



# The Holy See

---

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER  
POPE JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED JEWISH  
APPEAL FEDERATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA**

*3 September 1998*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I warmly welcome you, the representatives of the United Jewish Appeal Federations of North America, and I thank you for your visit. "May the Lord bless you and keep you always" (Num 6:24). Your presence highlights the very close bonds of spiritual kinship which Christians share with the great religious tradition of Judaism stretching back through Moses to Abraham.

Our meeting is another step in the direction of strengthening the spirit of understanding between Jews and Catholics. For the good of the human family, it is crucial at this time that all believers work together to build structures of genuine peace. This is not just because of some political necessity which will pass, but because of God's command which endures forever (cf. Ps 33:11). In our different ways, Jews and Christians follow the religious path of ethical monotheism. We worship the one, true God; but this worship demands obedience to the ethic declared by the prophets: "Cease to do evil, learn to do good; correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Is 1:17). Without this, our worship means nothing to the God who says, "Take away from me the noise of your songs. . . until justice flow forth like a river" (Am 5:23-24).

The key to understanding the bond between the worship of God and service of humanity is given to us in the Book of Genesis. There we see that every human being has an absolute and inalienable dignity, for we are all created in the image and likeness of God himself (cf. Gen 1:26). I am sure therefore that we share the fervent hope that the Lord of history will guide the efforts of Christians and Jews and all men and women of good will in working together for a world of true respect for the life and dignity of every human being, without discrimination of any kind. May this

be our prayer and commitment!

May the Lord God “shed the light of his face upon you and be gracious to you; may he look upon you with kindness and give you his peace” (Num 6:25-26). Amen.

Copyright 1998 © Libreria Editrice Vaticana

---

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana