism after him.

One of the manifestations of that progressivism is the changed attitude of the Church to the Jewish people. After almost two millennia of hostility and prejudice which took various forms in different places and at different times, there began to appear signs and symptoms of a desire to understand the Jew and to establish better relations with him. Here are some of the signs.

In 1965, the Second Vatican Council in a Conciliar Declaration entitled "Nostra Aetate," absolved the Jew of the charge of deicide. The historic sentence in that declaration read as follows:

What happened in His passion cannot be blamed on all the Jews then living without distinction, or upon the Jews of today.

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There are those who are not pleased with that statement. They would prefer that it be more precise and more exhortative. So would we all. But one should not quarrel with rhetoric nor find fault with diplomatic pronouncements couched in literary style. Let us rather find comfort in a Midrashic observation which comes to mind:

In speaking of the Machpela sale by Efron to Abraham, the Midrash comments. "How many quills were broken and how much ink was spilt until the transaction was sealed." One is tempted to paraphrase that statement by saying: "How many Inquisitions were inflicted and how much blood was shed until that crucial sentence became part of Catholic policy."

And here is another sign of Catholic amicability. Toward the end of 1974 the Vatican created a Commission for Religious Relations with Jews. Then on January 3, 1975, this Commission issued a document that came to be known as the "Guidelines," which contains suggestions and proposals for implementing the declaration made by the Second Vatican Council in 1965.

Again there are those in America and Israel who are displeased. The "Guidelines," they contend, have serious omissions. We agree. They do not say enough. Again we agree. They fail to spell out certain important subjects that require clarification. We wish that had been done. The document has serious theological implications and doctrinal overtones that are unacceptable to the Jew. Not really, if one reads the "Guidelines" with an unbiased eye.. This will be proved later on in this paper.

A most heartening symptom of good will was provided by the Pope himself. In a recent address to the Sacred College of Cardinals he made specific reference "to the place of Jerusalem in the love and longing of the Jewish people." This was the first time that such an observation was made by the head of the Catholic Church. Those who are familiar with the measured accents of the supreme spokesman of Catholicism have reason to believe that the Pope's reference to Jerusalem was no rhetorical accident, especially when made before such an august body as the Sacred College.

In the last decade, therefore, the Catholic Church has demon-

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strated by word and, to a minor extent, even by deed that it is anxious to lower the barriers between Catholic and Jew and that it seeks to establish channels of communication between the two.

It is against this background that our committee's visit to Rome should be viewed. And it is against this background too that the "Guidelines" should be evaluated.

What is the substance of the "Guidelines," and what do they propose? There are two ways of looking at them. One is with the eye of suspicion and apprehension; the other is with the eye of interest and hope. For the sake of all concerned the second method is preferable.

The "Guidelines" are divided into four sections, with an Introduction, which is a sort of prologue, and a Conclusion, which is in the nature of a summation. Let us begin with the Introduction.

The opening paragraph of the Introduction explains that the Declaration "Nostra Aetate," issued by the Second Vatican Council on October 28, 1965, "marks an important milestone in the history of Jewish-Christian relations." It relates the issuance of the Declaration to "the memory of the persecution and massacre of Jews which took place in Europe just before and during the Second World War."

In that statement there is a suggestion of remorse and an intimation of penitence. By this reference to the Holocaust, the first to our knowledge in any official Catholic document, the Church may not be pounding its breast in confessional posture; but it is at least tapping it lightly and saying in effect, "we have all sinned, and let us now resolve that *jamais plus*, 'never again'."

This penitential mood seems to be no mere figment of the imagination. It is real and substantive. It finds expression in the "Guidelines" themselves which state with emphasis, "that the spiritual bonds and historical links binding the Church to Judaism condemn (as opposed to the very spirit of Christianity) all forms of anti-Semitism and discrimination . . ."

This is the first time in the history of Catholicism that anti-Semitism was openly and officially condemned. Throughout the ages and up to our very day the farthest that the Church went

was to "deplore" anti-Semitism, never to condemn it. The cynical will say, "So what." The less cynical will say, "It's about time." The realistic and the practical will be gratified that such a moment in history has been reached.

The Introduction to the "Guidelines" concludes with the suggestion that in the light of all that has happened, the time has come that, "Christians must . . . strive to acquire a better knowledge of the basic components of the religious tradition of Judaism; they must strive to learn by what essential traits the Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience."

