



## **The Mercy Seminar 2025, Term III.6**

### **DECLARATION ON THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS *NOSTRA AETATE* PROCLAIMED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI ON OCTOBER 28, 1965**

4. As the sacred synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it remembers the bond that spiritually ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham's stock.

Thus the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election are found already among the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets. She professes that all who believe in Christ--Abraham's sons according to faith--are included in the same Patriarch's call, and likewise that the salvation of the Church is mysteriously foreshadowed by the chosen people's exodus from the land of bondage. The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God in His inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles. Indeed, the Church believes that by His cross Christ, Our Peace, reconciled Jews and Gentiles, making both one in Himself.

The Church keeps ever in mind the words of the Apostle about his kinsmen: "theirs is the sonship and the glory and the covenants and the law and the worship and the promises; theirs are the fathers and from them is the Christ according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:4-5), the Son of the Virgin Mary. She also recalls that the Apostles, the Church's main-stay and pillars, as well as most of the early disciples who proclaimed Christ's Gospel to the world, sprang from the Jewish people.

As Holy Scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation, nor did the Jews in large number, accept the Gospel; indeed not a few opposed its spreading. Nevertheless, God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their Fathers; He does not repent of the gifts He makes or of the calls He issues--such is the witness of the Apostle. In company with the Prophets and the same Apostle, the Church awaits that day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and "serve him shoulder to shoulder" (Soph. 3:9).

Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred synod wants to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues.

True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ; still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures. All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.

Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.

Besides, as the Church has always held and holds now, Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of men and out of infinite love, in order that all may reach salvation. It is, therefore, the burden of the Church's preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows.

### **COMMISSION FOR RELIGIOUS RELATIONS WITH THE JEWS**

#### ***Notes on the correct way to present the Jews and Judaism in preaching and catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church, 1985***

The existence of the State of Israel and its political options should be envisaged not in a perspective which is in itself religious, but in their reference to the common principles of international law.

The permanence of Israel (while so many ancient peoples have disappeared without trace) is a historic fact and a sign to be interpreted within God's design.

### **FUNDAMENTAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE HOLY SEE AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL, DECEMBER, 1993**

#### **Preamble**

The Holy See and the State of Israel,

Mindful of the singular character and universal significance of the Holy Land;

Aware of the unique nature of the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people, and of the historic process of reconciliation and growth in mutual understanding and friendship between Catholics and Jews;

Having decided on 29 July 1992 to establish a "Bilateral Permanent Working Commission", in order to study and define together issues of common interest, and in view of normalizing their relations;

Recognizing that the work of the aforementioned Commission has produced sufficient material for a first and Fundamental Agreement;

Realizing that such Agreement will provide a sound and lasting basis for the continued development of their present and future relations and for the furtherance of the Commission's task,

Agree upon the following Articles:

### **Article 1**

§ 1. The State of Israel, recalling its Declaration of Independence, affirms its continuing commitment to uphold and observe the human right to freedom of religion and conscience, as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in other international instruments to which it is a party.

§ 2. The Holy See, recalling the Declaration on Religious Freedom of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Dignitatis humanae*, affirms the Catholic Church's commitment to uphold the human right to freedom of religion and conscience, as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in other international instruments to which it is a party. The Holy See wishes to affirm as well the Catholic Church's respect for other religions and their followers as solemnly stated by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council in its Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra aetate*.

### **Article 2**

§ 1. The Holy See and the State of Israel are committed to appropriate cooperation in combatting all forms of antisemitism and all kinds of racism and of religious intolerance, and in promoting mutual understanding among nations, tolerance among communities and respect for human life and dignity.

§ 2. The Holy See takes this occasion to reiterate its condemnation of hatred, persecution and all other manifestations of antisemitism directed against the Jewish people and individual Jews anywhere, at any time and by anyone. In particular, the Holy See deplors attacks on Jews and desecration of Jewish synagogues and cemeteries, acts which offend the memory of the victims of the Holocaust, especially when they occur in the same places which witnessed it.

### **Article 3**

§ 1. The Holy See and the State of Israel recognize that both are free in the exercise of their respective rights and powers, and commit themselves to respect this principle in their mutual relations and in their cooperation for the good of the people.

§ 2. The State of Israel recognizes the right of the Catholic Church to carry out its religious, moral, educational and charitable functions, and to have its own institutions, and to train, appoint and deploy its own personnel in the said institutions or for the said functions to these ends. The Church recognizes the right of the State to carry out its functions, such as promoting and protecting the welfare and the safety of the people. Both the State and the Church recognize the need for dialogue and cooperation in such matters as by their nature call for it.

