



HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

27th JANUARY 2014

Pope Francis and the Holocaust



A new pope must prioritise. So many things crying out for his attention, what must come first? Just days after his election Pope Francis wrote to the Chief Rabbi of Rome.

No-one was surprised that writing this letter came high on the new Pope's list of what he must do; he and his friend Rabbi Abraham Skorka of Buenos Aires have co-authored a book, *On Heaven and Earth*, in which the then Archbishop Bergoglio wrote this:

'The Shoah [Holocaust] is genocide, like the others from the twentieth century, but it has a distinctive feature....an idolatrous construction against the Jewish people. The

'I sincerely hope that I can contribute to the progress there has been in relations between Jews and Catholics since the Second Vatican Council in a spirit of renewed collaboration.'

**- POPE FRANCIS TO
THE CHIEF RABBI OF
ROME**



pure race, the superior beings, they are idols for the foundation upon which Nazism was built....Each Jew that they killed was a slap in the face to the living God in the name of idols.'

As Holocaust Memorial Day approaches what can Catholics do?

More than one diocese has organised an event at which many parishes were represented. After one such event Jewish people who had attended spoke with appreciation of the experience; in words that were the theme of Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) 2013 'bridges were built.' If a big event is not possible then at least each diocese can encourage parishes to include a bidding prayer on the Sunday nearest to HMD.



Rabbi Daniel Sperber at the Conference on Christians in the Holy Land at Lambeth Palace

This year's theme

The theme of HMD in 2014 is JOURNEYS. Those rounded up for the Nazi death camps or the forced labour camps of Cambodia endured hellish, terrifying journeys before they were killed. Children and others escaped Nazi Germany and journeyed as refugees to

countries where they could be safe. After the genocide there were further journeys to make: to find a homeland; to find reconciliation with the descendants of those who had perpetrated such evil. Church and Synagogue still have a long journey to make before 'all people will call on God with one voice and "serve him shoulder to shoulder"' Nostra Aetate, paragraph 4.

“all people will call on God with one voice and “serve him shoulder to shoulder””

- *NOSTRA AETATE, PARAGRAPH 4.*



Archbishop
Vincent Nichols of
Westminster with
Rabbi Jonathan
Sacks at the
Inaugural Pope
Benedict XVI
Lecture

Resources

If each diocese were to circulate its parishes with details of local HMD events (and how to obtain tickets if necessary) this information could be included in parish newsletters and on websites.

For a HMD resource pack

Including posters, leaflets, and further information on this year's theme:

Holocaust Memorial Day Trust: PO Box 61074
London SE1P 5BX

www.hmd.org.uk

Tel: 020 7785 7029

Vatican Documents on Catholic-Jewish Relations

Documents from the Holy See

Catholic Truth Society, London
www.jcrelations.net

For outreach to schools, resource materials and visits to Auschwitz

Holocaust Educational Trust

BCM Box 7892, London WC1N 3XX
Tel: 0020 7222 6822

info@net.org.uk

www.het.org.uk

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For educational materials and visits:

Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre

Laxton, Newark, Notts NG22 0PA

Tel: 01623 836627 www.Bethshalom.com

The Imperial War Museum

(permanent exhibition on the Holocaust)

Lambeth Road, London SE1 6HZ

Tel: 020 74165320

The Jewish Museum

129 - 131 Albert Street, London NW1 7NB

Jewishmuseum.org.uk

London Jewish Cultural Centre

theholocaustexplained.org

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