In this spirit and with such intention there follow proposals and suggestions that deserve the serious consideration of Catholic and Jew.

The first proposal is the need for dialogue. Dialogue is defined by the "Guidelines" as a desire by each side to know and understand the other; to increase and deepen the knowledge that each has of the other; to cultivate respect each for the other; above all to manifest that respect for the faith and religious convictions of each other.

This is a very laudable and honest definition of the concept of dialogue and one which ought to satisfy Catholic and Jew. There follow, however, two observations that have caused negative reactions among Jews and consequent defensive reactions among Catholics.

The first of these observations has to do with what Catholicism regards as the "universal mission" of the Church. This principle is expressed in the "Guidelines" in the following language:

In virtue of her divine mission, and her very nature, the Church must preach Jesus Christ to the world.

This statement raised many suspicions. Religious leaders in Israel and America detected in it implications of proselytization. Even the most fair-minded elements in the Jewish community were displeased with the evangelical overtones of the statement. This is not surprising. To a people exposed for centuries to forced conversions and secretly administered baptisms, any intimation of these actions brings back ghosts and specters that are hard to forget.

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It is true that the "Guidelines" offer assurance that the "preaching of Jesus Christ to the world" will be done without giving offense to the Jews, and "while maintaining the strictest respect for religious liberty." Still, preaching Jesus to the world of necessity includes preaching to Jews who are part of the world, and Jews naturally recoil from such a prospect.

Catholic spokesmen went to some pains to explain that "witness" to Jesus should in no way be interpreted as an attempt, direct or indirect, to convert Jews. Father Edward Flannery notes that the reference to the "universal mission" is limited to one sentence in the "Guidelines," and "in no sense implies a particular mission to the Jews."

Father de Contenson speaks in a similar vein as does also the Rev. Carlo M. Martini, head of the Pontifical Biblical Institute. Indeed, all important Catholic leaders disavow any intention suggested by the "Guidelines" to proselytize or convert Jews.

What shall the Jewish reaction be to the statement that "The Church must preach Jesus Christ to the world"? Have we a right to expect the Catholic Church to surrender a cardinal principle of its faith? Shall we refuse an intelligent, honest and liberal interpretation of that principle by Catholic authorities? Can we find too much fault with an apologetic *caveat* that Catholics "must take care to live and spread their Christian faith while maintaining the strictest respect for religious liberty . . ." Are not Catholics virtually saying, "We are not out to convert you; we merely want to talk to you and to understand you and have you understand us"?

This, indeed, is what Father Edward Flannery, a liberal champion of dialogue with the Jews, actually said on January 3, 1975: "The Vatican recognizes the difficulties . . . in explaining Christian universalism where Jews are concerned . . . the document points to respect for religious liberty and for understanding . . . This approach should not be interpreted as suggesting that Jews be made objects of conversionist efforts . . ."

The conclusion is evident. Either we engage in dialogue with confidence and courage, or we acknowledge that we are not ready for it. That, in the eyes of many, would be a sad admis-

sion.*

There is another observation in the "Guidelines" in the section dealing with dialogue that engendered negative reactions among many Jews. That observation has to do with the sensitive subject of common prayer. The "Guidelines" seem to suggest that dialogue between Catholic and Jew should be extended so that it may include, as it were, common dialogue by the two with God. Here is the statement as it appears in the "Guidelines":

In whatever circumstances as shall prove possible and mutually acceptable, one might encourage a common meeting in the presence of God, in prayer and silent meditation, a highly efficacious way of finding that humility, that openness of heart and mind, necessary prerequisites for a deep knowledge of one's self and of others. In particular that will be done in connection with great causes such as the struggle for peace and justice.

However carefully and sensitively the proposal for common prayer may be phrased, it should be firmly stated that common prayer is one interreligious activity that is unacceptable to most Jews. Parenthetically, it should be noted that the International Committee for Interreligious Consultations took exception to it in its official statement which appeared together with the "Guidelines" in the public press.

Common prayer is a complicated matter. It is entangled with theological, psychological and practical difficulties. Faiths, unlike families, need not pray together to stay together. Interpret prayer as you will, it remains fundamentally a profoundly personal experience, a communion of one man with *his* God. Prayers for worthwhile common needs are best expressed by multitudes addressing God individually for their common desires.

