

DIALOGUE, DOCTRINE AND DIPLOMACY: A CONSIDERATION OF THE GUIDELINES FOR CATHOLIC JEWISH RELATIONS, MAY 1992

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In a dramatic ceremony held in the crypt of St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney on 2 November 1992 Bishop Bede Heather, the Chairman of the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, formally launched the Australian Guidelines for Catholic Jewish Relations.¹ In their speeches at the launch, Bishop Heather and Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) President Leslie Caplan acknowledged the historic significance of the Catholic Jewish reconciliation process which began with the Declaration known as *Nostra Aetate* ('In our Times') initiated by Pope John XXIII and approved by the Second Vatican Council in 1965.

At the same time the speakers could not avoid mention of some of the contentious doctrinal and political issues. Bishop Heather spoke of 'the mountain of Jesus of Nazareth' as the greatest of all barriers between Judaism and Christianity², and concluded 'This mountain will not be readily moved before the faith of us all is transformed by God's merciful grace'.³ In this context he acknowledged the 'delicate path to be walked by the Catholic here, making known to all, including Jewish people, the gospel of Jesus Christ',⁴ while at the same time conducting open dialogue in an atmosphere of mutual respect.⁵ In another section of his speech he noted that 'the Guidelines ask the Catholic people to try to understand some of that mythology which is attached to the State of Israel in the Jewish mind'⁶.

Leslie Caplan responded on the issue of 'the mountain of Jesus of Nazareth':

Dialogue can only be possible on the assurance that it is aimed at building bridges of understanding, love and respect for each other, and that it is not aimed at finding some path to unity. The mountain of Jesus of Nazareth must never be an

issue between us. We respect your faith, but it is a condition precedent that you must not only understand our belief, but accept that we are not involved in any process of unification.⁷

On the 'mythology' of the Land, he emphasised the 'covenant binding the people of Israel to the land of Israel' as 'the touchstone of the future relationship between the Jewish people and the Church'.⁸

These issues represent but some of the areas of difficulty that necessarily arise out of any process of reconciliation between the Jewish people and the Catholic Church. While it will be seen the reconciliation process which is represented by the Australian Catholic *Guidelines* (referred to in this article as *Guidelines*) has resulted in the building of positive personal relationships in the Australian environment, there is no doubt that the ideological chasms which remain, and the need to take account of bitter Jewish memories of centuries of Christian persecution culminating in the Holocaust, will still require careful diplomacy.

The issue of Jewish-Christian relations in general and Jewish-Catholic relations in particular has been the subject of a vast literature. However, to date, there has not been any academic research into the 'Reconciliation Statements' issued by a number of the Christian Churches in Australia during the 1990s⁹. This article will specifically consider *Guidelines*, which was the first and most comprehensive of those statements and which has been associated with an active programme of education and communication. It will outline the general background and the Australian experience of the Catholic-Jewish reconciliation process and it will take the form of an analysis of the principal features of the *Guidelines*, and their implementation and effect on Catholic-Jewish relations.

Much of the information about Catholic-Jewish relations in Australia in this article has its source in the recollections and observations of the active participants in the reconciliation process who kindly assisted me in personal discussion. Those who spoke with me included the interviewees listed in the Appendix. Where possible oral history has been checked against and integrated with the written, archival sources.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

At the core of the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people lie the historical origins of Christianity in the land of Israel and the unifying context of the Jewish idea of ethical monotheism, the concept of a divinely ordained moral law. Added to this is the adoption by Christianity of elements of the Jewish nation-

al culture represented by the body of Jewish literature comprised in the Hebrew Bible and the features of the Jewish liturgy which have been incorporated into Christian practice.

Historically, however, these elements of shared culture have been overshadowed by destructive processes. The charge of Deicide and an inability to accept Jewish rejection of the Christian messianic proclamation still linger at the heart of the Christian consciousness; and both have been essential elements in the long history of religious hatred and physical persecution directed against the Jewish outsider in the mono-cultural societies of Christian Europe.¹⁰ It was in this context that the Catholic Church eventually wrestled with the implications of the Nazi Holocaust, and determined to re-examine its relationship with the Jewish people.

Arguably the critical event was the election of Pope John XXIII after the death of Pius XII in 1958. In January 1959 John announced the convocation of a Second Vatican Council for the renewal of the Church¹¹. In that same year he also announced a critical change in the Good Friday prayers. Before John XXIII the prayer read as follows:

Let us pray also for the perfidious Jews: that our God and Lord may remove the veil from their hearts; that they also may acknowledge Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Since 1959, after a number of further changes, the prayer now reads:

Let us pray for God's ancient people, the Jews, the first to hear his word: for greater understanding between Christian and Jew; for the removal of our blindness and bitterness of heart.¹²

This decision has produced a major change in the Catholic liturgy and was naturally implemented in Australia.

In 1965, the historic declaration known as *Nostra Aetate* became one of the numerous important achievements of the Second Vatican Council. Robert A. Graham has described the process of the drafting and adoption of the Declaration as follows:

The history of the Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions begins with Pope John XXIII. He wanted the Council to make a statement on the Jews, and he asked Cardinal Bea to see to it. Between that beginning and the outcome there is perhaps the most dramatic story of the Council.¹³

After lengthy and vigorous debate following the presentation of a first draft in 1963 and a number of critical revisions of the text, the Declaration was finally approved by the Council in October 1965 during the papacy of Paul VI, as the final session of the Council was drawing to a close.

The *Nostra Aetate* Declaration does not resile from reciting the Jewish non-acceptance of the Christian messianic message: 'Jerusalem did not recognise the time of her visitation'. However, it seeks to overcome this Jewish rejection of the essence of Christianity as a source of anti-Jewish feeling by proclaiming a continuing validity for the Jewish Covenant. 'The Jews still remain most dear to God because of their fathers, because he does not repent of the gifts he makes.'¹⁴ Interestingly, a reference to 'conversion' of the Jews in an earlier draft was dropped 'because many Council Fathers felt it was not appropriate in a document striving to establish common goals.'¹⁵

Most importantly, on the charge of Deicide the Declaration states 'True, authorities of the Jews and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ; still, what happened in His passion cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living, without distinction, nor upon the Jews of today.'¹⁶ This paragraph originally included the words 'or guilty of deicide', and much controversy surrounds the circumstances in which this was deleted, with both positive and negative connotations.¹⁷ The third significant element in the Declaration was a forthright condemnation of antisemitism as a sin.¹⁸

In 1966 Pope Paul VI approved the setting up of a special office for Catholic Jewish relations, curiously situated within the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. Cardinal Cassidy explains that it was not considered appropriate to place the office within the Secretariat for Non-Christian Religions, in the light of the special psychological historical and theological relationship between Jews and Christians.¹⁹ He also explains that the emphasis at the beginning was on education of the Christian public.²⁰ In 1970 a Catholic Jewish Liaison Committee was set up, but it was not until 1974 that a dedicated Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews was formally brought into existence.

Meanwhile, an early step in the implementation of the Declaration had come in the United States. In 1967, the United States National Conference of Catholic Bishops issued the first *Guidelines on Catholic Jewish Relations*.²¹

It was not until 1975, a decade after *Nostra Aetate* was finalised, that the new Vatican Commission issued *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration Nostra*

Aetate (n.4), which are expressed in non-specific general terms.

In the 1980s the reconciliation movement received new impetus with a series of statements by Pope John Paul II promoting the concept of a 'common heritage' between Jews and Christians. In one such statement, made on 6 March 1982, the Pope promoted the idea of common spiritual purpose:

Through different but finally convergent ways we will be able to reach, with the help of the Lord who has never ceased loving his people (cf Rom 11.1) this true brotherhood in reconciliation and respect, and to continue to a full implementation of God's plan in history.²²

Such statements stimulated further activity in the Catholic movement for reconciliation, even if they did reflect Christian rather than Jewish world views²³. In 1985, the US Bishops issued a fully updated and revised version of the 1967 Guidelines, prepared by Dr Eugene Fisher²⁴, setting out principles to be applied in dialogue, liturgy and joint social action.

