



The Holy See

JUBILEE PILGRIMAGE
OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE HOLY LAND (MARCH 20-26, 2000)

VISIT TO THE CHIEF RABBIS AT HECHAL SHLOMO
SPEECH OF JOHN PAUL II

Thursday, 23 March 2000

Very Reverend Chief Rabbis,

It is with deep respect that I visit you here today and thank you for receiving me at Hechal Shlomo. Truly this is a uniquely significant meeting which - I hope and pray - will lead to increasing contacts between Christians and Jews, aimed at achieving an ever deeper understanding of the historical and theological relationship between our respective religious heritages.

Personally, I have always wanted to be counted among those who work, on both sides, to overcome old prejudices and to secure ever wider and fuller recognition of the spiritual patrimony shared by Jews and Christians. I repeat what I said on the occasion of my visit to the Jewish Community in Rome, that we Christians recognize that the Jewish religious heritage is intrinsic to our own faith: "you are our elder brothers" (cf. *Address at the Synagogue of Rome*, 13 April 1986, 4). We hope that the Jewish people will acknowledge that the Church utterly condemns anti-Semitism and every form of racism as being altogether opposed to the principles of Christianity. We must work together to build a future in which there will be no more anti-Judaism among Christians or anti-Christian sentiment among Jews.

There is much that we have in common. There is so much that we can do together for peace, for justice, for a more human and fraternal world. May the Lord of heaven and earth lead us to a new and fruitful era of mutual respect and cooperation, for the benefit of all! Thank you.

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