

**WHAT CURRENTLY IS THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH'S SELF-
UNDERSTANDING OF ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE
HOLOCAUST? A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION OF
CONTROVERSIES SURROUNDING THE HOLOCAUST (OR
SHO'AH) SINCE THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL (1962-1965)**

by

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Introduction.

On 16th March 1998 the Roman Catholic Church¹ published a document entitled, *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah* (Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, 1998)². This document prompted this writer to ask: -

What currently is the Church's self-understanding of its relationship to the Holocaust?

This thesis is an attempt to answer this question and this Introduction addresses: -

- a) The reason for this topic and the disciplinary context which will position this thesis as a contribution to Christian-Jewish relations.
- b) How the term 'Holocaust' is defined in this thesis.
- c) How the chapters will be structured and the rationale behind the structure of this thesis.
- d) The types of sources used.

The writer approaches this question as both a Catholic and member of the clergy.³ The question itself emerged from an earlier study devoted to Jewish-Christian relations, including a study of the

¹ In this thesis, the term Roman Catholic Church will be abbreviated to the Church as a proper noun and this refers solely to the Latin Rite western Church.

² This document is attached at Appendix III of this dissertation.

³ A deacon of twenty-nine years standing.

Holocaust. Also, the writer is old enough to remember (from childhood) overhearing 'soldiers' stories' about the suffering inflicted on Europe's Jews during the Second World War by the Third Reich. Additionally, there is also a memory of a Sunday newspaper article concerning the Holocaust, read about the age of nine or ten (circa 1955/56) and never forgotten. There is also the memory of the controversy concerning Rolf Hochhuth's play, *The Deputy*,⁴ first performed in Berlin in 1963 which contributed to these memories. Collectively, these elements provide the discomfiting ingredients at the root of this enquiry. This thesis is not seeking to offer any exonerating apologetic for any or all of the Church's alleged acts or omissions during the period of 1939-1945. Neither is it a polemic against the Church in respect to any alleged acts or omissions during that time. Hopefully it's an honest attempt in charting a course between the twin perils of apologetic and condemnatory polemic. There are risks in this undertaking. This enquiry will challenge the writer's beliefs and perceptions; secondly, it may fail in establishing its objective, but worthwhile undertakings entail risk; otherwise there is little point in trying. Importantly the Catholic enquirer must approach this subject with a sense of humility and an awareness of the limitations of their own

⁴ For a full discussion of these, see E Barach-Rubenstein, 2003.

religious and cultural perspectives, notwithstanding any opprobrium that an honest enquiry may possibly attract.

Within this dissertation the Holocaust is located in the time of the Second World War and it has been fairly argued it was as much a real and tragic part of the history of Christianity (and in particular, Catholicism) as it's a part of the history of the Jewish people. (Cargas, 1999, p141). The Holocaust and the attempted destruction of the Jewish people, religion, culture and history remains even now a fundamental challenge to contemporary Christianity. (Kung, 1992, p219/281)

Defining the Holocaust is to encounter difficulties of understanding, yet for better or worse, the term Holocaust is the one used throughout this thesis. Defining what constitutes an appropriate terminology is particularly difficult and contested, thus to state the case succinctly: -

The term 'Holocaust' is employed ... precisely because, given the ambivalence over its use, it best illustrates the complexity inherent in remembering these events. ... [However]... The very act of naming ... inevitably entails a degree of simplification. (Wollaston, 1996, p2)

Terminology is necessary and choices must be made. So, it's important to state how the term Holocaust is used here. One definition is (Levi and Rothberg, 2003, pp3/4): -

We understand the Holocaust as the systematic genocide of approximately six-million European Jews by the Nazis and their allies. Given the scale ... of the Nazi destruction, it is useful to think of the Holocaust not as a single event, ... rather as a series of events. The genocidal events took place during World War II but were not part of the war. They were, rather the product of an extremist, antisemitic worldview that attempted to actualize the 'utopian' vision of racial purity, even at the expense of the war effort. While the Nazis did not succeed in murdering all the Jews under their dominion, they had a clearly articulated intention to do so.

One concern to be expressed relates to an exclusive definition limiting the term Holocaust to the suffering of the Jews of Europe and there are more inclusive definitions acknowledging that National Socialist policies targeted a range of different groups for distinct reasons. For example, the historians Henry Friedlander and Doris Bergen both maintain that those killed in the National

Socialist government's T4 'euthanasia' programme were the first victims of the Holocaust (Bergen, 2008, p157): -

Hitler's Germany first crossed the line from persecution to mass-murder not with the Jews but with people considered handicapped. The year 1939 would see [the] initiation of a programme to murder people defined as 'lives unworthy of living'. Here, too, experimentation would characterise the early stages of implementation and the outbreak of war provided both cover and justification for the killers.⁵

There were also the Roma people who were targeted victims of Nazi mass-murder. (Bergen, 2008, p8 and Rees, 2017, pp120/123) Yad Vashem, Israel's national Holocaust remembrance authority applies the term Holocaust to Jewish victims of National Socialist genocide in speaking of the assault on the Jewish population of mainland-Europe in the following way: -

The Holocaust is defined as the sum total of all anti-Jewish actions carried out by the Nazi regime between 1933 and 1945: from stripping the German Jews of their legal and economic status in the 1930s; segregating and starvation in the various occupied countries; the murder

⁵ For a further discussion of this issue see Rees (2017; p165/169).

of close to six million Jews in Europe. ... In Nazi terminology the Jews were referred to as "world Jewry", a term unparalleled with respect to any other ethnic, ideological, or social group. The Nazis' proclaimed goal was the eradication of European Jewry. ... The word Holocaust, which came into use in the 1950's as the corresponding term, originally meant sacrifice burnt entirely on the altar. The selection of these two words with religious origins reflects recognition of the unprecedented nature and magnitude of the events. Many understand Holocaust as a general term for the crimes and horrors perpetrated by the Nazis; others go even farther and use it to encompass other acts of mass-murder of and persecution of European Jewry.

Specifically restricting the term, Holocaust to the Jewish people of Europe is also a point of view expressed elsewhere. (Katz, 1983, p287/310): -

The intentions of the Nazis led to Auschwitz, from which there was no escape. Moreover, the Jews sent to Auschwitz came from all quarters of Europe ... their death was the consequence of a perverse metaphysical schema,

not a nationalist one ... The intention of Hitler was to rule over a world that was *Judenrein*: ... (ibid p305)

Not all Jews were murdered at Auschwitz, or in death camps, but there were more Jewish survivors of Auschwitz than there were of any other death camp. Nevertheless, there were many other non-Jewish victims of Auschwitz, firstly many Polish gentile nationals as well as it being a centre for the mass-murder of Sinti and Roma people, as recollected by the annual commemoration of the liquidation of the Gypsy' Family Camp, the *Zigeunerlager* and not forgetting there were also large numbers of Soviet POWs who were victims. (Rees, 2017, p120/123)

No definition sufficiently captures the appalling and sadistic humiliations to which Jews were subjected. In essence the Holocaust was not just about industrialised murder in gas chambers; it was more than that. Death was inflicted in other ways including arbitrary executions, beatings, starvation in ghettos, cruel 'medical' experimentations, slave labour and mass shootings carried out on an horrific scale. (Goldhagen, 2003, p112 and 154. Rees, 2017, p223. Benz, 2000, p78/84)⁶ The marginalisation of Jews has a long history. Before the time of Constantine the Great

⁶ For a more detailed discussion, there is David Cesarani's, *Final Solution* (2015) and for a post-war reflection Gitta Sereny's, *The German Trauma*. Also, Christopher Browning (Undated) in, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101*.