The Reconciliation Movement in Sydney

According to Rabbi Apple 'somewhere in the 1970s there was a first attempt to create a climate of understanding between the Catholic and Jewish communities in Australia.'²⁵ He describes the evolution of the *Guidelines*:

Like everything else they had a pre-history...Probably the most important outcome of that was a meeting which took place at the home of Dr Joachim Schneeweiss who was then the president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry. In the course of that meeting the Catholic representatives made the statement that Catholic attitudes to Jews and Judaism had irreversibly changed, particularly since the Second World War, in respect especially of the issue of Christian proselytising of Jews. It was made perfectly clear that the major change in attitude was that the Catholic Church worldwide but certainly in Australia, no longer believed that it had an obligation to target Jews for conversion to Christianity and the results of that was firstly that it cleared the air, bearing in mind that there had been long term Jewish resentment of Christian proselytising attempts including by the Catholic Church, but it also made it possible for a series of explorations to begin in terms of the right relationship between the Jewish community and the Catholic Church. Now amongst the things which tran-

spired was that a number of key officials within the Catholic Church were deputed to try to put into writing some of the possible ways in which the two communities could speak to each other, understand each other and work together.²⁶

Another key element in the reconciliation movement was the establishment in 1980 of a community of the Sisters of Zion in Sydney under the guidance of Sister Lenore Sharry, with a specific programme of 'commitment to the Jewish people and to reconciliation between Church and Synagogue'.²⁷ The Order, known officially as the *Religieuses de Notre Dame de Sion*, had established a branch in Australia in 1890, when they had been invited by the Bishop of Sale in Victoria to work in the diocese, and had established a school. Founded by a Jewish convert, Fr Theodore Ratisbonne in 1843 in Rome, their original programme was a desire for the conversion of the Jews to Christianity. Since the Second World War and 'ratified by the teaching of Vatican II in *Nostra Aetate*'²⁸, the idea of conversion was replaced by 'the Church's recognition that God is always faithful to the people whom he chose as his own.'²⁹ As the Order's website puts it:

Israel's resurrection as a nation after the Holocaust strengthens faith in God's promises to his people and hence to all humanity, because Abraham, the father of all Jews received God's assurance. 'In you shall all the nations of the earth be blessed', so our faith is 'established in Sion'.³⁰

In 1979, Sister Lenore Sharry made an exploratory visit to Sydney with the aim of developing a plan of action for the Order's work in promoting Catholic-Jewish relations.³¹ She identified the Eastern



Sister Lenore Sharry (NDS), late 1991

Suburbs as her 'area of research' which was 'an almost unknown area in Christian circles'. She noted the existence of the 'Jewish-Christian Study group' which was meeting bi-monthly at the Great Synagogue, a 'Jewish Christian Study Group' which met in Bondi with Rabbi Alony of the Central Synagogue, and a 'Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee' overseen by Professor Alan Crown, of the Department of Semitic Studies at Sydney University.

Sister Lenore's observation was that 'on the whole' the reaction to Jewish Christian discussion was 'very cautious' and that 'the situation is a very delicate one and much discretion is needed'. As she put it: 'a clear plan is required to get a hearing'. The 'Challenges' she identified were as follows:

1. We enter at our request therefore we have to make our own way.
2. Interest in Ecumenism and interfaith work is almost non-existent among clergy and bishops not educated to it;
3. Many priests "threatened" by changes and involvement of laity etc.
4. Quite a large Lebanese population including recent arrivals.
5. Jewish community not interested in contact with the Church – want to be left alone. (Large number of Hungarian Jews who have suffered). Anything that is done has to be done very quietly at first. The Jewish community is like one big family!
6. To know how to get in touch with informed people on the Christian side.³²

By 1982, after two years in Sydney, she made the following observations:

Jewish Christian Relations in Sydney developed very slowly and received three of the greatest challenges since the Second Vatican Council with reactions to 1) developments of the war in Lebanon; 2) the Papal audience with Yasser Arafat and 3) the canonisation of Maximilian Kolbe.³³ These added to the ever-present need to educate Christians in a true understanding of Judaism and of its significance for deeper appreciation of Scripture, Jesus and his message.

At this stage of their history Jewish-Christian Relations are primarily concerned with sensitizing Christians to the situation of their Jewish brothers and sisters. Contacts with the Jewish community are minimal. Christians have still a very long way to go before we can effectively relate. The Australian Jewish community in general, sees little advantage in contact

with Christians, and are mistrustful of them. The very name for so many – victims of the Holocaust- is synonymous with persecution. There is a great deal of anger which surfaces when either Israel or other Jewish concerns appear jeopardized or are criticised.³⁴

In 1984 the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies hosted a conference on 'Jewish Christian Dialogue Towards the Year 2000', a full day seminar which was organised with the assistance of Sister Lenore Sharry of the Sisters of Zion According to Jeremy Jones, at the time Public Affairs Director of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, discussions at that conference included one on the prospect of a proper formal, reconciliation statement being produced in Australia.³⁵

In 1987, at the instigation of Sister Lenore, a Catholic-Jewish Relations Committee was established as a committee attached to the Archdiocesan Commission for Ecumenism, Sydney. Its members were from the Catholic community, nominated and approved by the Archbishop.³⁶ Father Richard Dixon, director of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine was the Chairman and Sister Lenore was the secretary.

In 1988 the Sisters of Zion played an active role in the revival of the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ), which had existed in Sydney briefly from 1943-48, the move initiated by the late Rabbi Dr Israel Porush, senior minister of The Great Synagogue from 1940 until 1972.³⁷ In 1974, his successor, Rabbi Raymond Apple and several Church leaders attempted to re-establish the CCJ, but after resistance from some of the churches an inter-faith Luncheon Club was established instead. In 1988, when Sr. Shirley Sedawie of the Melbourne branch of the Order returned from Rome, Sister Lenore and Rev. Bern Stevens of the Uniting Church worked with Rabbi Apple to renew the CCJ.

The Development and Adoption of the Australian Guidelines

When Pope John Paul II visited Australia in 1986, he had a formal meeting with the leadership of the Jewish community. Jeremy Jones recalls a great deal of planning went into the visit, in particular in the drafting of Leslie Caplan's statement which he would present as president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry.³⁸ The statement presented the Jewish community's concerns regarding Israel, antisemitism and other relevant Jewish Catholic issues. Protocol dictated that an advance copy was to be sent to the Vatican's foreign office. As Jones put it: 'They commented on it, they tried to change it, we didn't agree to changes, although if they had some stylistic things or there was a sound argument we would



John Paul II in 1986 meeting members of the Australian Jewish community.

Front from left: Cardinal Edward Clancy, Pope John Paul II, Leslie Caplan, Jeremy Jones.

Back from Left: (Centre) Rabbi Apple, Prof Graham De Vahl Davis, Robert Zabłud, Mark Leibler (partially obscured). Also present: Isi Leibler and Malvina Malinek.

work it out.³⁹ According to Jones this process created a good deal of contact between the Jewish community and the Catholic Church overseas and within Australia. There was that 'build up'.⁴⁰

In 1990, Dr Eugene Fisher visited Australia for the centenary of the Sisters of Sion in Australia, and according to Bishop Bede Heather he encouraged the Sisters to work towards the preparation of Australian Guidelines, presumably on the model of his 1985 American document.⁴¹ Bishop Heather also praised the Sisters for 'preparing material for the consideration of the bishops'.⁴² The minutes of the Catholic-Jewish Relations Committee in 1990 include a perceptive and detailed analysis of the US Guidelines by its chairman, Rev. Richard Dixon⁴³, who is described by Bishop Heather as one of the people involved in the original draft.⁴⁴ Dixon's paper notes that:

Jews see themselves as a people. They are not a Church and there are no exact parallels in this self-understanding... Proselytism is not merely a religious issue for Jews but a cutting of oneself off from the people. Those who practise proselytism are little better than Hitler in their attempt to destroy the Jewish people.

Unfortunately neither the Minutes nor the notes of Sister Lenore make any mention of the concrete proposal to issue Australian Guidelines, or any comment on the drafting process, and Richard Dixon has resigned from the priesthood. This writer has, therefore, not been able to trace the reasoning process behind the Australian variations from the American model.

Jeremy Jones recalls that when the *Guidelines* were being developed 'There were [sic] a lot of discussions with the people who were working on that paper from the Catholic side. I know for instance Bede Heather, he would contact various people in the Jewish community for fine tuning.'⁴⁵ According to Jones such contact was not formal in the sense that approval was sought from the Jewish community. Rather the writers of the document wanted the drafting to be sensitive to Jewish concerns. The process was 'in good spirit - it wasn't as if we were negotiating a contract.'⁴⁶

As to his involvement in the drafting process, Rabbi Apple remembered that he was asked to look at a draft and his comments were invited. 'More or less' everything that he had suggested was incorporated. He believed that 'in a few instances it needed the nuance which an outsider was not always able to arrive at in relation to Jews and Judaism.'⁴⁷

Josie Lacey also recalled a personal discussion with Sister Lenore on the question of Jewish sensitivity to Christian portrayal of the Passover celebration (the 'Seder').⁴⁸ This is the subject of a special appendix to *Guidelines* which insists that the 'rites of the Haggadah should be respected in all their integrity'.