To be sure, it is possible "to encourage a common meeting in the presence of God" as the "Guidelines" suggest. But what kind of a meeting will it be? Professor Ze'ev Falk, Professor of Jewish Law at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and a Hakhmah oriented Jew, suggests one possibility for common prayer.

* The statement issued by IJCIC and which appeared in the public press at the time when the "Guidelines" were published gave expression to Jewish apprehensions on this issue. (*New York Times*, Friday, January 3, 1975).

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In a recent interview that appeared in the *Jerusalem Post* of February 11, 1975, he said:

With regard to common prayer, I think this has to be removed from the traditional context of synagogue or church, and should not make use of existing liturgical texts. For here is the danger of syncretism. But I am not against attempts to create new forms and new occasions, on a neutral basis, in neutral wording, to express our common concern and our common prayer to God.

This statement of a respected religious academician deserves analysis. What does Professor Falk mean by avoiding "existing liturgical texts"? What does he mean by having common prayer "removed from the traditional context of synagogue or church"? What has he in mind by favoring "new forms and new occasions, on a neutral basis, in neutral wording, to express our common . . . prayer to God"?

Contrived liturgical texts, as yet non-existent; prayers "removed from the traditional context of synagogue and church"; "new forms . . . on a neutral basis, in neutral wording . . ." — prayers that conform to such description are simply not prayers. God is never neutral and neutrality is hardly a devotional posture for men of faith.*

The second section of the "Guidelines" deals with the general subject of Liturgy. It should be explained that the term "liturgy," as used in the Catholic document, is generic and covers the entire gamut of relationships which in Judaism is referred to as "*bein adam lamokom*." The Catholic speaks of this relationship as ". . . a living community in the service of God, and in the service of men for the love of God." The Catholic, therefore, frequently refers to this relationship as "the liturgical life."

But the document is somewhat in error. This liturgical life is, "just as characteristic of the Jewish liturgy as it is of the Christian one." From this assumption follows a rather benevolent conclusion. Here it is: "To improve Jewish-Christian relations, it is important to take cognizance of those common elements of the

* The official Jewish reaction to common prayer was made clear in the statement published simultaneously with the "Guidelines." (*New York Times*, Friday, January 3, 1975).

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liturgical life (formulas, feasts, rites, etc.) in which the Bible holds an essential place.”

The liberal interpretation of the concept of “liturgical life” proceeds further and expresses itself in concrete suggestions designed to achieve more wholesome and lasting Jewish-Christian relations. A few examples of this accommodating attitude on the part of the Catholic Church are admittedly convincing. Here they are in the language of the “Guidelines”:

1. An effort will be made to acquire a better understanding of whatever in the Old Testament retains its own perpetual value . . .

2. With respect to liturgical readings [from the Bible], care will be taken to see that homilies based on them will not distort their meaning, especially when it is a question of passages which seem to show the Jewish people as such in an unfavorable light.

2. Efforts will be made so to instruct the Christian people that they will understand the true interpretation of all the texts and their meaning for the contemporary believer.

4. Commissions entrusted with the task of liturgical translation will pay particular attention to the way in which they express those phrases and passages which Christians, if not well informed, might misunderstand because of prejudice.

An impartial and unbiased reader must accept these statements as explicit, and admire their tone as decidedly genuine. The unbiased reader will be even more impressed by a footnote appended to the above statements which reads as follows:

Thus the formula “the Jews” in St. John, sometimes according to the context means “the leaders of the Jews,” or “the adversaries of Jesus” [should be replaced] by terms which express better the thought of the evangelist and avoid appearing to arraign the Jewish people as such. Another example is the use of the word “pharisee and pharisaism” which have taken on largely pejorative meaning.

All of this is extremely gratifying and does show how far backward Catholics are prepared to lean in order to establish an ongoing dialogue with Jews.

There is, however, one thing that troubles a Jew who is anxious to encourage dialogue with the Catholic Church. It troubled our entire committee and it constitutes an aggravating condition

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for most of Jewry, especially those who live in Israel and those in Diaspora who are committed to Israel.*

I refer to the glaring and perhaps significant omission of the Peoplehood and State of Israel from the comprehensive treatment in the "Guidelines" of the overall subject of the "liturgical life."