(272-337CE) to the Holocaust in the twentieth century, Christian and Catholic attitudes to Judaism and the Jewish people is one that can only be described as triumphalist and supersessionist, accompanied with overt teachings of contempt, mixed with the potent charge of deicide. The concept of supersessionism as an idea is almost as old as Christianity itself, an idea that the beliefs and covenantal inheritance of the Jewish people has been abrogated in favour of the new covenant inherent in Christianity: -

Supersessionism is the view that the Church has displaced, superseded, or replaced Israel to become a new, spiritual Israel (a doctrine also known as replacement theology). This view can be traced back to the earliest church period. (Smith, 2009)⁷

The Church's theological position was that the (so called) 'old' Covenant was deemed to be abrogated; the Church, by God's will and election became the successor to the 'old' Israel becoming the 'new' Israel; the replacement of the elect of God. The untold sufferings the application of this belief inflicted is now sadly a matter of history, elements of which will emerge within this thesis. Since the 1970's there has been a growing number of works on the subject of Christian anti-Judaism and supersessionism; notable

⁷ An alternative term to supersessionism is replacement theology, but the terms can be interchangeable.

examples include Reuther, 1974; Flannery, 1965; Littel, 1975; Wilson, 1995; Carroll, 2002; Smith 2009; Griech-Polelle, 2017⁸. Nevertheless, it is important for Catholics to engage in critical enquiry of the Holocaust and its consequences for one notable reason; even after seven decades there are those who deny the Holocaust ever occurred, or alternatively argue its magnitude has been exaggerated, never being as extensive as claimed. Having defined the key term underpinning much of the discussion, it is important to briefly explain the approach taken and structure of this thesis.

Firstly, there will be an examination of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) discussing why it was convened and its importance to the post-war Church. A particular focus of discussion is Note 4 of the Council's declaration, *Nostra Aetate* (hereafter, *NA*)⁹. It will be argued that the radical importance of this section of the declaration is foundational to the Church's view of Judaism in the post-war era, a point clearly made in the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, "*The Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable*", a

⁸ For a wider ranging general discussion, see, Franklin Littell's, *The Crucifixion of the Jews* (1975) or for a more specific case history of how prejudice played out in a specific way, see K Stow (2001) *The Theater of Acculturation: The Roman Ghetto in the Sixteenth Century* (2001) or J Weiss (1996). *Ideology of Death: Why the Holocaust Happened in Germany*, For a more literary perspective, see Israel Zangwill (1898) *Dreamers of the Ghetto*, especially chapter 2.

⁹ In Our Time, 1965.

reflection on the significance of *NA* issued to mark its 50th anniversary in 2015.

Secondly, the document, *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah* (Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, 1998 (Hereafter *WR*) will be examined. Controversially among other things, this document: -

Though widely welcomed, was criticised for distinguishing too sharply between Christian anti-Judaism and Nazi anti-semitism and for making a distinction between the responsibility of the Church and the responsibility of individual Christians. (Lane, 2006, p215)

Thirdly, the Catholic Church's process of canonization is considered in relation to the Holocaust in general and Auschwitz in particular. Canonization is a particular way in which the Church understands itself in promoting models for devotion at a level that transcends the ordinary. Although the Church is not unique in its tradition of making declarations of those deemed worthy of declared sainthood, it does nevertheless exercise this function for clearly specific ends and examples from the period of the Holocaust exemplify in a special way the Church's view of itself in the context of the

Holocaust. This chapter will explore canonization with particular reference to two victims of Auschwitz; Maximillian Kolbe and Edith Stein.

Fourthly, Auschwitz as a location and metonym will be examined and the reason for this is that there has developed a type of Catholic understanding of Auschwitz, with its critics accusing the Church of seeking to 'Christianize', or 'Catholicize' the site. In discussing the legitimacy of such accusations, this chapter will reflect on the Auschwitz 'convent' controversy (1984-1993), the 'war of the crosses' (1998-1999) and certain statements made about Auschwitz at the most elevated levels of the Church.

The key research sources underpinning this dissertation are: -

- a) The examination of a range of institutional statements (for example, *Nostra Aetate*, *We Remember* and the two Geneva Statements produced jointly by Jewish and Catholic delegations in attempting to resolve the Carmelite controversy, 1986, 1987).
- b) Speeches and articles by key participants and organizations, both Catholic and Jewish.

- c) Press coverage (with representative examples from the Catholic, Jewish, national and international press).
- d) Relevant secondary literature or commentaries on these controversies.

In the broadest of meanings, teaching documents promulgated by the Church are important. Such documents are measured, balanced, honed and nuanced to the finest degree, stating and restating the Church's position on matters of faith, tradition, doctrine and morals when such needs arise. The importance of documents is evident, for example the Second Vatican Council issued four Constitutions, three Declarations and nine Decrees. In Pope John Paul II's pontificate (1920-2005; papacy 1978-2005) there were fourteen encyclicals and forty-seven other writings. His successor, Pope Benedict XVI (b1927. Papacy 2005-2013¹⁰) produced three encyclicals and twenty-four other documents in just eight years. So, for the Church, documents are very important and great store is placed upon them.

The history of the emerging debate of remembrance between polemically and diametrically opposed positions is well known and so this dissertation will attempt to reflect this reality and establish

¹⁰ Pope Benedict XVI abdicated from the papacy in 2013, the only pope (to date) to do so in modern times.

where it sits on the continuum of opinions. A key element of this thesis is not about what the Church did or did not do, nor how it acted or failed to act during the Holocaust. Nor is it about the Church appropriating in any way the Holocaust to itself as a Catholic event within its own history. Primarily relevant to this enquiry is to try and see how the Church understands itself today in the context of the Holocaust. Such self-understanding is something that defines the Church's position as much as anything else. Thus, the Church must understand the Holocaust in light of its own self-understanding as Christ's Church, the sacrament of Christ in the world today. The Church's self-understanding is that it's unlike other forms of human communities. True, as it continues through time, the people of yesterday are not the same people as those of today. However, as a supernatural community, the Church of the first century apostles and the Church of today is essentially the same community; the same Church, an unbroken sacramental continuum from past to future. From an eschatological perspective and according to the teaching of the Church, it will always remain 'the same', until the end of time. This is why, as a supernatural community composed entirely of very fallible human-beings, its self-understanding in how it articulates its relationship to the Holocaust is important. As Wilson points out, (2012, p94): -

The need to let suffering speak is the condition of all truth.