Eventually *Guidelines* was adopted by the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference and formally launched on 2 November 1992. The document followed the basic outline of the 1985 revision of the US guidelines, with changes clearly designed to suit Australian conditions, and some small but significant differences in language which will be noted later in their context. The Australian document was the first set of Guidelines adopted by any national Catholic Church after the United States.

The current doctrinal source referred to in *Guidelines* is a document that was issued by the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews at the Vatican in June 1985. The document is entitled

*Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis of the Roman Catholic Church*⁴⁹, referred to as 'Notes' both here and in the text of *Guidelines*. An interesting feature of *Notes* is a repeated emphasis on a need for precision and accuracy in presentation, implying a need for authoritative guidance on a subject which is regarded as difficult and sensitive. The document was signed by Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, then President of the Commission, who was succeeded in that office by the Australian Cardinal Edward Cassidy in 1990, two years before the issue of the Australian *Guidelines*.

Guidelines comprises two operative elements. Firstly, the document affirms and re-states the newly developing Church doctrines concerning the Jewish people which have emanated from *Nostra Aetate*. The second element of *Guidelines* suggests practical steps to be taken for the purpose of implementing the new approach. This article will consider both the theological statements and the proposals for action, as well as the effect of the policies in practice as perceived by leading Jewish and Catholic protagonists.

THEOLOGICAL ISSUES EMERGING FROM THE GUIDELINES

The Teaching of Contempt

Guidelines begins by affirming the central proclamation of *Nostra Aetate*: 'Jews should not be presented as repudiated or cursed by God, as if such views followed from the Holy Scriptures.'⁵⁰ The statement represents a formal end to 'teaching of contempt', a teaching which Cardinal William Keeler records as 'going back to the earliest Fathers of the Church.'⁵¹ In this context it is significant that while the former anti-Jewish teachings of Christianity had their essential origins in the New Testament texts, the elaboration of Jew-hatred as a central doctrine had another early source in the violent outpourings of the 'Church Fathers' of the second, third and fourth centuries CE. It is worth recording a few typical examples from an extensive literature of hatred:

The Passover sermon of Melito of Sardis (second century):

You were celebrating,
 He was starving;
 You were drinking wine and eating bread,
 He vinegar and gall;
 You were bright of face,
 He was oppressed;
 You were singing, he was being judged...

God is murdered.

The King of Israel is killed by an Israelite right hand.⁵²

Professor Mark Chancey of the Southern Methodist University⁵³ cites Gregory of Nyssa (fourth century):

Slayers of the Lord, murderers of the prophets, adversaries of God, men who show contempt for the law, foes of grace, enemies of their fathers' faith, advocates of the Devil, broods of vipers, slanderers, scoffers, men whose minds are in darkness, leaven of the Pharisees, assembly of demons, sinners, wicked men, stoners and haters of righteousness.⁵⁴

Chancey also records that

Saint John Chrysostom (4th century), author of one of the most used liturgies in Christendom, described Jews as drunken gluttons who hire prostitutes and who worship idols; people of darkness, not of the light; and 'Christ killers'. Jews, who had murdered their master, were no better than dogs. They were, in fact, "wild animals suited only for slaughter".⁵⁵

The categorical renunciation of such teaching thus represents the very essence of the reconciliation process. It encompasses all of the theological issues which go to the heart of Christian-Jewish discord, as well as the problem of re-assessing the relevant New Testament texts. In this context this article will consider some of the historic anti-Jewish doctrines of the Church, the specific responses made in *Guidelines*, and the current developments in Catholic-Jewish relations in Australia, which have followed.

The Charge of Deicide

On the critical issue of Jewish responsibility for the death of Jesus, *Guidelines* re-states the assertion in *Nostra Aetate* that the 'Passion of Jesus' cannot 'be blamed on all Jews then living, without distinction, nor upon the Jews of today'.⁵⁶ It is a statement that is highly problematic from a Jewish perspective, reaffirming as it does the New Testament story of a trial by a Jewish court and the Jewish demand that a reluctant Pilate proceed with the execution. However, *Guidelines* does at least follow the US precedent of simply omitting the controversial phrase 'True, authorities of the Jews and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ', which precedes the exculpatory words in *Nostra Aetate*.

It is also notable that the statement from *Nostra Aetate* takes

the courageous and essential step of directly contradicting the words in *Matthew 27.25*, the dramatic hand-washing scene in which the Jewish 'crowd' is described as responding to a reluctant Pontius Pilate by demanding the crucifixion with the critical words: 'His blood be upon us and on our children'.

The imperative to contradict the word of Christian scripture in order to preserve a basic humanity was not without its consequences. For example the reconciliation statement was thoroughly condemned by the Arabic Christian newspaper *An Nahar* published in Sydney, which reported the launch of *Guidelines* in a two page article with the specific banner headline 'His Blood be upon Us and on our Children'⁵⁷. The first paragraph of the *An Nahar* article set the tone:

Why, O Council of Churches of Australia, the publication of the document on Christian Jewish religious reconciliation and rapprochement at this time? And why this sudden tolerance by absolving contemporary Jews from the crime of shedding the blood of Christ? That they are not responsible for this crime that their ancestors committed against the Messenger of peace and incriminated their offspring after them?⁵⁸

The publication in Sydney of such a categorical criticism of the very idea of reconciliation certainly illustrates the problems faced by the Vatican both in dealing with literalist Christians opposed to any dilution of Christian scripture, and in accommodating political pressures exerted both by and upon the Churches situated within the Arab world.

Nevertheless, despite the deficiencies in the formal statements and the fundamentalist opposition, the reality which Josie Lacey reports⁵⁹ following personal discussions at the Catholic University in Sydney is that the teaching that 'the Jews killed Christ' has simply disappeared from the Catholic school system, and has probably also disappeared from preaching and theological training in Australia.

The Portrayal of Judaism in the Gospels

One of the basic and repeated themes of the Gospel narrative is the portrayal of an alleged Jewish legalism, narrowness and hypocrisy. Indeed the *modus operandi* of the Gospel account is to denigrate the Judaism of the time in order to proclaim the virtues of Christianity by way of contrast.

The well-known parable of the Good Samaritan is just one of a multitude of typical examples. A man is left by robbers half-dead by

the roadside. A Priest and a Levite pass by on the other side. The man is rescued and cared for by a passing Samaritan, one of a group regarded as heretical by mainstream Judaism. Jesus uses the parable as a means of lecturing a Jewish 'teacher of the law' on the meaning of 'love'.⁶⁰ Some 38 parables in a similar vein have been counted. One Christian website⁶¹ provides a blunt summary of the theme:

As we go through the other 38 parables of Jesus, you will see how many of them make statements that show that the nation of Israel is no longer equated with the Kingdom of Israel on earth. Jesus controverted the teaching of the Jews and said that God could and did change His plan and program for the nation of Israel because of repeated and continues rebellion and unrighteousness.⁶²

Denigration of Jews and Judaism in the Gospels does not, of course, end with the parables. The Gospel narrative is one of unrelenting conflict with every stream of Jewish religious authority, from Pharisees to Sadducees, and from Priests to Levites and 'teachers of the law', from the 'Woe unto the Pharisees' verses in Matthew,⁶³ to the episode of the moneychangers in the Temple.⁶⁴

Guidelines deals with this need for re-interpretation of the New Testament texts without directly confronting the words of the Christian scripture. Recommended Activity 10(d) calls for an 'explicit rejection' of the 'notion that the Judaism of that time, especially Pharisaism, was hypocritical and nothing more than an empty observance'. The Gospel accounts of episodes denigrating alleged Jewish attitudes and practices of the time are countered in paragraph 10(b) which acknowledges the 'richly diverse and creative religious, social and cultural life of the Jewish community in the first century of the Common Era.' Paragraph 10(f) makes a generalised call for 'further analysis' of 'such expressions as "the Jews" by St. John and of other New Testament references'.