§ 3. Concerning Catholic legal personality at canon law the Holy See and the State of Israel will negotiate on giving it full effect in Israeli law, following a report from a joint subcommission of experts.

#### **Article 4**

§ 1. The State of Israel affirms its continuing commitment to maintain and respect the “Status quo” in the Christian Holy Places to which it applies and the respective rights of the Christian communities thereunder. The Holy See affirms the Catholic Church's continuing commitment to respect the aforementioned “Status quo” and the said rights.

§ 2. The above shall apply notwithstanding an interpretation to the contrary of any Article in this Fundamental Agreement.

§ 3. The State of Israel agrees with the Holy See on the obligation of continuing respect for and protection of the character proper to Catholic sacred places, such as churches, monasteries, convents, cemeteries and their like.

§ 4. The State of Israel agrees with the Holy See on the continuing guarantee of the freedom of Catholic worship.

#### **Article 5**

§ 1. The Holy See and the State of Israel recognize that both have an interest in favouring Christian pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Whenever the need for coordination arises, the proper agencies of the Church and of the State will consult and cooperate as required.

§ 2. The State of Israel and the Holy See express the hope that such pilgrimages will provide an occasion for better understanding between the pilgrims and the people and religions in Israel.

#### **Article 6**

The Holy See and the State of Israel jointly reaffirm the right of the Catholic Church to establish, maintain and direct schools and institutes of study at all levels; this right being exercised in harmony with the rights of the State in the field of education.

#### **Article 7**

The Holy See and the State of Israel recognize a common interest in promoting and encouraging cultural exchanges between Catholic institutions worldwide, and educational, cultural and research institutions in Israel, and in facilitating access to manuscripts, historical documents and similar source materials, in conformity with applicable laws and regulations.

### **Article 8**

The State of Israel recognizes that the right of the Catholic Church to freedom of expression in the carrying out of its functions is exercised also through the Church's own communications media; this right being exercised in harmony with the rights of the State in the field of communications media.

### **Article 9**

The Holy See and the State of Israel jointly reaffirm the right of the Catholic Church to carry out its charitable functions through its health care and social welfare institutions; this right being exercised in harmony with the rights of the State in this field.

### **Article 10**

§ 1. The Holy See and the State of Israel jointly reaffirm the right of the Catholic Church to property.

§ 2. Without prejudice to rights relied upon by the Parties:

- a) The Holy See and the State of Israel will negotiate in good faith a comprehensive agreement, containing solutions acceptable to both Parties, on unclear, unsettled and disputed issues, concerning property, economic and fiscal matters relating to the Catholic Church generally, or to specific Catholic Communities or institutions.
- b) For the purpose of the said negotiations, the Permanent Bilateral Working Commission will appoint one or more bilateral subcommissions of experts to study the issues and make proposals.
- c) The Parties intend to commence the aforementioned negotiations within three months of entry into force of the present Agreement, and aim to reach agreement within two years from the beginning of the negotiations.
- d) During the period of these negotiations, actions incompatible with these commitments shall be avoided.

### **Article 11**

§ 1. The Holy See and the State of Israel declare their respective commitment to the promotion of the peaceful resolution of conflicts among States and nations, excluding violence and terror from international life.

§ 2. The Holy See, while maintaining in every case the right to exercise its moral and spiritual teaching-office, deems it opportune to recall that, owing to its own character, it is solemnly committed to remaining a stranger to all merely temporal conflicts, which principle applies specifically to disputed territories and unsettled borders.

## Article 12

The Holy See and the State of Israel will continue to negotiate in good faith in pursuance of the Agenda agreed upon in Jerusalem, on 15 July 1992, and confirmed at the Vatican, on 29 July 1992; likewise on issues arising from Articles of the present Agreement, as well as on other issues bilaterally agreed upon as objects of negotiation.

## Article 13

§ 1. In this Agreement the Parties use these terms in the following sense:

- a) "The Catholic Church" and "the Church" – including, *inter alia*, its Communities and institutions;
- b) "Communities" of the Catholic Church - meaning the Catholic religious entities considered by the Holy See as Churches *sui iuris* and by the State of Israel as Recognized Religious Communities;
- c) "The State of Israel" and "the State" – including, *inter alia*, its authorities established by law.

§ 2. Notwithstanding the validity of this Agreement as between the Parties, and without detracting from the generality of any applicable rule of law with reference to treaties, the Parties agree that this Agreement does not prejudice rights and obligations arising from existing treaties between either Party and a State or States, which are known and in fact available to both Parties at the time of the signature of this Agreement.