It is impossible to write about the Holocaust without being mindful of the unimaginable suffering that it was, so the intention here is to sensitively try to identify how, after what is in effect three-quarters of a century, the Church's understanding of itself is in the context of the event known most widely as the Holocaust. It now remains to turn to the creation of the Church's document, *Nostra Aetate*.

I

Nostra Aetate, Note 4: Its Significance and Relevance.

This chapter evaluates the significance of the Second Vatican Council and its declaration, *Nostra Aetate* (hereafter *NA*), which radically redefined the Church's understanding of its relationship to Judaism. Reflecting on its origin and legacy, the discussion in this chapter confines itself solely to Note 4, the document's section in which the Council reflected on the Church's relationship to the Jewish people.¹¹

Understanding and interpreting *NA*'s significance must be rooted in an awareness of the context in which it emerged, particularly the decisive role played by Pope John XXIII (Born Angelo Roncalli. 1881-1963; papacy 1958-1963) in calling the Second Vatican Council, insisting it include a statement on the relationship of the Church and the Jewish People. His conviction that it was imperative the Church should confront and address this was influenced by a range of factors, for example his wartime awareness of what happened to the Jews of Europe, his meeting with Jules Isaac, and his insistence that Jews and Christians are 'brothers' and both are covenant people. Whilst papal nuncio to Turkey, based in Istanbul during the Second World War, Roncalli became painfully aware of

¹¹ The full text of *Nostra Aetate*, Note 4 is included in Appendix II of this dissertation.

European Jewry's plight and was also discreetly pro-active in providing relief to Jews for whom he is credited with possibly saving several thousand lives. (Hebblethwaite. 1994, pp166/198. Lane, 2006, p203). John XXIII, in addition to calling the Second Vatican Council and insisting that it considered a 'statement on the relationship of the Church and the Jewish People', was also responsible for removing from the 'Good Friday' Passion liturgy the phrase, '*Oremus et pro perfidis Iudaeis.*'¹²

The development of how this requested 'statement on the Church and the Jewish people' took shape will be reflected on, with a brief discussion of influential precursors and the role played by the 'authors' of the text (e.g., Bea, Willebrands, Oesterreicher) and its institutional 'home' (the Secretariat for Christian Unity). Attention will also be paid to the significance of Bea's decision to consult with and encourage input from key Jewish organizations (such as the American-Jewish Committee) and individuals, most notably Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel (1917-1972).

The difficult pathway of this statement through the Council is a key element in appreciating the document's radical nature. It took

¹² Let us pray for the perfidious Jews.

several forms, initially as a stand-alone document, then possibly as part of different declarations, for example, as an appendix to the *Decree on Ecumenism*, or the major document, *Lumen Gentium*, before finally emerging as Note 4 of *NA*, of the *Declaration on the Relation of the Church and non-Christian Religions*; a time-frame lasting almost as long as the Council bears witness to the determination to produce such a text and the very real obstacles and challenges it faced until the statement was finally promulgated by Pope Paul VI (papacy 1963-1978), on 28 October 1965. Note 4 emerged to become a revolutionary volte-face in the Church's relationship with the Jewish people re-defining the Church's self-understanding in the context of its own ecclesiology; hence the positioning of the Commission of the Holy See for Religious Relations with the Jews within the remit of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, rather than within the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Relations.¹³

NA's significance as an irrevocable conciliar statement resulted in a number of later documents and statements that clarified its significance and practical implications for Catholic teaching, a

¹³ This positioning is evident on the Vatican's website, where the CRRJ is structurally presented as a subsection of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Unity. See further the structure chart at <http://www.vatican.va/romancuria/pontificalcouncils/chrstuni/index.htm#Commission%20for%20Religious%20Relations%20with%20the%20Jews>. Accessed 2nd May 2018.

process that is still ongoing over fifty-years later, evident in the publication of, "*The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable*" (Rom 11:29) - *A reflection on theological questions pertaining to Catholic-Jewish relations* published on the 50th anniversary of NA (No. 4) on the 10th December 2015.

NA's importance is made clear by the influential commentator on Catholic antisemitism, Edward Flannery (1999, p263): -

[T]he *issuance* of ... [NA] ... can only be gauged as an epochal move forward on the part of the Church on the road toward Jewish-Christian understanding and reconciliation.

Flannery's importance as a commentator can be gauged from his obituary in the New York Times on the 22nd October 1998.¹⁴ Flannery explains that the radical nature of NA subsists in acknowledging the common patrimony the Church enjoys with and inherited from Judaism. Equally, all forms of detrimental behaviour towards Judaism and the Jewish people are to be deplored and the age-old canard of the actual and 'eternal' guilt of Jews for the death of Christ is forever disavowed by the Church, as Flannery explains (1999, p265): -

¹⁴ See also the appreciation expressed on the Christian-Jewish Relations website. http://www.icrelations.net/FlanneryEdwardH_25460html?L=%2Fetc%2Fpasswd&page=1

The emergence of a ... [post-Vatican II] ... Christian theology of Judaism ... promises to become a potent factor in the decline and disappearance of Christian antisemitism.

Is Flannery overstating the case of the historical Catholic antipathy to Judaism? As Cohn-Sherbok has noted (2009, p248): -

The Catholic Church fostered Jew-hatred, insisting that the emancipation of Jewry was an evil to be resisted. Between 1870 and 1894 one-third of all anti-Semitic books published in France were written by Catholic priests.

In essence this statement by a much-published academic equally reflects a level of historical antipathy expressed towards Jews by those who could be seen as spokesmen for the Church.¹⁵ From today's perspective, the Second Vatican Council was overall a deeply cathartic event for the Church and insofar as the Council was concerned, the historic declaration, *NA* and particularly Note 4 emerged as an integral element of this. As a matter of general reflection, the reason for convening the Second Council by Pope John XXIII subsists in appreciating the spirit of *aggiornamento*¹⁶

¹⁵ This subject is more widely discussed in Kertzer (2002) where the theme of clerical antipathy towards Judaism is more fully explored.

¹⁶ Renewal.

which underpinned Vatican II, so this chapter acknowledges the importance of his commitment to including a document on the Church's relationship with the Jewish people for consideration by the Council.

Following the death of Pope Pius XII (1899-1958 papacy 1939-1958), Cardinal Angelo Roncalli, then Archbishop of Venice was elected in 1958, aged seventy-seven years. His election was something of a surprise, as Roncalli had not done anything to promote himself in the conclave (Hebblethwaite, 1994, p282). At his age it was likely that his papacy would not be a long one and in fact it was just five years. What followed his election was an even greater surprise; namely the calling of the Second Vatican Council, which lasted from the 11th October 1962 to the 8th December 1965.¹⁷ Was the calling of the Second Vatican Council really as great a surprise popular mythology would suggest? It has been suggested that John XXIII mentioned the possibility of a council only two days after his election and the first documented reference to such a possibility appeared by 2nd November 1958. (Hebblethwaite. 1994, p307). Roncalli, before becoming pope had a long if somewhat modest career as a Vatican diplomat and the

¹⁷ Pope John XXIII announced the calling of the Second Vatican Council 25th January 1959. For further information on the convening of the Council and an overview of all its work, see for example, Vorgrimler (1969; Vol. I, II, III IV and V), Hebblethwaite. (1991; p27-34), Flannery (2004; p263-265, 296) and Doyle (1993; p21-26).

idea of both a council and a statement on the Jewish people, which found form in the document, *NA* is linked to his long experience in eastern-Europe and his acute awareness of the sufferings of Jews in Europe during the Second World War. (Barrens. 2015, p34; Lane. 2006, p203). The Council's first session opened on 11th October 1962 and this Council would be very different in tone and content to the one that preceded it ninety-one years before.¹⁸

NA is a short document compared to others that emerged from the Council. Its structure consists of the Preamble (14.1%), followed by sections on: -

Non-Christian Religions: - (24.33%).

Islam: - (11.87%).

Judaism: - (38.41%).

The Brotherhood of Man: - (11.29%).

Any general awareness of *NA* usually focuses on Note 4, concerning Judaism, consisting of just fifteen long sentences in Latin; it was this short section on Judaism that generated significant controversy prior to the Council, as the draft text presented in various forms was debated. It is helpful to consider the outline of *NA*'s

¹⁸ That is the First Vatican Council (1869-1870). Which sought to seek to understand what the Church itself was in terms of the modern world and to address what the Church perceived as the challenges of liberalism in a post-enlightenment age. It came to a somewhat abrupt end because of the onset of the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871).

development. It's status and importance are clear as Oesterreicher explains and it is worth quoting at length what he says, given that he was a member of the team supporting Cardinal Bea in drafting the text: -

The declaration holds a special place among the documents of Vatican II. It derives, at least in its original core, the declaration concerning the Jews, from an express wish of John XXIII. Its special character is not limited to its origin. In it, a Council for the first time in history acknowledges the search for the absolute by other men and by whole races of people and honours the truth and holiness in other religions as the work of the one living God. It is the first time also that the Church has publicly made her own the Pauline view of the mystery of Israel. To that extent the Declaration is an acknowledgment by the Church of the universal grace and its activity in the many religions of mankind. Furthermore, in it the Church gives glory to God for his enduring faithfulness towards his chosen people, the Jews. ... Although born out of the experiences of the recent past, it is not a merely contemporary or even political document: it is deeply theological. Wide in its scope, it in no way

obscures the uniqueness of God's dealings with Israel.

(Cited in Vorgrimler 1969, Vol. III p1)

The declaration's origins illustrate the importance that John XXIII placed upon it. In part, there is the role of the French survivor and historian, Jules Isaac (1867–1963) to be taken into account as having a contributory role in ushering in the eventual change in the Church's relationship to Judaism. In the summer of 1960, Isaac travelled to Rome hoping to make representations to John XXIII, (Vorgrimler Vol. III, 1969, pp2-4/8). Initially Isaac met with difficulties, but succeeded in meeting John XXIII on 13th June 1960, with the support of the French ambassador to the Holy See. This encounter seemingly made a lasting impression on John XXIII. (Vorgrimler, 1969, Vol. III p2) On 18th September 1960, Cardinal Augustin Bea (1881–1968), was appointed by the pontiff to draft a declaration reflecting the relationship between the Church and the Jewish people. Bea was given the task as the president of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. An additional element and support to Bea was the Apeldoorn working group which had important influence on the content of the draft declaration. (Vorgrimler, 1969, Vol. III p12) This was a group of lay Catholics and clergy whose aim was to seek ways of facilitating reconciliation between Catholics and Jews. Nevertheless, much of the impetus for

the creation of *NA*, derived from the quiet presence and real insistence of John XXIII, who died during the Council and it was Pope Paul VI who finally promulgated *NA*. So, in part the genesis and evolution of *NA*'s Note 4 resulted from the work of a group of committed Catholic clergy supporting Bea in compiling draft versions of the text. This group included Monsignor John Maria Oesterreicher (1904-1993), a leading Catholic theologian, committed to advancing the need for the Church to seek a lasting reconciliation and rapprochement with Judaism. Born in what is now the Czech Republic (then Moravia) and Jewish by birth, he converted to Catholicism and trained for the priesthood, being ordained in 1927. An open opponent to National Socialism and evading the Nazi's, he escaped to the USA, after the fall of France in 1940 and Oesterreicher's influence can be gauged from his obituaries such as that published in the *New York Times* on the 20th April 1993. Although responsibility for the draft declaration lay with Bea, he received additional support from others, including Johannes Willebrands, a Dutch bishop, Emile-Joseph de Smedt, a Belgian bishop and also the French bishop, Pierre Marie Joseph Duprey. To these names there may also be added John Oesterreicher (as noted above) and Thomas Stransky, representing an American perspective on the declaration's development. It was

Bea's greater insight into the issues and sensitivities that led him to invite Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, a refugee from Nazism, working at the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, to act as an advisor to the group. This is significant because Heschel was widely recognized as an outstanding religious thinker in twentieth-century Judaism and a major influence in Catholic-Jewish relations in the United States. For example, his biographer Samuel Dresner, reflecting on the impact of Heschel's death commented: -

The loss occasioned by the death of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel ... has been felt with increasing poignancy. The passing years have only emphasised the immensity of the void and unique stature of the man. ... Both Catholics and Protestants sought out Heschel's opinions on theological and social issues, because they believed they believed these opinions represented an authentic Jewish perception ... for example his persuasive presence at the Second Vatican Council.

(Dresner 1985. pvii. Also, Vorgrimler, 1969, Vol. Three, p16-17, 66. Flannery, 1986, p85. D'Costa, 2014, p88/89. Dresner, 2002, p16)

The creation and progress of Note 4 through the Council was never going to be easy or straightforward. For example, it was Heschel, who in 1964 expressed anxiety about a leaked draft of *NA*, (Cunningham, 2009, p28) the implications of which: -

Seemed to many commentators to hope for the conversion of Jews to Christianity. He [Heschel] labelled the notion "spiritual fratricide" and declared himself, "ready to go to Auschwitz any time, if faced with the alternative of conversion or death".

Heschel claimed that his passionately expressed sentiment made a deep impression on Pope Paul VI who insisted that the reference to mission be dropped from the draft text. (Furnal, 2016). As a consequence, the declaration was remoulded to state: -

The Church awaits the day, known to God alone, on which all people will address the Lord in a single voice and 'serve him shoulder to shoulder'.

For Heschel this was, 'the first statement of the Church in history dealing with Judaism devoid of any expression of hope for conversion. One of the many who voted in favour of the declaration was Cardinal John Carmel Heenan (1905-1978), the Cardinal

Archbishop of Westminster.¹⁹ Heenan stated unequivocally to the Council that: -

The text contains these words "[The Catholic Church] has a sincere respect for those ways of acting and living, those moral and doctrinal teachings which may differ in many respects from what she holds and teaches, but which none the less often reflect the brightness of that truth which is the light of men" ... In this century the Jews have endured grievous and indeed inhuman injustices. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who on the Cross forgave [his actual] persecutors, I humbly ask that our declaration publicly acknowledge that the Jewish people are, as such not guilty of the Lord's death ... I maintain it is unjust to condemn the whole Jewish people for the death of Christ. (cited in Vorgrimler, 1969, Vol. III pp79/80)

Heenan was not saying anything new insofar as the Catholic Church is concerned and the Council of Trent (1545-1563) declared no guilt could be attached to the Jewish people for the death of Christ. However, Heenan seemingly argued that the final consequences of the age-old and iniquitous charge of deicide could

¹⁹ Heenan was responsible for writing a biography of a predecessor, Cardinal Arthur Hinsley (1865-1943), the 'wartime' cardinal, noted and revered as a defender of the Jewish people and a thorn in the side of German National Socialism (Heenan, 1944. Hagerty, 2008).

not reasonably be separated from what happened to the Jewish people of Europe between 1939 and 1945. A similar but more contemporary view is expressed in an Advent Pastoral Letter of the Plymouth Diocese (Budd, 1996, p153): -

The death of Jesus and the death of millions of Jews this [twentieth] century are tragically and inextricably linked. For centuries Jews have been pilloried, persecuted and blamed for the death of Jesus. The charge of deicide or killing God was levelled against them – this was fertile soil in which the evil of Nazism took root with such catastrophic effect.

It is essential to view these developments within the broader context of the Church's initiatives in Christian-Jewish relations in the immediate post-war period. The earlier reference to the Apeldoorn group is important because soon after the end of the Second World War their work contributed towards a series of Christian documents reflecting on the nature and scale of the Nazis attempt to annihilate European Jewry. These texts written within fifteen years of the end of the Holocaust are significant in their own right, yet are often overlooked. Two key sources in this area are Barrens, 2015, pp51/65 and in particular *Dialogika*, an invaluable,

open-access collection of online resources created by the Council of Centers of Christians and Jews. In summary the documents are: -

An address to the Churches (The Ten Points of Seelisberg)	1947	Written by the International Council of Christians and Jews
The Rectification Necessary In Christian Teaching: Eighteen Points.	1948	Jules Isaac
On the Jewish Question	1950	Written by the Evangelische Kirsche in Deutschland
The Schwalbach Theses: Proposals for Christian Religious Teaching	1950	Written by the German Coordinating Council of Societies for Christian-Jewish Relations
Good Friday Prayers	1959	Pope John XXIII changing the prayer - Jewish people
Themes for Evanston	1960	Written by Karl Thieme
Recommendations from the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies, Seton Hall University	1960	Written by John Oesterreicher et al
Second International Catholic Study Conference in Apeldoorn on Christian-Jewish Relations	1960	Written by Willehad Eckert, OP
Presentation of historical background of Christian anti-Judaism	1960	Jules Isaac
Notes about a Crucial Meeting with John XXIII	1960	Jules Isaac

The Image of the Jews In Catholic Teaching	1961	Judith Hershcopf Banki
Anti-Jewish Elements in Catholic Liturgy	1961	Eric Werner
On Improving Catholic-Jewish Relations	1962	Abraham Heschel

Essentially, these documents reflect efforts in the post-Holocaust period to address issues of antipathy towards Judaism and some elements of which were eventually incorporated into *NA*. There were other pertinent documentary precursors from the Catholic perspective which include various early draft forms of what became *NA* and the debates during the Council itself: -

Submitted Draft: "On the Jews and Non-Christians"	1964	Second Vatican Council Coordinating Commission
Report on the Statement "On Jews and Non-Christians"	1964	Augustin Bea
The Council's Deliberations (1)	1964	Council Fathers of Vatican II
The Council's Deliberations (2)	1964	Council Fathers of Vatican II
The Council's Deliberations (3)	1964	Council Fathers of Vatican II
Subsequent Draft of the "Declaration of the Church's Relationship to Non-Christian Religions."	1964	Council Fathers of Vatican II

Other influential texts in this period which were: -

Decree on the Jews (<i>Decretum de Judaeis</i>)	1961	Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity
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On the Attitude of Catholics Toward Non-Christians and Especially Towards Jews	1963	Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity
Address to "the People of the Covenant"	1964	Pope Paul VI
Appendix 'On the Jews' to the "Declaration on Ecumenism	1964	Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity
On the Jews and Non-Christians	1964	Second Vatican Co-ordinating Committee
Lumen Gentium. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church	1964	Second Vatican Council (excerpt)
Address to the People of the Covenant	1964	Pope Paul VI
Amendments to Section 4 (Concerning the Jewish People)	1965	Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity

Collectively, what is important about these documents is that it can be seen how they collectively contributed to the debate and more importantly to inform what was eventually contained in Note 4 of *NA*. It is a challenge to determine which document was the most important in contributing to *NA*; equally it's beyond the scope of this chapter to present a detailed analysis of each of them. Among these texts the, *Address to the Churches* (the Ten Points of Seelisberg), by the International Council of Christians and Jews in Switzerland in August 1947 is particularly significant. Given the date of its creation when the emerging awareness and the memory of the Holocaust was still painfully raw, it is notable that it recognised European Christianity's failures at the time of the

Holocaust and importantly for this discussion are the elements of the Ten Points of Seelisberg that were influential in what would become *NA* (Barrens, 2015, pp32/33). For example, there is recognition in the first four points of the importance of the patrimony that Jews and Christians share and which became a significant element of *NA*. In addition, points 7 and 8 make it clear that the responsibility for the crucifixion was not in any way a crime to be laid against the Jews alone. The Ten Points of Seelisberg demonstrates that ideas were being expressed prior to *NA* and were gaining traction in circles committed to improving Christian-Jewish relations. A second particularly significant document is the Decree on the Jews (*Decretum de Iudaeis*) of 1961. It was in 1960 that Bea was asked to compile this statement, although it never went before the Council itself. Consisting of just four paragraphs, it makes clear that the Church looks to its common patrimony with the Jewish people. Equally it avers that in no way can the Jewish people be declared 'accursed' because: -

They are so beloved for the sake of the Fathers and the promises made to them.

The importance of the documentary pre-history of *NA* is that it makes clear that *NA* did not in any sense spring complete and

entire from the Council Fathers, rather it was a process of reflection and deliberation over a twenty-year period of gestation; a process that was consistent with and possibly influenced by developments in the broader discussion of Christian-Jewish relations, both within and beyond the Catholic Church.

Having briefly reflected on the precursors and context from which the initial draft text requested by John XXIII emerged, it now remains to consider its progress through the Council, which could be described as fraught and on occasions a drama and such a view would not be unreasonable. The draft declaration was first introduced to the Council in June 1962. The ensuing debate regrettably included expressions of overt, even virulent antisemitism and with regard to the issue of antisemitism a case in point can be made. During the first session of the Council, a privately published book entitled *The Plot Against the Church* was circulated to all the Council Fathers and their advisors and this odious tract was described (by Higgins) as: -

Running to several hundred pages and expensively printed and bound. (Higgins, 1986, p19).