There is some doubt whether this particular aspect of *Guidelines* has penetrated to the grassroots of daily preaching. For example this writer had the experience of hearing the story of the Pharisee and the tax-collector at the christening of a friend's child; and Josie Lacey reports the story of the Good Samaritan preached at an inter-faith gathering with Muslims!⁶⁵

How the 'further analysis' of the texts in 'St. John' and other such texts is to take place is not directly addressed in *Guidelines*. Certainly Jewish participants in religious discussions can hardly expect Christians to disown their whole scripture because Jews find it offensive. The general Catholic approach has been to suggest a

need for re-interpretation of the text in the light of the historical context in which the New Testament was written. Sister Dr Marianne Dacy explained:

I think when we're looking at the Gospels, when we're looking at Matthew or John, we're looking at a certain type of literature, we're looking at a different period, we're looking at a time when Christianity was trying to establish itself as an entity against Judaism...Christianity was originally a sect of Judaism but in order to define itself, it had to show that it was better than the group that it was leading. This is how it has come out and in John the separation is more marked because it is later. And again when we talk about curses, this is all a type of literature, a type of mindset that is very far removed from the twenty-first century. People have taken it literally, which is unfortunate.⁶⁶

More particularly the Gospels have been described by the official Catholic commentators as a narrative of conflict between the religious authorities and early Christianity as a dissenting group within Judaism. It has also been noted that the earliest gospels were written at a time when Christians belonging to the early Church were a rejected minority within Jewish society⁶⁷. The problem here is that while such interpretations may explain the text, they only partially overcome the problems posed by the essential anti-Jewish content of a literal reading.

Also, where the issue is really serious, as in the particularly extreme accounts in *John* and *Matthew* of Jewish complicity in Deicide, there has been minimal Christian re-examination of the relevant scriptural texts in the light of the imperial Roman environment in which they were written.⁶⁸

The Concept of a 'New Covenant'

The negative portrayal of Judaism in the Gospels is supplemented by the Pauline epistles which speak of a new Covenant for the Christians based on 'love' and 'the Spirit of Jesus' which supersedes the Jewish covenant of the moral law. *Galatians* 4, for example, defines the Christians as the spiritual Isaac, while 'Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.' This theme is a central feature of Christian doctrine, affirmed and spelled out in detail throughout the epistles.⁶⁹

Nostra Aetate hints at the concept of a separate Jewish covenant, which is supplemented but not replaced by the 'New

Covenant' of the Christians, with the elliptical observation that God 'does not repent of the gifts he makes.'⁷⁰ It is a theme affirmed in a statement by Pope John Paul II to the Jewish community of Mainz in 1980 referring to the 'people of God of the Old Covenant which has never been revoked.'⁷¹ A related concept, elaborately explored in *Notes*, is the medieval idea of 'typology', that the 'Old' Testament allegorically foreshadows the New by way of 'promise and fulfilment'⁷², and that Christians should 'learn to appreciate and love the [Jews] who have been chosen by God to prepare the coming of Christ... notwithstanding their difficulty in recognising in Him their Messiah.'⁷³ On the other hand, the authors of *Notes* are still very careful to assert that the 'Church and Judaism cannot...be seen as two parallel ways of salvation, and the Church must witness to Christ as the Redeemer for all, while maintaining the strictest respect for religious liberty.'⁷⁴ Presumably this rules out compulsion, but not persuasion.

Cardinal Cassidy similarly wrestles with the question of the two covenants and the issue of mission, though in a more sympathetic fashion:

The Catholic Church does not have a mission to the Jewish people... There's a covenant with the first people of God that's never been revoked...Does that mean that the Jewish people have no need at all to know the second one because they've got their own and that will lead them to salvation? Or are we still obliged to do that first thing, to proclaim our message believing that that would also enrich the Jewish people if they were interested in it?⁷⁵

It is a theme which is sensibly and diplomatically completely ignored in *Guidelines*, which is very careful to avoid any direct articulation of the central ideological chasm. In particular, no reference at all is made to the extremely sensitive concept of an 'Old Covenant' and a 'New Covenant'.



Cardinal Cassidy with Josie Lacey, April 2002

The Characterisation of Jesus Christ and the nature of Dialogue

A central basis for the Christian 'doctrine of contempt' arises from the Jewish rejection of the both the divinity and the messianic character of Jesus Christ, the 'mountain of Jesus of Nazareth' referred to by Bishop Bede Heather. Dialogue on such matters is a particularly sensitive issue given the Jewish recollection of the forced 'Disputations' of medieval Europe and the riots, book-burnings and occasional massacres which followed.⁷⁶

The subject appears by implication in Item 6 of the 'General Principles'. *Guidelines* follows the theme of Notes in condemning 'proselytism, which does not respect religious freedom'.⁷⁷ However, *Guidelines* then asserts a right of Christians to 'witness to Jesus as the Risen Christ'⁷⁸, and follows this with a reference to 'conversations' about the 'vocation of Christians and the Jewish people to witness to the whole world'⁷⁹, as reflected in the statements of John Paul II but not particularly welcomed by Jewish community leaders such as such as Leslie Caplan.⁸⁰

Again the reality is that discussions between Catholic and Jewish participants encounter none of these problems, and that there is an atmosphere that is far more positive and friendly than the theoretical positions would indicate. Indeed, both sides seem to be genuinely interested in a process of learning without missionising, and in the diplomatic process of establishing relationships, which make it possible to act co-operatively in a variety of situations. As Sister Dacy explained:

Dialogue is between two people who are willing to learn from each other without trying to get the other to accept their viewpoint...dialogue is between one who is prepared to regard the other as an equal...I don't think Christians have to witness to the Jews at all, I wouldn't say that was necessary. I think that if you want to explain what you believe, fine. But the question of witness I don't think is relevant, and that's certainly not part of dialogue in my mind.⁸¹

Josie Lacey also outlined her experience of inter-faith dialogue in the Women's Inter-faith Network and the World Conference for Religion and Peace. She found that the Catholic participants strictly adhere to the principle that each was there to explain their own beliefs and practices, to answer sincere questions and not to presume to understand or compare the beliefs and practices of others. The result was a genuine broadening of understanding and the development of real friendships.⁸² Needless to say, any form of 'pro-

paganda' in the traditional Catholic sense, was out of the question.

Similarly, in my discussions with Cardinal Cassidy, he expressed the view that 'the Catholic Church does not have a mission to the Jewish people'.⁸³ He referred to the 2002 statement 'issued by the Ecumenical and Interreligious affairs Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the National Council of Synagogues USA' entitled 'Reflections on Covenant and Mission'⁸⁴ (*Reflections*), a document which generated a storm of controversy within the Catholic community.

Essentially *Reflections* puts forward the proposition that 'campaigns that target Jews for conversion to Christianity are no longer theologically acceptable in the Catholic Church'. It refers to a formal statement⁸⁵ made by Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Vatican Commission for the Religious Relations with the Jews in which he put forward the following proposition:

The term mission, in its proper sense, refers to conversion from false gods and idols to the true and one God, who revealed himself in the salvation history with His elected people. Thus mission, in this strict sense, cannot be used with regard to Jews, who believe in the true and one God. Therefore, and this is characteristic, there exists dialogue but there does not exist any Catholic missionary organization for Jews...in dialogue Jews give witness of their faith...and Christians give account of the hope they have in Jesus Christ. In doing so, both are far away from any kind of proselytism, but both can learn from each other and enrich each other...⁸⁶

Thus, *Reflections* considers that Judaism is salvific for the Jews because it is a faithful response of the Jewish people to God's irrevocable covenant. On the other hand, *Reflections* states that the Catholic Church must always 'evangelise' and 'will always witness to its faith' and that 'sincere individual converts from any tradition or people, including the Jewish people, will be welcomed and accepted.'⁸⁷ Cardinal Cassidy stated that he had always been a strong advocate of a deep theological study of the nature of the Jewish covenant long before *Reflections* was drafted, and that he agreed with the ideas expressed in that document.⁸⁸

According to Rabbi Apple the Catholics 'have learnt how to witness to their faith in a constructive way without trying to ram it down anyone's throat...the Catholics are leagues ahead of the others.'⁸⁹ Interestingly, Rabbi Apple believes that the Catholics did have a mission for Jews 'because they would like to see everyone including the Jews, seeing the light...one has to grant that this is their

way of thinking, so long as they don't impinge on my Jewish conscience.⁹⁰

Jeremy Jones also stressed that the Catholic representatives with whom he has been engaged in dialogue (as opposed to other Christian denominations) 'have their beliefs and they believe that they're right but they don't try to make you one of them – [but] if you become one of them they will probably be overjoyed.'⁹¹ As far as proclaiming one's faith Jeremy colourfully put it : 'if a Catholic came to me...and they said oh I'm a Priest but I really don't know that my religion is the best thing there is – you'd think this person is either a fool or a liar and so we don't lie and they don't lie – we have a good relationship.'⁹²

Antisemitism and the Holocaust

Guidelines refers to the large numbers of Jewish Holocaust survivors in Australia as one of the reasons giving rise to the need for the issue of the document, and it refers to Holocaust denial and a need to overcome 'impatience with Jewish sensitivity'.⁹³ Another reference is in General Principle 9, that 'Christians must strive to learn by what essential traits Jews define themselves', and that in this context 'topics such as the Nazi attempt to annihilate the Jews...will obviously come up for discussion'. It is also acknowledged in Recommended Activity 10 (b) that 'anti-Semitism has resulted in centuries of persecution which reached its climax in this century' with the Nazi Holocaust.