There is one fundamental difference between Judaism and Catholicism and for that matter between Judaism and Christianity. Catholicism is the religion of Catholics; Protestantism is the faith of Protestants; Christianity is the creed of Christians. Judaism is the religion, not of Jews, but of the Jewish people. This distinction between Judaism and other faiths was a bitter issue fought out on many battlefields, in many places and throughout the post-Emancipation period for almost a century and a half.

German Jews, almost until Hitler, sought to think of themselves as "Germans of the Mosaic persuasion." The *protest rabbiner* in the days of Theodor Herzl "protested" the very concept of Jewish Peoplehood. They declared that "Germany was for them Palestine and Berlin was for them Jerusalem." I met one of the survivors of those *protest rabbiner* in Munich after World War II. He was past eighty and had just returned from the Concentration Camp in Theresienstadt. It took him fifty years to learn that for the Jew there was only one Palestine and one Jerusalem.

French Jews had a similar experience. The Grand Sanhedrin of Napoleon was prepared to sell the national birthright of French Jewry for the pottage of French citizenship. Came the Dreyfus affair and the violent calls of "*mort au Juives*," and French Jewry realized that they were not merely a collectivity of religious communicants but a people united by a common history and bound by a common destiny.

A liberal French deputy, Clermont-Tonnere, in the early days of the French Republic is credited with an oft-quoted statement: "To the individual Jew, everything; to the Jews as nation, nothing." His liberalism was sound but his knowledge of Judaism was defective. For the Jew is a composite. He is at once man

* What follows was part of a statement made by the writer at one of the sessions in the Vatican as part of a general discussion on the "Guidelines."

and Jew; faithful citizen of his country and loyal son of his ancestral land. Samson Raphael Hirsch, father of neo-Orthodoxy in Germany of the last century, spoke of the Jew as "*der Israel-Mensch*." The Jew is an amalgam in whom Peoplehood, ancestral homeland and human *menschlichkeit* are fused harmoniously in the ethos of his personality.

If, then, in the language of the "Guidelines," Christians "must strive to learn by what essential traits the Jews define themselves . . .", it becomes a matter of fundamental importance for Christians not to overlook the national dimension of Jewishness.

A recognition of this dimension becomes especially important if Christians, again in the language of the "Guidelines," are "to take cognizance of those common elements of the liturgical life (formulas, feasts, rites, etc.) in which the Bible holds an essential place."

Even a cursory review of the liturgical life of Judaism will demonstrate how central are the elements of Peoplehood and Land in the religion of Israel. Let us look briefly into the "formulas, feasts, rites, etc." that together constitute the Jewish liturgical life.

First, the rites of Judaism. It is natural to begin with the rites associated with the birth, circumcision and naming of a child. In Judaism these ceremonies are not mere initiatory sacraments as they are in the Church. They represent the admission of a newborn child into the covenant of Abraham and the act of circumcision is called the "Abrahamitic rite." Figuratively present at that rite is Elijah, prophet of national redemption. Circumcision thus becomes not a form of baptism but a ceremony of Jewish identification. As the wine from the "cup of blessing" is dabbed over the lips of the child very significant words are recited from the book of Ezekiel: ". . . I said unto you, live by your blood; live by your blood." It is as though the child of eight days is inducted into a people whose fate in history has been to live though life is imperiled.

If circumcision is not baptism, neither is the "naming" of a girl-child a form of christening. The formula that is used in the synagogue, at the Torah and before a congregation is: "And let her name be known in Israel . . ." A Jewish child's identity

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is not exclusively a religious one; it is a national one as well. The child by acquiring a name becomes simultaneously a member of a faith and of a people.

Let us proceed to the rite of marriage. The traditional formula of marriage is: "You are consecrated unto me by this ring according to the Law of Moses and of Israel." Consecration according to the Law of Moses is understandable. It means marriage in conformity with religious requirements. All faiths insist on that. But marriage to the Jew is more than a sacrament; it is, in addition, a ceremony with national implications and with national responsibilities.

The "seven benedictions" that are part of the marriage ritual include pious sentiments not found in any other faith. Here are a few:

May Zion the barren exult and be glad, as her children gather within her in joy . . . Soon, O Lord Our God, may there be heard in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem voices of joy and gladness, voices of grooms and brides . . .

As the marriage ceremony draws to a close a glass is broken under the wedding canopy. This symbolizes that any Jewish joyous occasion is considered incomplete as long as the Holy Land is not fully restored and the holy Temple in Jerusalem is not yet rebuilt.