As explained below, those who were opposed in any way to *NA* and particularly Note 4 ever seeing the light of day were in possession

of the resources they felt they needed and this would seem to evidence a fair measure of determination.

The fact that it was circulated at all clearly indicates there were those who were prepared to fund, no matter what the cost may be, the derailment of any progress towards what became the eventual completion of *NA*. The much-awaited final vote clearly indicated how much notice was taken of this publication, (Higgins, 1986, p19).

The fact remains that this virulently antisemitic publication was circulated and was according to Higgins: -

[T]he work of a paranoid ... group ... who had an almost psychotic hatred of Jews - and not only Jews, but also the alleged fifth column of traitorous cardinals, archbishops and bishops ... who are unconditional tools ... of Communism and the secret power directing it. (1986, p20)

A later, more sinister dimension to this issue is that Higgins reports this deeply antisemitic tract was still circulating in the United States of America some twenty years after it was sent to the Council Fathers. (Higgins, 1986, p20)²⁰

²⁰ Published in 2015, a book by a Dr. E. M. Jones, *The Catholic Church and the Jews*. Its theme is critical of what *NA* represents and it equally is less than praiseworthy in the 2015 document, *The Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable*.

Further opposition reflected Middle-Eastern interests. This external challenge to the Council's declaration on the Church and Judaism emanated from the Arab world according to Vorgrimler. The strong probability and motivating factor in such opposition derived in part from the antipathy in the Arab world to the recently established State of Israel²¹ some sixteen-years earlier. On the 18th November 1964, Damascus Radio broadcast a bitterly sarcastic observation in respect to both the Church and the Council: -

Why did the Church not have the courage to display the same favourable attitude when millions of Jews were persecuted by the Nazis? Could the Church find no better moment to rehabilitate the Jew than when these were persecuting Arabs? ... Instead of approving a document that absolved the Jews of the murder of Christ, the Council should have approved those documents that accused the Jews of massacring and expelling thousands of innocent Arabs. (Vorgrimler. 1969 Vol. III, p101)

The acrid relationship between Israel and her Arab neighbours eventually erupted into the bitter Six-Days War from 5th to 10th June 1967 and the ensuing occupation of both the West Bank and

²¹ In Tel Aviv, David-Ben-Gurion and the Jewish council proclaimed the State of Israel on the 14th May 1948. The United Nations vote on the Partition plan that would create the Jewish state occurred on the 29th November 1947. May 1948 marked the end of the British Mandate in Palestine and withdrawal of British military personnel.

the Golan Heights, a situation which continues to this day and presents a very real and significant obstacle in the way of any possible settlement between Israel and the Palestinian communities. It is important to note that the Six-Day War, following so soon after the promulgation of *NA* did have some detrimental effect on Catholic-Jewish relations, a point that is clearly expressed by (Wyman, 1996, p723): -

In the spring of 1967, with Arab armies massed on Israel's borders and Arab leaders threatening genocide, American Jews watched in dread ... Shortly after hostilities broke out, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops released a general statement deploring the war and designating a day of prayer for peace. Jews and some Christian leaders deplored the lack of support, the more so because it awakened memories of the Christian churches' virtual indifference during the Holocaust.

Furthermore, the representatives of the Middle-Eastern Catholic churches in communion with the Latin Rite (Roman) Catholic Church feared the possibility of an Arab-Moslem backlash against them in respect to the Jewish people being rehabilitated in the eyes of the Church. (Lane, 2006, p204. Vorgrimler, 1967, p101 Vol. III).

These examples of trenchant opposition from diverse positions illustrate that the declaration's progress through the Council was fraught and tortuous, illustrating the difficulties and challenges that the very rapprochement which the Council Fathers and by direct inference, the Church sought to achieve. The draft text underwent several revisions and was the subject of much debate as the Council Fathers sought to grapple with the importance and the very sensitive nature of the subject matter and which eventually took the form it now has as *NA Note 4*.

The ensuing debate continued for several sessions of the Council and a further sense of the underlying drama can be gleaned from the different speeches both for and against the declaration²². Achilles Lienart, Bishop of Lille expressed sympathy for the deep-seated concerns of representatives of the Oriental Church because of the tensions that defined relations between the Arab nations and Israel; he also spoke in favour, referring to the need for the ancient 'charge' of deicide to be refuted, but it was Gabriel Tappouni, the Patriarch of Antioch spoke of such a declaration being: -

²² References to these speeches are accessible through *Dialogika*.

Inopportune and we ask in accordance with our request that this declaration be stricken from the acts of the Council. That is our position! So be it!

As the debate continued Ernesto Ruffini, Archbishop of Palermo reflected on how the Jews of Italy had been 'snatched from certain death' (during the Second World War - see chapter 3 for further discussion). Support was expressed by Franz Konig, Archbishop of Vienna who pointed out that negative depictions of Jews in Sacred Scripture have led to things: -

Done against the Jewish people erroneously with evil intent and with unfounded interpretation of Sacred Scripture that must be corrected. I have spoken.

Joseph Ritter, Archbishop of St. Louis argued that the declaration should make a clear reference to the shared patrimony of both Jews and Christians, an important element that would underpin the future of Jewish-Catholic relations. Overall, the fourteen principal speakers reflected a moving, deep-seated sentiment that the Council had before it an opportunity that could not have existed before, namely to address the Church's understanding of its fraternal relationship with the Jewish people.

The text's final form definitively teaches that the Church owes its spiritual ties to Abraham and his descendants; equally it owes a spiritual debt to the Jewish Scriptures, inherited from the Jewish people²³. *NA* clearly teaches that: - 'God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their Fathers; He does not repent of the gifts He makes or the calls He issues'. In this brief single statement, the antecedent history of the teaching of centuries of contempt is firmly discarded, the Church's teaching is now that Israel remains the elect of God, namely the Covenant between God and the Jewish people is not (and never was) revoked. Equally, the infamous slander of *decide* is finally rejected as a false belief, totally incompatible with the teaching of the Church (Lane, 2006, p210). The triumph of *NA* is that as a solemn declaration of a council of the Church, it was promulgated just twenty years after the end of the Second World War and the Holocaust on the 28th October 1965. Of a total of 2,312 votes cast by the Council Fathers; three votes were deemed invalid and only eighty-eight were cast against the passing of the declaration. (Vorgrimler. 1967, Vol. III, p129). After almost two millennia of the Church's hostility towards the Jewish people and Judaism by either act or omission,

²³ For the purposes of this thesis, the term Jewish Scriptures is used in preference to the commonly used Christian term, Old Testament, in order to avoid any suggestion of Christian supersessionism.

the Church stated irrevocably its own teaching on its recognition of its relationship to Judaism.