Since the publication of *Guidelines*, the Church has attempted to grapple with the question of Christian responsibility and culpability. There are various issues. One relates to the 'centuries of persecution' which are specifically connected to the Holocaust in *Guidelines*. The question which follows is whether the 'teaching of contempt', and the resulting persecutions in the name of Christianity, created the social and moral conditions which led to unparalleled atrocity and mass-murder in the name of a non-religious racially-based 'antisemitism'.

A totally different issue arises out of the actions of individual Catholics and of the organised Church during the events of the Nazi Holocaust. It is beyond argument that individual Catholics, including some leading Catholic clergymen, actively participated in some of the worst barbarities,⁹⁴ and that this was particularly the case in Catholic regions such as Slovakia and Croatia which welcomed the Nazis as liberators and set up puppet regimes. Theologically, of course, their actions were those of individuals, and the Church as such does not consider that it bears a responsibility for their actions which calls for repentance.⁹⁵ Nevertheless the reference to 'impa-

tience with Jewish sensitivity' does seem to be grossly inappropriate.

Much has also been made of the failure of Pope Pius XII to exercise moral authority in intervening by way of emphatic calls to the Catholic world to resist manifest evil.⁹⁶ All of the associated issues, including the Concordat with the Nazi state⁹⁷ and allegations of post-war Church *Ratlines* to protect suspected war criminals continue to rankle.⁹⁸ Whatever the eventual verdict of the historians, the need for a more definitive statement by the Church still remains.

Cardinal Cassidy in his capacity as head of the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews was deeply involved in drafting the document *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*, which was issued by the Vatican on 19 March 1998. The document provoked a heated response.⁹⁹ In particular many Jewish writers and leaders were distressed by the document's defence of Pope Pius XII and by the assertion that the Holocaust was the work of a Nazi neo-pagan regime whose roots were outside Christianity. As Elie Wiesel pointed out: 'The truth is that the majority of Christians did not lift a finger because in their parishes they heard repeated every day that Jews are perfidious Christ killers.'¹⁰⁰ According to Cardinal Cassidy:

I think that what is very important is that the document sets out very clearly that there was a Holocaust, and that the Jewish people were the victims...The Jewish expectation was much greater than what we at the time felt that we could do. I would have liked it to have been a bit stronger but I think the Church wasn't able to go further at that time. We had to take our Church with us. We couldn't just do it on our own and say, this is how we see it.¹⁰¹

Sister Lenore, in a commentary on an article by Josie Lacey published in the B'nai Brith *Background* magazine in 1990, expressed the following view:

No Christian with any knowledge of Church History can fail to acknowledge Christian responsibility for the 'teaching of contempt', albeit in ignorance, which marred so much of Christian presentation of the Jewish people...This stance served as justification for all kinds of inhuman behaviour and persecution...Hitler in our century had little to create, but plenty of material and theories to put into practice, during the Nazi era.¹⁰²

Sister Dacy remarked:

I think that for 2000 years there's been this terrible triumphalism on the part of the Church and...it took a Holocaust to wake the Church up that what it had been teaching for generations had prepared the ground for what happened with Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, that the attitudes that had been propagated prepared people to think this way and to act this way and if there had been a more vigorous defence on the part of the Christians, I don't think it would have happened. I don't know, it would not have been to the same extent.¹⁰³

It is not within the scope of this article to make a detailed analysis of the Vatican's Shoah Statement. However, despite its weaknesses it is notable that both Marianne Dacy and Jeremy Jones consider the Statement to be a very important 'breakthrough',¹⁰⁴ and 'a step in the right direction'.¹⁰⁵

The Vatican and Israel

When Guidelines was launched in November 1992 the Vatican had not yet recognised the State of Israel or established diplomatic relations with it after 44 years of independence. At the time the issue was regarded by the Jewish communities throughout the world as a matter of central importance in their relationship with the Church, and this was reflected in the comments of ECAJ president, Leslie Caplan, at the launch.

There were those who believed that the attitude of the Church in failing to recognise the State had doctrinal implications. The early 'Church Fathers' had prophesied continuing exile as a punishment both for 'unbelief' and for the 'murder of God', and the concept of exile as a just punishment has long been a central Christian doctrine. Some examples of these attitudes include:

Tertullian, in *An Answer to the Jews* written in 198 or 208 CE¹⁰⁶ wrote:

Chapter XIII.-Argument from the Destruction of Jerusalem and Desolation of Judea.

But we perceive that now none of the race of Israel has remained in Bethlehem; and (so it has been) ever since the interdict was issued forbidding any one of the Jews to linger in the confines of the very district, in order that this prophetic utterance also should be perfectly fulfilled: "Your land is desert, your cities burnt up by fire,"-that is, (he is foretelling) what *will have happened* to them in time of war "your region

strangers shall eat up in your sight, and it shall be desert and subverted by alien peoples.¹⁰⁷

Again, Origen of Alexandria in the third century CE wrote that:

On account of their unbelief and other insults which they heaped upon Jesus, the Jews will not only suffer more than others in the judgment which is believed to impend over the world, but have even already endured such sufferings. For what nation is in exile from their own metropolis, and from the place sacred to the worship of their fathers, save the Jews alone? And the calamities they have suffered because they were a most wicked nation, which although guilty of many other sins, yet has been punished severely for none as for those that were committed against our Jesus.¹⁰⁸

However, most influentially, Saint Augustine in *The City of God*, wrote the following in the fourth century:

Book XVIII, Chapter 46—‘ Of the Birth of Our Saviour, Whereby the Word Was Made Flesh; And of the Dispersion of the Jews Among All Nations, as Had Been Prophesied’.

But it was not enough that he should say, ‘Slay them not, lest they should at last forget Thy law,’ unless he had also added, ‘Disperse them’; because if they had only been in their own land with that testimony of the Scriptures, and not every where, certainly the Church which is everywhere could not have had them as witnesses among all nations to the prophecies which were sent before concerning Christ.¹⁰⁹

In the introductory section, *Guidelines* disposed of any such interpretation of the Vatican’s refusal to recognise the State of Israel which still continued at that time. It clearly acknowledged both the religious attachment of the Jews to the land of their ancestors and the establishment of Israel ‘according to international law’.¹¹⁰

The effect of this straightforward statement was marred a little in General Principle 9, in which Catholics are urged to ‘make an honest effort’ to understand the link between the land and the people. While this unfortunate phrase also appears in the US precedent, *Guidelines* differs by omitting the more positive American references to the ‘rebirth of the Jewish State in the Land of Israel’ and the Jewish ‘longing for the homeland, holy Zion’. There was, in addition, the problem at the launch of the introductory address of

Bishop Heather referring to 'that mythology which is attached to the State of Israel in the Jewish mind'.¹¹¹

Unknown to the participants at the launch, however, the Vatican and the Israeli state were at that time actually engaged in the negotiation of the document which would be known as the Fundamental Agreement between the Holy See and the State of Israel, and signed on 30 December 1993.¹¹² According to both Cardinal Cassidy and Rabbi David Rosen, the chief Israeli negotiator, the delay until some three months after the Oslo Accord had neither political nor doctrinal implications. Both diplomatically insisted that it resulted rather from technical matters relating to the status of the Church in Israel, particularly in Jerusalem, which were eventually resolved by creative ambiguity.¹¹³ Rabbi Rosen nevertheless noted the wider implications:

As the Preamble of the Agreement indicates, the accord took place within the wider context of Catholic-Jewish reconciliation on which it undoubtedly had a profoundly positive impact in turn. Indeed, for many Jews especially in Israel, the diplomatic normalization served as testimony and proof of the genuineness of the transformation in theological attitudes and teaching that had taken place over the previous thirty years.¹¹⁴

Indeed the Agreement itself begins with an affirmation by the Holy See of its respect for other religions and their followers as stated in the *Nostra Aetate* declaration, as well as a specific condemnation of antisemitism.¹¹⁵

Unfortunately, since the breakdown of the Oslo peace process after Camp David II in 2000, the situation has also deteriorated dramatically at the personal level. There is an increasing perception by many of those who describe themselves as 'progressives' within the Church that the Palestinians are the 'underdogs' oppressed by a ruthless Israel. It is a tribute to the skill of the anti-Israel public relations machine that the conflict between Israel and an Arab-Islamic world determined to destroy it has been replaced in the minds of many Christians with an image of an oppressive Israel denying a Palestinian 'right of self-determination'. Jeremy Jones sees the issue in terms of Catholic 'liberation theology':

One of the issues within Catholicism that concerns the Jewish community is what's called the liberation theology. It is very strong within South America and liberation theology sees oppressors and victims. Most people I know who were exponents of liberation theology whom I've met a number of times

at international conferences on social justice – they are rabidly anti-Israel and as far as they are concerned it is legitimate for them to use anti-Semitism to defeat the tyrant Israel.

