



ZE10011708 - 2010-01-17

Permalink: <http://www.zenit.org/article-28077?l=english>

Pope at Synagogue Proposes 3 Areas for Teamwork

Calls Jews, Christians to Unite in Defending God, Life, Family

ROME, JAN. 17, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Drawing from their common recognition of the Ten Commandments, Jews and Christians can and should unite in defending God, life and the family, Benedict XVI proposed today as he visited the Synagogue of Rome.

The Pope became today the second Pontiff to visit the Roman synagogue; John Paul II went there almost 24 years ago, in 1986. And it was the third synagogue the German Pontiff has visited, after Cologne and New York. His speech reflected on the common spiritual patrimony of Jews and Christians, and affirmed the efforts of the Apostolic See to save Jews during World War II.

The Bishop of Rome particularly highlighted the Ten Commandments as "a shining light for ethical principles, hope and dialogue, a guiding star of faith and morals for the people of God." He said the Commandments are a "beacon and a norm of life in justice and love, a 'great ethical code' for all humanity." They "shed light on good and evil, on truth and falsehood, on justice and injustice, and they match the criteria of every human person's right conscience," he added.

Areas of cooperation

In this light, Benedict XVI said there are "several possible areas of cooperation and witness," and he chose to emphasize three.

"The 'Ten Commandments' require that we recognize the one Lord, against the temptation to construct other idols, to make golden calves," he said.

And since "in our world there are many who do not know God or who consider him superfluous" and "other new gods have been fabricated to whom man bows down," Jews and Christians share a common mission, the Pope suggested.

"Reawakening in our society openness to the transcendent dimension, witnessing to the one God, is a precious service which Jews and Christians can offer together," he stated.

Secondly, the Ten Commandments "call us to respect life and to protect it against every injustice and abuse, recognizing the worth of each human person," Benedict XVI noted. "[...] Bearing witness together to the supreme value of life against all selfishness, is an important contribution to a new world where justice and peace reign."

Finally, the Holy Father affirmed that the Decalogue calls to "preserve and to

promote the sanctity of the family, in which the personal and reciprocal, faithful and definitive 'Yes' of man and woman makes room for the future, for the authentic humanity of each, and makes them open, at the same time, to the gift of new life."

He exhorted Jews and Christians to "witness that the family continues to be the essential cell of society and the basic environment in which human virtues are learned and practiced," saying this "is a precious service offered in the construction of a world with a more human face."

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