Is Jewish marriage, then, a personal matter? Is that sacred rite only "religious" in character? Is it not more correct to say that under the wedding canopy a drama is enacted in which two individuals are joined as husband and wife, but that in the union are included the people of which the wedded couple is a part, the land which is their ancestral heritage and the God whose presence solemnizes the sacred performance?

What is true of the rite of marriage is equally true of the "last rites" that mark the departure of a Jew into the hereafter. Before the cover is placed upon the casket holding the mortal remains, some earth from the Holy Land is sprinkled over the deceased, symbolizing, as it were, that identification with the Land of Israel continues to all eternity.

Let us proceed to another aspect of the "liturgical life" cov-

ered by the "Guidelines" and which includes feasts, festivals and formulas. All these religious occasions are endowed by Judaism with national elements of such pronounced character that it becomes impossible to separate the national from the "religious."

Passover is the festival of freedom: Freedom from bondage, freedom to serve God, freedom to be a sovereign people in a sovereign land. Here is the Bible articulating the significance of the holiday: ". . . I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of Egypt . . . and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm . . . and I will take you to me as a people . . . And I will bring you unto the land which I vowed to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage . . ." Land, people and faith are tightly interwoven and nothing can tear them apart.

The same is true of the festival of *Shavuot* which Christians call Pentecost. Is it a religious holiday? Of course. It commemorates the giving of the Ten Commandments. Nothing can be more religious than that. But it is also the *Chag Habikurim*, the festival of the First Fruits — fruits that ripen in *Eretz Yisroel* and that in ancient days were brought as offerings to the Temple in Jerusalem. Again we see the nexus between the religious and the national.

And *Sukkot* too is no different. It commemorates the booths in which our ancestors dwelt when they left Egypt. But it is also associated with the harvest period of ancient Palestine. At *Sukkot* time throughout the Diaspora prayers are recited for rain. Rain for whom? For Argentina or Johannesburg which are then in the midst of winter? No! The Diaspora Jew prays for rain for the one country which needs it at that season of the year — Israel. Can the link between faith, people and land ever be severed? This is our sacred Triad even as Christianity has its Holy Trinity.

Jews understand and respect that cardinal dogma of Christianity. They hope that those "who strive to learn by what essential traits the Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience," will similarly understand the unshatterable bond forged by the Jewish tradition between the People of Is-

rael, the Land of Israel and the Faith of Israel.*

Section III of the "Guidelines" offers evidence that the Church means business. This section deals with Teaching and Education and it suggests plans and methods as to how the Church can best transmit its new understanding of Judaism and its new attitude towards Jews.

One example of the new understanding involves a fresh appreciation of the "Old Testament" in its relation to the New Testament. For countless generations the accepted doctrine of the Church was to consider the New Testament as an advance over the Old, and hence superior to it. The New Testament, the Church held, teaches love, kindness and compassion; the Old Testament is legalistic and harsh. It stresses strictness, justice and law.

The "Guidelines" in Section III present an altogether different appraisal of the "Old Testament." Here is what they say on that subject: "The Old Testament and the Jewish tradition founded upon it must not be set against the New Testament in such a way that the former seems to constitute a religion of only justice, fear and legalism, with no appeal to the love of God and neighbor."

Quite a change, and a welcome one, indeed!

Here is another example of the new understanding. Christianity, through the ages, held that with the expulsion of our people from its land, authentic Judaism ceased to exist. Moreover, it was replaced by the "New Judaism," which is Christianity.

Now the "Guidelines" speak another language. "The history of Judaism did not end with the destruction of Jerusalem, but rather went on to develop a religious tradition . . ." This concession, though the Jew never required it, is almost a revolutionary admission.

In Section III there is also a welcome repetition of what had previously been decided by the Catholic Church: "With regard to the trial and death of Jesus, the Council recalled that 'what happened in his passion cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then

* It is interesting to note that after the substance of this statement was made by the writer, Fr. Flannery observed that what was here presented constituted a dilemma for Catholics. Many, he added, did not know all this and now the dilemma has to be resolved.

living without distinction, nor upon the Jews of today'."

The importance of this statement, once before enunciated in Vatican II, lies in the fact that it appears in the section of the "Guidelines" dealing with teaching and education. It implies, therefore, that the myth about the crucifixion having been committed by Jews will no longer be taught to succeeding generations of Christian children.