Now they are important within international Catholicism, they're not that important in Australia, although they have people who would pay a lot of attention to their works, so this stuff is part of a debate even within the Catholic Church. Whether you see Jews as the people who went through the Shoah, and therefore victims, or you see Jews as part of the oppressive militarily alliance between America, Israel, colonialism, whatever...we ignore that at our peril and it's very difficult to deal with.¹¹⁶

Marianne Dacy has identified anti-Israel sentiment in more serious terms. Although anti-Israel bias is not specifically a Catholic phenomenon, she sees it as a problem which specifically affects Jewish-Christian relationships. As she described the situation:

People will not come to our events...they will not come to the Holocaust events that we run because of their political views about Israel...It has nothing to do with the Holocaust and yet they will equate it with it, and that really I find disturbing.¹¹⁷

In her opinion anti-Israeli sentiment is 'the new kind of anti-semitism.'¹¹⁸ As she puts it, 'people need to blame somebody and you'll find it's all out of proportion and there's still that undercurrent there.'¹¹⁹ She considers it to be a 'significant problem, certainly in Australia.'¹²⁰

THE RECONCILIATION PROCESS IN PRACTICE

Guidelines envisages two distinct ways of implementing the reconciliation process. Firstly there is the change in the teachings of the Catholic Church as a consequence of the ideological re-assessment which has been developed and refined following *Nostra Aetate*, and which is reflected in the theological content of *Guidelines*. This in turn has required a fundamental change in the content of Catholic education and 'preaching' about Jews and Judaism, and this is, of course, the central element in the implementation of Christian reconciliation in the actual practice of the Church. Obviously the scope and extent of such a re-orientation of Church teaching actually taking place in the school system and in the churches can be determined only by extensive research that is beyond the scope of this article. The one Australian Catholic syllabus in Religious Education

which the writer has been able to find¹²¹ barely mentions the issue of Jews and Judaism in Christian teaching. For Year Six there is a reference to the Jewish Scriptures, as follows:

Distinguish different styles of writing in the Scriptures and connect the scriptural message with every day life.

Key Concepts

1. The Jewish and Christian Scriptures contain different types of writing.
2. The Christian Scriptures teach us about Jesus and the early Christian communities.
3. The Jewish Scriptures tell the story of the people of Israel's covenant relationship with God.
4. The Gospel of God's saving love challenges us to live Christian lives.
5. The four Gospels are central to the Church's prayer and teaching.

There is no other reference to Judaism whatsoever in the syllabus, except by implication under 'Religion and society' in Year Twelve:

Understanding and respecting the role of diverse religious traditions, particularly in the Australian context:

Stage Outcome

By the end of Year Twelve students should be able to:
Express an understanding and appreciation of belief systems and spirituality and how religious experience, traditions and communities serve to engage and support people and their search for meaning.

Key Concepts

1. The human search for meaning and fulfilment is inspired by the Holy Spirit.
2. The mystery of God is manifest in world religions.
3. Aboriginal spirituality, beliefs and practices are important in understanding the spirituality of Australians as a whole.
4. The relationship between Church and state raises a number of issues including religious pluralism and tolerance; ethical codes of different world religions and social justice issues.

If the Canberra-Goulburn syllabus is typical, then it might be

regarded an advance in that it makes no negative references, or it might be considered a disappointment in asking children to read the Gospels literally. Certainly, it does not ask teachers to wrestle with *Nostra Aetate* or *Guidelines*. Indeed, Marianne Dacy notes that *Guidelines* has not been publicised much at all within the Australian Church. In her opinion:

mostly any activities that come about in parishes have not been because of this document; it's been because of official statements, you might say, coming from the Vatican. I think that that has had a greater influence than this document which I'd say many people are not aware of.¹²²

The second element of the implementation process envisaged by *Guidelines* is an engagement in 'dialogue' between Catholic and Jewish representatives. As noted above, such an engagement is traditionally viewed with the utmost suspicion by Jewish protagonists. Nevertheless, with ground rules based on an implied renunciation of any mission to the Jews as acknowledged by Cardinal Cassidy in our discussion,¹²³ the problematical ambiguity arising from the reference to 'witness' in *Guidelines* has been overcome without difficulty in practice.

Jeremy Jones explained that the Jewish community has just completed its seventh annual 'Conversation' with the Catholic Bishops Committee. At these Conversations participants discuss a particular theme. As he explains:

We meet alternatively in a Catholic venue or a Jewish venue. We have a serious topic. For instance we've discussed the impact of globalisation, medical ethics with concentration on stem cell research, racism and immigration. This year we decided we wanted to talk about two topics, Zionism and evangelism.¹²⁴

According to Jones 'it was a very serious conversation, and our team consisted of, I Think, it was four Rabbis plus three lay people. Their group consisted of six priests and one lay person.'¹²⁵ Jeremy described the 'Conversations' as follows:

A paper was given by one of the delegates, which discussed the attitude of the Catholic Church to conversion of Jews to Catholicism, and what the different views are. It was a very honest paper. It didn't say there was one view, it said where the debate is, what is the weight of the various voices within the

Catholic Church. It was a fantastic way to learn about where the Catholic Church is on this issue. At other times though we also have a part of the Conversation, what we might call a practical session, so this year the practical session was on Mel Gibson's film *The Passion*.¹²⁶

In addition to these Conversations, Jones stated that 'it wouldn't be rare for us every month or two, either one of the members of that group or one of the members of our group to pick up the phone and speak to somebody else, to follow it up on a more practical level'.

According to Rabbi Apple, the ECAJ and the Australian Catholic Bishops have had an ongoing relationship since the *Guidelines* were issued and this has led 'once or twice a year'¹²⁷ to a meeting between ECAJ representatives and representatives of the Catholic Bishops. Rabbi Apple described these meetings as ones 'at which good old friends reacquaint themselves with each other. We know each other so well by now that we're almost members of the same family.'¹²⁸

Rabbi Apple also stated that it is very rare that there are any major issues that affect the harmony between the Jewish and Catholic communities in Australia. If problems do arise then 'we'd be able to handle them behind the scenes on a happy personal level without anyone perhaps even knowing that there was a fire, so it's as if the fire is put out before it began to burn'.¹²⁹ This is what Rabbi Apple referred to as 'behind the scenes diplomacy'. As he explained:

I entirely disagree with those who feel that every problem has to be ventilated and shouted about. For my part, if for example there ever arose a serious problem between the Jewish and the Catholic communities in Australia, I would be one of those who would be able to get on the phone without any fuss, phone direct to one of the Catholic Bishops, maybe even speak on first name terms and say look I've got something on my mind, do you think we can have a cup of coffee together and have a chat.¹³⁰

Rabbi Apple gave the following example:

Over the course of recent decades there have been a number of times when Jews including myself, felt that the Pope, the Vatican and the Catholic community could have been much more open and unequivocal when comments were made on matters involving Jews. For example, there was a problem some years ago about the convent at Auschwitz and the feeling which I shared was that while Auschwitz cannot, God forbid, be called holy ground – it's not, it's cursed ground - I felt

that the best thing to do on the site of Auschwitz is to leave it desolate and as wasteland and I feel it was a major error of judgement on the part of some in the Catholic Church to feel it was an appropriate place to create a Christian institution. Well this is an example of a time when perhaps there could have been internationally a clearer statement. However our experience in Australia has been that on the rare occasions when there was a problem such as this, the Catholic leader with whom we discussed such things shared our disappointment with the Vatican, so they did not automatically feel that whatever the Vatican said or did was necessarily the right approach, and I had no qualms about being critical. So this is in itself one of the great by-products of the guidelines and of the new climate.¹³¹

On the other hand, Rabbi Apple does not regard dialogue as anything but 'an end in itself.' According to Rabbi Apple:

if there is an aim, the aim is that because we share this planet we should know each other. For me as a Jew the aim is not, let's have a nice conversation because we need somebody's vote in the United Nations when Israel is on the agenda - it's not about this. If the result of the dialogue is that somewhere along the line, people have a more positive attitude to Israel or anything else that particularly concerns Jewish people, well and good, but I still say that the discussion is worthwhile in and for itself.¹³²

