1970

Text of Vatican II Statement on the Jews

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TEXT OF VATICAN II STATEMENT ON THE JEWS

The Statement on the Church’s bond to the Jewish people is part of the Council’s Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions. It was adopted on October 15, 1965, and promulgated on October 28. The final vote was 222 for and 88 against. This unofficial translation is by the Editor.

As this Sacred Synod probes the mystery of the Church, it remembers the spiritual bond that ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham’s stock.

Thus the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God’s saving design, the beginnings of her faith and election go back as far as the days of the patriarchs, of Moses, and of the prophets. She affirms that all who believe in Christ—Abraham’s sons according to the faith (cf. Gal 3:7)—are included in the call of this patriarch; she also affirms that her salvation is mysteriously prefigured in the exodus of the chosen people from the land of bondage. The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God, in that loving-kindness words cannot express, deigned to conclude the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which the wild roots of the Gentiles have been grafted (Rom 11:17-24). For the Church believes that by His cross Christ, who is our Peace, reconciled Jews and Gentiles, making the two one in Himself (cf. Eph 2:14-16).

The Church keeps ever before her eyes the words of the Apostle about his kinsmen: “Theirs is the sonship and the glory and the covenants and the law and the worship and the promises; theirs are the patriarchs and from them is the Christ according to the flesh” (Rom 9:4-5), the Son of the Virgin Mary. Furthermore, she recalls that the apostles, the Church’s foundation-stones and pillars (cf. Eph 2:20), were also born principally of dialogue.

True, the Jewish Lord is angry for the death of God’s people and passion cannot be averted; nor can it be attributed to the new people presented as rejected in Scripture. May all catechetical work not conform to this.

The Church, now, on the day of Pentecost, for this reason addresses the Jews, she decries the staged against them forever. She does so as the Church of the Gospel’s pure intention.

One thing remains: “He was crucified from which every
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The Church, indeed to the Jewish people is part of the relationship of the Church to the Non-Covenant people of God. On October 15, 1965, and promulgated was 2221 for 88 against.

Editor.

As Holy Scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation (cf. Lk 19:44), nor did the Jews in large number accept the Gospel; indeed, not a few opposed its dissemination (cf. Rom 11:28). Nevertheless, now as before, God holds them most dear, for the sake of the patriarchs; He has not withdrawn His gifts or calling—such is the witness of the Apostle (Rom 11:28-29). In company with the prophets and the same Apostle, the Church awaits that day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and “serve him with one accord” (Soph 3:9; cf. Is 66:23; Ps 66[65]:4; Rom 11:11-32).

Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is so rich, this Sacred Synod wishes to encourage and further their mutual knowledge of, and respect for, one another, a knowledge and respect born principally of biblical and theological studies, but also of fraternal dialogue.

True, the Jewish authorities and those who sided with them pressed for the death of Christ (cf. Jn 19:6); still, what happened in His passion cannot be attributed without distinction to all Jews then alive, nor can it be attributed to the Jews of today. Certainly, the Church is the new people of God; nevertheless, the Jews are not to be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from Holy Scripture. May all, then, see to it that nothing is taught, either in catechetical work or in the preaching of the Word of God, that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.

The Church, moreover, rejects any persecution against any man. For this reason and for the sake of her common patrimony with the Jews, she decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, staged against the Jews at whatever time in history and by whomsoever. She does so, not moved by political reasons, but impelled by the Gospel’s pure love.

One thing remains: Christ underwent His passion and death freely and out of infinite love because of the sins of all men so that all may obtain salvation. This the Church has always held and holds now. Sent to preach, the Church is, therefore, bound to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God’s all embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows (Nostra Aetate, iv).