Section III concludes with a declaration of intention that "Information concerning these questions is important at all levels of Christian education." In other words, the "new understanding" about Jews and Judaism acquired by the Catholic Church must not remain a matter of theory; it must become a fact of Catholic life to be dealt with "at all levels of Christian education."

How shall that be achieved? By devising effective methods for the dissemination of the newly acquired knowledge about Judaism and the newly adopted attitude towards Jews. The methods implied by the "Guidelines" should include a revision of catechisms of religious text books and history books, and the employment of the mass-media for educational purposes.

If and when this is done, Jews will have every reason to be pleased.

Section IV of the "Guidelines" is short but important. It proposes that Social Action become a joint Catholic and Jewish enterprise. The statement on that subject is direct and concise.

Jewish and Christian tradition, founded on the Word of God, is aware of the value of the human person, the image of God . . . In the spirit of the prophets, Jews and Christians will work willingly together seeking social justice and peace at every level — local, national and international . . .

At the same time such collaboration can do much to foster mutual understanding and esteem.

Jews can accept this proposal wholeheartedly. Indeed, every faith community is abidingly concerned with the improvement of the condition of man and of his world. There may be differences of interpretation on the meaning of the concept Kingdom of God. But there is unanimous agreement on the need to estab-

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lish the Kingdom of God on earth. "*L'taken olam b'malchut Shaddai*" is definitely a Jewish aspiration.

The "Guidelines" conclude with a summary statement that is realistic and significant. The first paragraph is especially important:

The Second Vatican Council has pointed out the path to follow in promoting deep fellowship between Jews and Christians. But there is still a long road ahead.

There is indeed. At the meetings in Rome the Jewish members of the International Committee on Interreligious Consultations expressed satisfaction that "the path to follow" was pointed out. They did not hesitate, however, to declare that "there is still a long road ahead."

Some of the obstacles, already encountered on that road were pointed out in the formal discussions round the conference table. Sharp statements, though softly spoken, were made about the glaring omission from the "Guidelines" of any reference to the State of Israel, even in spiritual terms.*

The failure on the part of the Vatican to condemn Arab terror on the ground and in the air was severely criticized. It was firmly stated that the influential voice of the Church remains ominously silent while a new "reign of terror" continues to sweep the world and makes Israel and Jews everywhere its principal targets.

Speakers on the Jewish side deplored the fact that the expulsion of the Israel delegation from UNESCO went uncommented by the Catholic Church. The condition was aggravated when the Pope saw fit to honor UNESCO with a choice Vatican award just about the time when the UNESCO anti-Israel action was taken.

Criticism was voiced for the tactical silence and non-reaction of the Vatican during the trial of Archbishop Cappuchi in Jerusalem and for the over-reaction to the twelve-year sentence imposed upon the convicted gun-runner and purveyor of weapons to

* Statements on the subjects which follow were made by Rabbi Henry Siegman, Professor Shmaryahu Talmon and Dr. Gerhard Riegner.

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Arab terrorists. They were plainly told that the moral power of the Church should have been differently manifested.

Professor Louis Henkin, Professor of International Law at Columbia University, read an extremely scholarly paper on Judaism and Civil Rights. The thrust of his words was that the Jew was the principal victim of the lack of human rights. It took the tragedy of the Holocaust to bring the very concept of human rights to the attention of the world and to place it on the agenda of the United Nations. For the Jew, he explained, human rights as such do not exist. In the Jewish tradition "rights" are considered as duties and moral imperatives that have the sanction of the law.

It was interesting to listen to the scholarly exchange between the lecturer and the scholars of the Vatican who were not in agreement with the Jewish point of view but understood it well.

* * *

A word in summation is in order.

1. The "Guidelines" represent a giant step forward in Catholic-Jewish relations. They should be accepted as such.

2. The "Guidelines" are by no means the last word of the Catholic Church on its attitude towards Jews and Judaism. Neither the Vatican is of that opinion nor do Jews have reason to hold that opinion.

3. Dialogue must continue with increasing "give" by the Catholics and with decreasing fear by Jews.

4. The "long road ahead" can and should be negotiated. It is wise, however, for Jews in particular, to be guided by an unfailing compass which has been its constant companion throughout history. In that way neither we nor our Catholic confreres will lose our common direction.

And in the meantime the advice of the biblical Joseph to his brothers remains sound: "Do not quarrel along the way."