For Cardinal Cassidy the purpose of dialogue with the Jewish people for Catholics is to 'overcome the strange...enmity and the persecution, the oppression that had happened between Christians and Jews. In other words, to get rid of all those myths and prejudices that were there for nearly 2000 years.' He pointed out that such enmity arose not always but very often out of 'official teaching'. He stressed that there arose a responsibility on the part of the church particularly after the Holocaust 'to look at this question and to try in our dialogue to come to a greater understanding of the Jewish religion and a greater, we would hope a greater understanding also by the Jewish people of our religion because very often both were quite wrong in the way in which they thought the other one acted or believed'.¹³³

Cardinal Cassidy's view is that what should then arise is the building up of 'a relationship, not a unity, not like Christian unity where you're looking for the Churches to come together but coming

together on the basis of partnership.¹³⁴ He pointed out that our moral values, commandments, our way of looking at life are so similar, and that we can work together in promoting these values. As he stated:

I believe that little by little we've been able to achieve something of that but still it's a slow process because you've got to get rid of all the suspicion that's naturally there – what are you up to, what are you trying to do...are you trying to find a back door in, you couldn't get in the front door... trust, you've got to build a trust and then if you can build trust I believe we can do a lot together.¹³⁵

Jeremy Jones sees the purpose of dialogue for the Jewish community in quite a different light. As he explained:

First of all the Catholic Bishops Committee publicised [the conversations] and we publicise it in the *Jewish News*. In the *Jewish News*, Jews see that it's taking place and that indicates that there is an engagement taking place, and I think that's important, particularly for a community that feels it doesn't have anybody listening to what it has to say on any subject which I think is a real concern in the Jewish world...¹³⁶

In 2000, Josie Lacey was one of the five representatives from ECAJ to attend the Jubilee Catholic Bishops Conference. At the conference representatives of a number of religious traditions were invited to join in the Catholic celebration of the Christian Jubilee year. For her this represented another side of the 'dialogue' process, with Catholic-Jewish engagement as part of a general progress in inter-religious communication in a multi-cultural society. Following a remark made by a Muslim participant at the Bishops Conference, Josie took the initiative of approaching Sister Trish Madigan, whom she knew through her involvement with the World Conference for Religions for Peace and who was at that time liaison officer for the Archdiocesan Commission of Ecumenism. She proposed that the women at the conference should form the nucleus of a new group, which became the Women's Interfaith Network, known as 'WIN'. WIN created a new form of dialogue, in which women from nine different religious traditions meet regularly and share their personal experiences of living within their own traditions. Sometimes the participants listen to particular personal experiences, and sometimes topics such as the 'death and dying' or 'the description of God'

are discussed in a comparison of different traditions. The result is a non-judgmental sharing, which has resulted in an increase of knowledge and understanding, and the development of bonds of personal friendship. WIN is hoping to broaden the availability of the experience by creating a network of such Networks.¹³⁷

It will be seen that dialogue has different meanings and purposes for the various participants, and that all of the various perceptions have their value in promoting inter-religious harmony. Traditional Jewish reservations have been respected; the Catholic Church has seen an opportunity to 'overcome a strange enmity'; Jewish leaders see an opportunity for a diplomatic contact with the Church which can assist in resolving problems which are expected to arise; others see the publicity attached to contact as a positive force in promoting harmony, and all see the process as a valuable human enterprise for its own sake.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

When Constantine made the fateful decision to strengthen the centralised power of the Roman Empire by granting imperial legitimacy to a universal Christian Church, one by-product was the importation of a deadly psychological disease into the very civilisation which Rome had established in the West.¹³⁸ Dr Leo Pinsker, arguably the true founder of modern political Zionism, made the diagnosis in his booklet *Auto-emancipation*, written in Odessa in 1881, some time before the pagan racist antisemitism of Nazi Germany appeared on the scene:

Judeophobia is a psychic aberration. As a psychic aberration it is hereditary, and as a disease transmitted for two thousand years, it is incurable.¹³⁹

Dr Pinsker was describing a condition which was the almost inevitable consequence of the creation of a crusading faith which proclaimed a 'Truth' which was both based upon, and claimed to supersede, the national religion of the Jews. The Jewish people, largely dispersed as cultural outsiders in a Christian Europe, were confronted with a hatred based on particular interpretations of the scriptural text of the New Testament, expressed in waves of persecution in almost every generation.

The culmination of that persecution in the Nazi inferno prompted a fundamental re-assessment of the character of human civilisation in general and Christian civilisation in particular. It took the accession to the papal throne of one man of vision in John XXIII to

throughout two millennia as a longing for the homeland, holy Zion. Appreciation of this link is not to give assent to any particular religious interpretation of this bond. Nor is this affirmation meant to deny the legitimate rights of other parties in the region, or to adopt any political stance in the controversies over the Middle East, which lie beyond the purview of this statement.¹⁴³

It is a statement which indirectly highlights the asymmetry between a powerful religious entity, with multi-millions of followers joined by teaching and belief, and the small ethno-religious group which was the source of its basic doctrines, stubbornly surviving in a hostile world. It can only be hoped that an improvement in mutual understanding will permeate the continuing process of dialogue, and that the period since *Nostra Aetate* will usher in a new era of friendship and mutual respect between the Jewish people and the Christian world.

NOTES

1. Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Committee for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, *The Faithfulness of the Lords endures for ever*, 30 November 1992.
2. Bishop Bede Heather, Transcript of speech at St Mary's Cathedral Crypt Sydney, 2 November 1992, p. 4.
3. *Ibid.*, p.5.
4. *Ibid.*, p.7.
5. *Idid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p.6.
7. Leslie Caplan AM, Transcript of speech at St Mary's Cathedral Crypt Sydney, 2 November 1992, p.3.
8. *Ibid.*, p.4.
9. Statements were issued by the Uniting Church in Australia and by the Lutheran Church of Australia. The Anglican Church prepared a draft modelled on the Catholic Guidelines, which has not yet been issued.
10. See H.H Ben-Sasson, ed. *A History of the Jewish People*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson 1976; Robert M. Seltzer, *Jewish people, Jewish thought: the Jewish experience in History*, New York: Macmillan; London: Collier Macmillan, 1980 and Robert S. Wistrich, *Anti-Semitism: the Longest Hatred*, New York: Schocken Books, 1994.
11. The First Vatican Council was convened in 1869-1870 by Pius IX, who is remembered by Jewish communities for his adamant refusal to return a kidnapped and converted Jewish child to his parents. The First Council ended with a declaration establishing Papal infallibility.
12. Texts from Encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com Accessed on 2 November 2004.

13. Robert A. Graham, in Abbott, W.M. (ed) *The Documents of Vatican II*, Guild Press, NY, 1966 p. 656.
14. *Nostra Aetate*, n.4.
15. Graham, op. cit. p.665.
16. *Nostra Aetate* n.4.
17. Graham, op. cit. p. 666.
18. *Nostra Aetate*, n.4.
19. Cardinal E.I. Cassidy *Ecumensim and Interreligious Dialogue*, New Jersey, Paulist Press, 2005 p. 161.
20. Ibid.
21. See 'Key US and International Events in Catholic-Jewish Relations' under www.americancatholic.org for a detailed timeline. Accessed 23 September 2004.
22. Papal Statement of 6 March 1982 cited in *Guidelines for Catholic-Jewish Relations* 1985. Revision issued by the US National Conference of Catholic Bishops.
23. See remarks of Leslie Caplan at the launch of *Guidelines*, noted above.
24. Associate director for the American Bishops' Secretariat of Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs.
25. Rabbi Raymond Apple. Interview by Rebecca Lacey-Ehrlich, The Great Synagogue, tape recording, 1 September 2004.
26. Ibid. Dr Joachim Schneeweiss was ECAJ president from 1976-1978 & 1980-1982.
27. <http://www.sion.org>. Accessed 2 November 2004.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Sister Lenore Sharry, 'Visit to Sydney (21st May – 2nd June 1979)' pasted in Scrapbook entitled 'Sion – Jewish Christian Relations – Sydney 1979'.
32. Ibid.
33. Maximilian Kolbe was the priest hero of a Nazi death camp. It was alleged that he was associated with an antisemitic publication. A website describes him as the patron saint of journalists.
34. Sister Lenore Sharry, 'Review of Jewish-Christian Relations, Sydney – 1982' pasted in Scrapbook, op. cit.
35. Jeremy Jones, interview by Rebecca Lacey-Ehrlich, ECAJ Office Darlinghurst, tape recording, 10 August 2004.
36. See Minutes of Meetings of The Jewish Catholic Relations Committee 1987-91.
37. See Israel Porush, 'The New South Wales Council of Christians and Jews, 1943-1948', *AJHS Journal*, vol 6, part 4, 1968, pp.181-195.
38. Jeremy Jones interview, op. cit.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Bede Heather's speech. See his introductory remarks, op. cit.
42. Ibid.
43. R.Dixon, 'The Place of the Jews and Judaism in Catholic Religious

