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## A Wish for Jewish-Catholic Dialogue in 2012

### Founder of Pave the Way Foundation Speaks on Steps for the Future

By Anita Bourdin

ROME, JAN. 17, 2012 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI's invitation to promote peace by working with the youth is right on target, according to the Jewish founder of a New York-based organization that aims to reconcile religions.

Gary Krupp, founder of the [Pave the Way Foundation](http://www.pavetheway.org), spoke with ZENIT on the occasion of the annual day of Jewish-Catholic dialogue, celebrated in Italy today.

ZENIT: On the occasion of the annual day of dialogue with Judaism organized by the Catholic Church in Italy today, could you explain the aim of the Pave the Way Foundation, which you founded?

Krupp: The Pave the Way Foundation (PTWF) is a non-sectarian organization that seeks to remove obstacles between the world's religions. Jewish-Catholic dialogue has been an important part of understanding one another's faith traditions and that clears away prejudices and hatred. PTWF, however, concentrates our efforts on identifying concrete obstacles and seeks to remove them. First, through our historic gestures we establish a level of trust and then we can move to accomplish our core mission. Religion must be removed as a tool to justify private agendas. Removal of this abuse makes dialogue easier.

ZENIT: The message of Pope Benedict for the World Day of Peace 2012 is focussed on educating the youth in justice and peace: How can we put into practice this invitation for peace between religions?

Krupp: The message of Pope Benedict XVI is exactly right on. It is the youth who must learn the truth about the problems of today if we ever hope to solve them. The hidden problem in learning, however, is the international media and its abuse of its awesome power to control ideas and thinking. News reports today intentionally editorialize and push private agendas, which muddies the truth and in turn creates hostility, hatred and in some cases death. Along with the Pope's remarks, I would add a statement of caution to the youth of today. Take care to weigh what you learn from news reports and mass media. Question the report; go to original local sources in order to seek the true story. Then try to find solutions based on the facts, not unbalanced and biased reporting.

ZENIT: You have come several times to Rome and you have been received by John Paul II and Benedict XVI: Do you remember one of these meetings as especially important for you?

Krupp: Our fantastic meetings with both Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI have been life changing. One was July 29, 2000, I received a telephone call from then Archbishop Renato Martino, that the Pope invested me as a Papal Knight of St. Gregory the Great. It was this action that changed the course of my life's work, prompting my wife Meredith and I to form Pave the Way Foundation (Merry came up with the name).

Specifically, two of the most important recollections in meeting with both Holy Fathers are, first: Jan. 18, 2005, when PTWF organized the Jewish audience to simply thank Pope John Paul II for all he had done in religious reconciliation with Jewish people. Watching three rabbis bless the Pope in Hebrew in the Clementine Hall and seeing tears in the eyes of the Pope will forever be etched in my memory.

The second most memorable meeting was when we presented the Bodmer Papyrus to Pope Benedict XVI with our wonderful friend and donor, Mr. Frank Hanna III, on Jan. 22, 2007. After our presentation ceremony, I gave the Pope a little framed photo of the rainbow that appeared in the sky when he blessed the memorial at Auschwitz. I took this photo when we accompanied the Pope with Jerzy Kluger to Poland, May 27, 2006. Pope Benedict was emotionally moved with this seemingly insignificant gift. The Pope asked me, "Was this Auschwitz?" I said, "Yes, Holy Father, I took this picture myself." He seemed almost as excited about this little photo of the rainbow and God's sign of approval in Poland, as he was in accepting the most important Christian manuscript in existence today.

ZENIT: How important is the Yad Vashem research on the Righteous Among the Nations for the dialogue between Jews and Catholics?

Krupp: Yad Vashem's research is precise and exacting and I believe extremely important in Jewish-Catholic relations. PTWF submission of the evidence in the case for Eugenio Pacelli as "Righteous Among the Nations" should be given immediate attention so that the black legend regarding Pope Pius XII is corrected by truth and facts. This is Jewish responsibility since we have amassed a huge amount of evidence that Eugenio Pacelli was indeed one of the great heroes to the Jewish people during the Holocaust.

Ingratitude is one of the worst character flaws in Judaism; the acceptance of the truth of Pacelli's personal heroism, I believe, is essential to bring my Jewish brothers and sisters to redemption. Eugenio Pacelli's reputation must be restored to where it was before the KGB intentionally began the greatest character assassination of the 20th century. This KGB Operation called "Seat Twelve" successfully accomplished its mission to isolate the Jews from the Catholics at the very moment of religious reconciliation with "Nostra Aetate."

ZENIT: How can a media organization such as ZENIT participate in changing mentalities and promoting peace?

Krupp: ZENIT's work throughout the years has been exemplary in reporting the truth and always in a positive manner. I can only encourage that when reporting on issues as sensitive as the Holy Land that the news reports are fair and the story reflects both sides of the conflict. Often, too many reports of Palestinian suffering supersede any mention of Israeli suffering, with the constant rocket attacks against civilian populations. Since there are 1.1 million Israeli citizens who are Muslim Arabs, violence against Israelis is against all Israelis, Christians, and Muslims as well. It is these acts of violence that first prompted the necessity for sea blockades, security checkpoints and a security

wall. If the violence ends, then these security measures, so often criticized, can be lifted. If one seeks peace, they must stand in everyone's shoes.

ZENIT: What is your wish for Jewish-Catholic dialogue in 2012?

Krupp: In 2012, my wish is that the intense work of posting 46,000 pages of documents and news articles and video recording of eyewitnesses of the actions of the Holy See during WWII, will be finally studied in a serious way, so that this 48-year-old obstacle between Jews and Catholics can be eradicated. Our wish is that God grants wisdom to the negotiators of the Fundamental Agreements between Israel and the Holy See. This diplomatic obstacle should be completely resolved soon after 17 years of negotiations. Pave the Way Foundation's goal recognizes that resolution of these two issues will "pave the way" to the wonderful positive relations between Jews and Catholics.

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