

Catholic, Jewish Leaders Stress Need for Prayer

Highlight Religious Leadership in Modern World

JERUSALEM, APRIL 1, 2011 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Catholic and Jewish leaders are together underlining the importance of prayer so as to give witness to the presence of God in the world.

This was one of the conclusions of a three-day meeting in Jerusalem of the Bilateral Commission of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews.

The meeting was co-chaired by Chief Rabbi Shear Yashuv Cohen of the Jewish delegation and Cardinal Jorge Mejía of the Catholic delegation.

The concluding statement was publicized Thursday, the last day of the meeting, which centered on the theme "Challenges of Faith and Religious Leadership in Secular Society."

The commission noted that "our modern world is substantially bereft of a sense of belonging, meaning and purpose."

It affirmed, "Faith and religious leadership have a critical role in responding to these realities, in providing both hope and moral guidance derived from the awareness of the Divine presence and the Divine image in all human beings."

The religious leaders affirmed, "Our respective traditions declare the importance of prayer, both as the expression of awareness of the Divine presence, and as the way to affirm that awareness and its moral imperatives."

"In addition, the study of the Divine Word in Scripture offers the essential inspiration and direction for life," they noted.

Moses

The commission observed that "the Biblical description of Moses was presented as a paradigm of religious leadership."

It noted that Moses, "through his encounter with God, responds to the Divine call with total faith, loving his people, declaring the Word of God without fear, embodying freedom and courage, and an authority that comes from obeying God always and unconditionally, and listening to all, ready for dialogue."

"The responsibility of the faithful is accordingly to testify to the Divine presence in our world," the statement asserted, "while acknowledging our failures in the past to be true and full witnesses to this charge."

It continued: "Such testimony is also to be seen in education, focus on youth and effective engagement of the media.

"Similarly, in the establishment and operation of charitable institutions with special care for the vulnerable, sick and marginalized, in the spirit of 'tikkun olam' (healing the world)."

The commission added that "the religious commitment to justice and peace also requires an engagement between religious leadership and the institutions of civil law."

The statement noted, "Resulting from the discussion on the practical implications for religious leadership in relationship to current issues, the bilateral commission expressed the hope that the outstanding matters in the negotiations between the Holy See and the state of Israel would soon be resolved, and bilateral agreements speedily ratified for the benefit of both communities."

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