Education Curricula', 8 November 1990

44. Letter of Bishop Bede Heather to the writer dated 31 July 2004, op. cit.
45. Jeremy Jones interview, op. cit.
46. Ibid.
47. Rabbi Apple interview, op. cit.
48. Josie Lacey, interview by Rebecca Lacey-Ehrlich, Bellevue Hill NSW, 10 September 2004.
49. *Notes* was greeted ambivalently by Jewish commentators at the time. Sister Lenore records articles in the *Jerusalem Post* and by the Australian leader, Isi Leibler.
50. *Guidelines*, op. cit., p.5.
51. Keeler, W.H., *Catholic-Jewish Dialogue: A Developing Agenda*, an address delivered at a Jewish-Catholic dialogue in Salvador, Brazil, 7 June 2004. Cardinal Keeler is the Moderator for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops.
52. Melito of Sardis, *Peri Pascha* 566-575, 714-716.
53. Mark Chancey, 'An Unacknowledged Passion' (www.bibleinterp.com), accessed 5 November 2004.
54. Ibid.
55. Chancey, op. cit.
56. *Guidelines*, op. cit., p.5.
57. Michael Haddad in *An Nahar*, 16 July 1992
58. Translation by Ethnic Affairs Commission interpreter service.
59. Josie Lacey interview, op. cit.
60. *Luke*, 10:25-37
61. www.discipleship.net/parable. Accessed 1 November 2004.
62. Ibid.
63. *Matthew*, 23:29-34
64. *John*, 2:13-22
65. Josie Lacey interview, op. cit.
66. Sister Marianne Dacy. Interview by Rebecca Lacey-Ehrlich, 31 August 2004, University of Sydney, tape recording.
67. See, for example, 'The Pontifical Biblical Commission', *The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* Vatican Press, 2002 at Chapter III, B and C.
68. There has been no authoritative Christian response to the various Jewish analyses demonstrating that the Trial described in the Gospels would be impossible under Jewish law.
69. See, for example, Roman 7-9.
70. *Nostra Aetate*, n.4.
71. Cited in *Notes*, I.3.
72. *Notes*, 1.5.
73. *Notes*, 1.8.
74. *Notes*, 1.7.
75. Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy, interview by Rebecca Lacey-Ehrlich, Warabrook NSW, tape recording, 29 July 2004.
76. See Hyam Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial: Jewish-Christian Disputations in the Middle Ages* Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1985.

77. *Guidelines, op. cit.*, p.7.
78. *Ibid.*
79. *Ibid.*
80. President of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry. See page 1: 'We are not engaged in any process of unification.'
81. Sister Marianne Dacy interview, *op. cit.*
82. Josie Lacey interview, *op. cit.*
83. Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy interview, *op. cit.*
84. *Reflections On Covenant and Mission*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, 12 August, 2002.
85. This Statement was made at the 17th meeting of the international Catholic Jewish Liaison Committee in May 2001 and repeated in Jerusalem a year later.
86. *Reflections, op. cit.*
87. *Ibid.*
88. Cardinal Cassidy interview, *op. cit.*
89. Rabbi Apple interview, *op. cit.*
90. *Ibid.*
91. Jeremy Jones interview, *op. cit.*
92. *Ibid.*
93. *Guidelines* 'Introduction', para. 3. The phrase implies, of course, that there is such 'impatience'.
94. See, for example, Father Jozsef Tiso, Prime Minister of the Nazi State of Slovakia, enacted the Jewish Codex in 1941 and collaborated in the Auschwitz deportations. Former priest Miroslav Filipovic-Majstorovic allegedly killed scores of prisoners at Jasenovac camp in Croatia with his own hands. Cardinal Stepinac allegedly participated in the government of the Nazi state of Croatia.
95. *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*, issued by the Vatican on 19 March 1998.
96. Rolf Hochhuth, *The Deputy*, New York: Grove Press 1964.
97. The Concordat between the Vatican under Pius XII and Adolf Hitler in 1933.
98. Mark Aarons, *Ratlines: How the Vatican's Nazi networks betrayed western intelligence to the Soviets*, London: Heinemann, 1991.
99. See for example Rabbi Raymond Apple, 'Mea culpa is a good start' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 April 1998; Pamela, Bone, 'A guilty bystander at world's massacres' *The Age*, 26 March 1998; and Chris McGillion, 'It's time to settle some differences', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 March 1998.
100. Quoted in article by P. Pullella "Vatican Holocaust Paper Leaves Jews Bitter.", *Excite News*, Reuters, 17 March 1998.
101. Cardinal Cassidy interview, *op. cit.*
102. Lenore Sharry, 'Comment by Sr Lenore Sharry of the Order of the Sisters of our Lady of Sion' attached to an article by Josie Lacey 'Medieval Roots of Modern Anti-Semitism' *Background Magazine*, February 1990.
103. Marianne Dacy interview, *op. cit.*
104. Jeremy Jones interview, *op. cit.*
105. Marianne Dacy interview, *op. cit.*

106. Dates calculated by Rev. S. Thelwall (www.ccel.org/fathers2). Accessed 25 September 2004.
107. Tertullian, *An Answer to the Jews*, para 259.
108. Origen, *Contra Celsum* II. 8.
109. Augustine, *The City of God* (www.ccel.org/fathers) Accessed 25 September 2005.
110. *Guidelines, op. cit.*, p.4.
111. *Ibid.*, p.6.
112. A bilateral permanent working commission was established on 29 July 1992.
113. Rabbi David Rosen, 'Israel-Vatican Relations Since the Signing of the Fundamental Agreement'. Available at <http://www.ajc.org>. Accessed 12 May 2004.
114. *Ibid.*, p.1.
115. Fundamental Agreement between the Holy See and the State of Israel, dated December 30 1993. Articles 1.2 and 2.2.
116. Jeremy Jones interview, *op. cit.*
117. Marianne Dacy interview, *op. cit.*
118. *Ibid.*
119. Marianne Dacy interview, *op. cit.*
120. *Ibid.*
121. Archdiocese of Canberra-Goulburn: Syllabus in Religious Education (www.cangoul.catholic.edu.au) Accessed 10 November 2004.
122. Marianne Dacy interview, *op. cit.*
123. Cardinal Cassidy interview, *op. cit.*
124. Jeremy Jones interview, *op. cit.*
125. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
126. *Ibid.*
127. Rabbi Apple interview, *op. cit.*
128. *Ibid.*
129. *Ibid.*
130. *Ibid.*
131. *Ibid.*
132. *Ibid.*
133. Cardinal Cassidy interview, *op. cit.*
134. *Ibid.*
135. *Ibid.*
136. Jeremy Jones interview, *op. cit.*
137. Josie Lacey interview, *op. cit.*
138. <http://campus.northpark.edu/history/WebChron/EastEurope/ConstantineConverts.html> one of many sites outlining the basic history. Accessed 2 November 2004.
139. Cited in Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, New York: Atheneum, 1969.
140. Josie Lacey interview, *op. cit.*
141. Jeremy Jones interview, *op. cit.*
142. Bede Heather's letter to this writer ends with the revealing sentence 'Meanwhile I hope we can join in prayer and active commitment to peace among the peoples of Palestine.'
143. 1975 USA Statement on Catholic Jewish Relations NCCB, *op. cit.*

APPENDIX - INTERVIEWEES

Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy, the former President of the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. Cardinal Cassidy held that office at the time of the *Guidelines*, and retired in 2001.

Dr Sister Marianne Dacy, of the Order of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion, which is an Order dedicated to the promotion of Catholic-Jewish relations. Marianne worked with Sister Lenore Sharry, now deceased, who has been described by Bishop Heather as 'the main architect of our *Guidelines*'. Sister Marianne has been the Archivist of the Archive of Australian Judaica at The University of Sydney since 1983.

Jeremy Jones, past president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ), which is the elected representative roof body of the Jewish community in Australia. At the time of the promulgation of *Guidelines*, Jeremy was actively involved as the Executive Director of the ECAJ.

Rabbi Raymond Apple, Chief Rabbi of the Great Synagogue in Sydney from December 1972 to December 2005. Rabbi Apple who formed the interfaith Luncheon club in 1974 was the foundation President of the reformed Council of Christians and Jews in NSW in 1988. He was actively engaged in inter-faith work in 1992, and is still so engaged.

Josie Lacey, the foundation Convenor of the Women's Interfaith Network ('WIN') in Sydney in 2000. She is interfaith advisor to the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia, an executive member of the World Conference of Religions for Peace (NSW) and currently the Hon. Secretary of the ECAJ.