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CATHOLIC-JEWISH COMMISSION: SCIENCE NEEDS RELIGION

Expresses Support for Yahad-In Unum

VATICAN CITY, JAN. 20, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Catholic and Jewish leaders are underlining the need for the ethical guidance of religion to direct scientific progress in responsible ways that respect the environment and human persons.

This was affirmed in an English-language statement released today by the Vatican, from the bilateral commission meeting of Catholic and Jewish leaders.

A delegation of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations With the Jews, led by Cardinal Jorge Mejía, met in Rome with the Chief Rabbinate of Israel's delegation for Relations with the Catholic Church, led by Chief Rabbi She'ar Yashuv Cohen.

This 9th meeting of the commission took place in Rome, beginning Sunday in conjunction with Benedict XVI's historic visit to the Synagogue of Rome.

The statement noted that at this event, in which all the commission members participated, the Pope "confirmed the commitment of the Catholic Church and its will to deepen dialogue and fraternity with Judaism and the Jewish People," while "unequivocally condemning anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism."

He highlighted the "work, significance and achievements of the bilateral commission," due to discuss "Catholic and Jewish teaching on creation and the environment."

Environmental crisis

The Pontiff expressed the hope for a "profitable dialogue on such a timely and important theme."

In today's statement, which marked the last day of the meeting, the commission highlighted the current "unique environmental crisis which is substantially the product of unbridled material and technological exploitation."

It continued, "While this challenge must obviously be addressed through the necessary technical means as well as self restraint, humility and discipline; the participants emphasized the essential need for society to recognize the transcendent dimension of creation that is critical to ensure sustainable development and progress in an ethically responsible manner."

"Not everything that is technically feasible is morally acceptable," the commission asserted.

It noted that this consciousness "ensures that every aspect of human advancement promotes the wellbeing of future generations and sanctifies the Divine Name."

The absence of this consciousness "leads to destructive consequences for humanity and environment and profanes the Divine Name," it added.

Human intervention

Making reference to the Biblical tradition, the commission affirmed that "our responsibility for the eco-system is bound up with and reflective of our obligations to one another."

Quoting the Holy Father's address at the Synagogue of Rome, the statement underlined in particular "a special generosity toward the poor, towards women and children, strangers, the sick, the weak and the needy."

"The ethical aspect of human intervention in the natural order lies in the limitation on the power of science and its claim to absoluteness, and in the expression of human solidarity and moral responsibility towards all," it affirmed.

Thus the commission urged "that all scientific innovation and development work in close consultation with religious ethical guidance."

"A genuine environmental ethic is a key condition for world peace and harmony," it stated.

The statement underlined "the critical importance of a moral religious education at all levels" in order to "guarantee responsible scientific and social development."

In these days, the commission members also participated in a presentation at the Pontifical Gregorian University by Father Patrick Desbois, who spoke about the work of Yahad-In Unum to "locate and memorialize the unidentified sites in Eastern Europe of mass murder during the Shoah."

The commission urged the support and publication of this "very important work, in order to learn from the tragedies of the past to protect and respect the sanctity of human life everywhere so that atrocities will never reoccur."

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