In reflecting on why this declaration is so important it's necessary to set out precisely what it was in *NA* that was so radical. One key indication of *NA*'s radical nature was that although it drew upon the foundation of Sacred Scripture; it never drew from that which is recognised by the Church as 'Tradition' for the simple reason that the declaration was unprecedented. Following the analysis of Christian documents reflecting the rapprochement with Judaism (Tatai, 2010, pp46/47) there are several notable points. Primarily, the declaration was promulgated by a sacred council, the highest possible authority of the Church; therefore, there cannot be any possibility of a subsequent revocation of it and the declaration reverses the Church's previous conservative and theological position of either explicit or implicit antipathy towards Judaism. It is indisputable that since the time of the declaration's promulgation, the Church has adopted a constructive and consistently positive approach towards Judaism in the spirit of *NA*. The document makes clear the Church's own debt towards Judaism in recognizing and speaking of the spiritual bond with Abraham's progeny reflected on by (St.) Paul (Gal 3:7). Following Pauline

thinking, the 'olive tree' is that good olive tree to which was grafted the 'wild olive', the people of the New Testament. Equally the Church recognises the election of Israel, which continues to enjoy God's protection, as evidenced by the survival of Judaism as a viable and vital ethical and monotheistic faith down the centuries. As noted earlier, the whole of *NA* reflects on the Church's relationship and understanding with other non-Christian faiths, nevertheless it remains the case that it is chiefly remembered for Note 4, concerning the Jewish people. As a foundational document, it opened the door for the development of other, more refined and specific teaching documents, which would never have come into existence had *NA* never been promulgated in the first place. Proportionate to its length, probably more has been written about *NA* than any other document emanating from the Council.

Important examples of these post *NA* documents are: -

<i>Guidelines and Suggestions for the Implementing the Conciliar Declaration: Nostra Aetate (No. 4)</i>	1974	Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews
<i>The Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church</i>	1985	Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews
<i>Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflections and Orientations on Inter-Religious Dialogue</i>	1991	Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue and the

<i>and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ</i>		Congregation for the Evangelisation of People
<i>Fundamental Agreement Between the Holy See and the State of Israel</i>	1993	Secretariat of State of the Holy See and the State of Israel
<i>We Remember: A Reflection on the Sho'ah</i> (Which will be reflected on in some detail in chapter 3)	1998	Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews
<i>The Gifts and the Calling of God Are Irrevocable</i> (Rom 11:29)	2015	Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews

The Fundamental Agreement is an example of an important, if less well-known document. Although it's the case that all the post-*NA* documents issued by the Church are of significance, this document in particular merits further mention. For example, Giulio Meotti (2013) points out that *NA* makes no reference to Medinat Israel, nor is Israel mentioned in the 1974 *Guidelines and Suggestions for the Implementing the Conciliar Declaration: NA*. He notes that: -

The Vatican had normal ties, however, with the most oppressive and odious regimes on this earth. It even maintained diplomatic relations with Nazi Germany until the very end of the war. Apparently, the Vatican considered only the State of Israel undeserving of its recognition.

This criticism is important in that, although Medinat Israel was established by United Nation's decree in 1948, it took the Vatican forty-five years to establish formal diplomatic relations. The Church could be criticised for not recognising Israel earlier, but if there had there been reference to the State of Israel in the draft of *NA*, it is fair to conjecture that the declaration would never have been promulgated.²⁴ In the years after the Council, Pope John Paul II emerged as a figure of major importance in promoting the legacy of *NA* and the Church's relationship with the Jewish people. The majority of the statements listed above were issued during his long pontificate and John Paul II gave a total of fifty-five addresses, sermons and issued numerous other documents on a wide range of aspects of Catholic-Jewish relations.²⁵

Not all that John Paul II said or wrote will be equally well remembered and some of this material is particularly contentious in relation to the subject matter of this thesis. His homily at the canonization of Edith Stein (see chapter 4), or his statements at Auschwitz-Birkenau (see chapter 5) are cases in point. If there is

²⁴ Further analysis on this particular text can be found in Marshall Breger (ed.), *The Vatican Accords* (2004), whilst the relationship between the Church and the State of Israel is addressed in detail by Anthony Kenny in, *Catholics, Jews and the State of Israel* (1993).

²⁵ Examples of these can be found in John Paul II, *Spiritual Pilgrimage: Texts and Jews and Judaism, 1979-1995*, eds. Fisher and Klenicki (1995) and David Dalin and Matthew Levering (eds), *John Paul II and the Jewish People: A Christian-Jewish Dialogue* (2007).

one single contribution by this pope that crystallizes the journey the Church has made from the inception of *NA* until now, it must be his prayer at the Western Wall in Jerusalem on the 12th March 2000: -

God of our fathers, you chose Abraham and his descendants to bring Your name to the nations: we are deeply saddened by the behaviour of those who in the course of history have caused these children of Yours to suffer, and asking Your forgiveness we wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the people of the Covenant. (Centers for Jewish-Christian Relations, *Dialogika*) and also Barrens, 2015. pp52/66)

The papacy of John Paul's successor Benedict XVI was also marked by a number of relevant documents and it was this pope who well before his election wrote; *Many Religions – One Covenant* (Ratzinger, 1999) in which he explored the meaning of covenant, searching for the relevance and meaning of the 'Old' and 'New' Covenants. In the preface to the book Hahn points out that: -

This book is a majestic bridge, fashioned by a master builder ... *Many Religions – One Covenant* ... spans the deep divides in modern Catholic scholarship to present a

compelling study in biblical theology, modern in its concerns ... (Hahn, 1999, p11)

Despite the brevity of his papacy compared to that of his predecessor, Benedict produced some three dozen documents in similar vein to those of John Paul II.²⁶ Collectively, these documents published over the ensuing decades following the promulgation of *NA* demonstrate how the original impetus of this document paved the way for the development of further teaching documents by the Church in respect to its understanding of Judaism. The debate over mission to the Jews following the publication of *Covenant and Mission* (2002) and the debate following publication of *Dominus Iesus*, published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 2000 created some ambiguity inasmuch as interpretations of it saw the Church as proclaiming its own pre-eminent position over and against both non-Catholic Christians and other faiths, including Judaism. A sense of coming to an understanding of the impact of this, at least in part can be gauged from Consultation of the National Council of Synagogues and the [United States] Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of August 12, 2002.