## Article 14

§ 1. Upon signature of the present Fundamental Agreement and in preparation for the establishment of full diplomatic relations, the Holy See and the State of Israel exchange Special Representatives, whose rank and privileges are specified in an Additional Protocol.

§ 2. Following the entry into force and immediately upon the beginning of the implementation of the present Fundamental Agreement, the Holy See and the State of Israel will establish full diplomatic relations at the level of Apostolic Nunciature, on the part of the Holy See, and Embassy, on the part of the State of Israel.

## Article 15

This Agreement shall enter into force on the date of the latter notification of ratification by a Party.

Done in two original copies in the English and [Hebrew](#) languages, both texts being equally authentic. In case of divergency, the English text shall prevail.

*Signed in Jerusalem, this thirtieth day of the month of December, in the year 1993, which corresponds to the sixteenth day of the month of Tevet, in the year 5754.*

Mgr. CLAUDIO M. CELLI	Dr. Yossi BEILIN
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## **Comprehensive Agreement between the State of Palestine and the Holy See, 2015**

The State of Palestine and the Holy See, conscious of the profound historical and cultural relations between the Palestinian people and the Holy See in the Holy Land;

Reaffirming the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, freedom, security and dignity in an independent State of their own;

Expressing full support for a just, comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, in all its aspects, in accordance with international law and all relevant United Nations resolutions, as well as for an independent, sovereign, democratic and viable State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, on the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, living side by side in peace and security with all its neighbours;

Reaffirming their support, in accordance with international law and consensus, for the two-state solution, under which all states in the region live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders;

Recalling the Basic Agreement between the PLO and the Holy See that was signed and entered into force in 15 February 2000 and which this Agreement intends now to further expand;

Re-committing themselves to the terms expounded in the Preamble to the aforementioned Basic Agreement which declared “that an equitable solution for the issue of Jerusalem, based on international resolutions, is fundamental for a just and lasting peace..., and that unilateral decisions and actions altering the specific character and status of Jerusalem are morally and legally unacceptable”;

Reiterating, in this regard, that a just and lasting peace should be achieved through agreement between the Palestinian and Israeli authorities and that any illegal unilateral measure, of whatever kind, is null and void, morally unacceptable and creates obstacles to the search for peace;

Looking forward to achieve and attain the above mentioned shared noble objectives;

Desirous of furthering the relationship between the State of Palestine and the Holy See;

Agree on the following Articles:

### **Article 1**

**§1.** This Agreement has been made taking into account the provisions and mutual obligations established in the Basic Agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Holy See which was signed and entered into force on 15 February 2000.

**§2.** In recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to their independent and sovereign state, the Holy See recognizes the State of Palestine and welcomes its admission to the United Nations as a Non-Member Observer State.

**§3.** This Agreement applies to the entire territory under Palestinian sovereignty in accordance with international law.

**§4.** Upon entry into force of this Agreement, the State of Palestine and the Holy See shall upgrade their diplomatic relations at the levels which shall be determined by the Parties, in accordance with relevant international law provisions.

## **Article 2**

**§1.** This Agreement shall not prejudice, detract, or derogate from the applicable principles, rules and norms of international law recognized and accepted by both Parties.

**§2.** The Holy See, while maintaining in every case the right to exercise its educational, spiritual and moral mission, and while being committed, among other, to the promotion of human rights, justice and peace and of the compliance with international law by all States, deems it opportune to recall that, owing to its own character, it remains extraneous to all merely temporal or political conflicts and claims no competence to enter into territorial disputes between nations, unless the contending parties or the international institutions make concordant appeals to its missions of peace.

**§3.** The State of Palestine herein re-affirms its commitment to the provisions of the Declaration of Independence of 15 November 1988 and Palestinian Basic Law with regard to the guarantee of freedom of religion, belief, worship and the performance of religious functions. The State of Palestine therefore confirms that it shall, in accordance with Palestinian law and internationally accepted human rights standards, permit without undue restrictions the exercise of the above freedoms of religion, belief, worship and the performance of religious functions to the Catholic Church, to any canonical legal person and to any Catholic person. The State of Palestine further confirms that it will take all possible legal measures to protect and guarantee the exercise of these freedoms.

## **Article 3**

Once signed and ratified by both Parties, this Agreement shall enter into force and its operative paragraphs shall be applicable in all territory administered by the State of Palestine without prejudice to Palestinian de jure sovereignty over all Palestinian territory in accordance with international law.

For the State of Palestine: Dr. Riad Al-Malki

For the Holy See: Archbishop Paul R. Gallagher Minister of Foreign Affairs