²⁶ For a further discussion of Benedict's contribution to Jewish-Catholic relations, see Carol Rittner and Stephen D. Smith [eds.], *No Going Back: Letters to Pope Benedict XVI on the Holocaust, Jewish-Christian Relations & Israel* (2009)

Nevertheless, the impact of *NA* was acknowledged in the world beyond the Catholic Church. For example, the House of Representatives in the United State Congress observed: -

[T]he 40th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate*, and the continuing need for mutual interreligious respect and dialogue. ... *Nostra Aetate* made possible a new relationship between Catholics and Jews worldwide and opened an historic chapter in Jewish-Christian that is unprecedented in its closeness and warmth (HCON 260 IH, 109th Congress, 1st Session H.Con.Res.260. 6th October 2005)

Whilst acknowledging the tremendous impact *NA* had, it would be a mistake to think that all would be instantly well. Almost two-millennia's prejudices and insensitivities are not so easily eradicated. Two examples or tendencies serve to illustrate this particular point. The Second Vatican Council's document, *Dei Verbum* (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation: - 18th November 1965) is in many ways the most theologically fundamental of all the documents of the Second Vatican Council, reflecting on the very nature of divine revelation through the medium of the scriptural texts. Yet arguably, the fourth chapter of

this document (DV 14-16), dealing with the 'Old Testament', in no clear or definitive way presents any greater understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures beyond that which had always been the case in centuries of the generally traditional Christian formularies of interpretation; suggesting a lack of sensitivity towards Judaism. According to Robert Murray SJ (1991, p76) this section is: -

[T]he least substantial part of *Dei Verbum*; it mainly repeats traditional Christian formulas, with no sensitivity towards Judaism as is called for in *Nostra Aetate* 4.

That is, within it there is no serious reflective evidence or acknowledgement of the fact that these Scriptures are, for a whole people (today's Jewish people), complete and entire in themselves, so the measure of sensitivity called for in *NA* is absent here. Given that *NA* had been published about twenty-one days earlier, these texts would have been considered virtually simultaneously by the Council. It is easy to be critical with hindsight and this one example isolated as it appears better reflects the sheer enormity of the work of the Council itself. Although further development of this point is beyond this thesis; a more nuanced way of reflecting on biblical texts and revelation and more consistent with the radical approach of *NA* may be garnered from more recent texts on the emerging relationship between the Church and the Jewish people, such as

The Pontifical Bible Commission's, *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (2002), and the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Bible, the Jews and the Death of Jesus*. (2004)

A further example of the slow impact of NA in Europe generally is discussed by Judith Hershcopf Banki, (1986, pp125/134) in her essay on religious education just before the Second Vatican Council. This discloses that even throughout the period of the 1960's, a time quite close to both the Holocaust and effectively contemporaneous with the Council, there were catechetical school works which, to all intents and purposes, suggested that the Jews were responsible for the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ and as such the Jews were and are a people forever guilty of the crime of deicide. Additionally, such texts taught that the exile of the Jews was itself a punishment from God for this 'crime' and Jews are represented as accursed by God having eternally put them beyond redemption and are forever an apostate people, which had been unfaithful to its historical, prophetic mission. So, the Jewish people, by this deeply disturbing and false reasoning, are the people who by rejecting Jesus Christ in his lifetime inevitably became a people

whose religious practise and belief had become ossified and reduced to a caricature of correct religious observation²⁷. This culpable ignorance overlooks the fact that post-Second Temple rabbinic Judaism became one of the most outstanding religious revolutions and accomplishments in history²⁸. The catechetical animus referred to here and which was essentially contemporaneous with the period of the Council is an indication that, no matter how well motivated the thinking around *NA*, so deep-rooted was the thinking that it sought to address that it was inevitably the case that there was only a slow change in the mindset of many Catholics. The publication of the 1974 *Guidelines* and 1985 *Notes* were in part designed to address this problem.

To use with the benefit of hindsight to highlight the possible shortcomings of the Second Vatican Council and the promulgation of *NA* is arguably unfair. As Lane has remarked: -

We must not read this document through the eyes of the twenty-first century. Instead, we must situate the document historically and culturally back in 1965. (2006, p209)

²⁷ The writer remembers a fairly recent conversation with a retired Catholic school teacher who still believes this.

²⁸ For a general history of the religious development of post Second Temple Rabbinic Judaism see, for example Raphael, 1983 or Shanks (ed), 1992.

The fact that the document came into existence, becoming an irrevocable element of the teaching of the Church is in itself a testament to the work of the Council. As noted above that Note 4 of *NA* is amongst the shortest of all the documents from the Second Vatican Council. Yet, in proportion to its length so much has been written about it. The post-Vatican Council documents mentioned above are a case in point, as are numerous other publications not all of which have been referred to in this chapter for example: -

1993 – *Catholics, Jews And The State Of Israel*. (referred to above)

1998 – *No Religion Is An Island, The Nostra Aetate Dialogues*.

2005 - *Multiple Paths to God: Nostra Aetate, 40 Years Later*.

Some fifty-three years have elapsed since *NA*'s promulgation and it's fitting to conclude this chapter with a brief discussion of the document by the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, published on 15th December 2015, entitled; *The Gifts and the Calling of God Are Irrevocable* (Rom 11:29). According to its own brief introduction this document is: -

A Reflection on the Theological Questions Pertaining To
Catholic - Jewish Relations On The Occasion of the 50th
Anniversary of "*Nostra Aetate*" (No. 4)

It is a long document of some twelve-thousand words and as such is almost twenty-times longer than *NA* itself. It is an important document because it reflects upon the fifty-years between *NA* and 2015 and no other document emanating from the Council has been so trenchantly reaffirmed. This recent document broadly explores and reflects upon the impact of *NA* since its promulgation. Deeply embedded in the structure of the document, in parts 4, 5 and 6, is the developing understanding of what Covenant-relationship is. Equally there is significant emphasis on dialogue and its special status in parts 2 and 7, as it speaks of the desirability of joint witness of Jews and Catholics against all forms of morally social ills. The most telling point in this document is in the final paragraph (49), which explicitly states: -

When Jews and Christians make a joint contribution through concrete humanitarian aid for justice and peace in the world, they bear witness to the loving care of God.
("The Gifts And The Calling of God Are Irrevocable" – Rom. 11:29 Para. 49)

Unlike *NA* reference to the Holocaust is made in this document, mentioning the Shoah (Holocaust) eight times. There is nothing new or radical in the references it makes; but it does at least state in paragraph 1 that: -

[T]he Jews were often confronted by and dependent upon a Christian majority. The dark and terrible shadow of the Shoah over Europe in the Nazi period led the Church to reflect anew on her bond with the Jewish people.

It is a pity that this comment is buried in such a long document that probably few people will ever read and many, including clergy who may have probably never even heard of it.²⁹ It is significant that it clearly states that *NA* and what followed from it was a direct response by the Church to the European conflagration and the Holocaust. Further references to the Shoah in paragraph 6 points to the earlier document; *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah* (1998), to be discussed in the next chapter. The remaining references speak of the papal visits of John Paul II to the Rome Synagogue, Yad Vashem and the critical importance of Jewish-Christian dialogue.

NA was the first positive statement made by the Church on the understanding of its relationship with the Jewish people and with Judaism and all that has followed stems from *NA* Note 4. Equally, as Lane notes (2006, p209) there are cross references to other documents of the Council which are reflected in *NA*. For example: -

²⁹ The writer randomly questioned several clergy colleagues on this point and as expected none of them had ever heard of it.

All are called by God's grace to salvation. (*Lumen Gentium* 13)

The Spirit offers to all the possibility of being partners in the Paschal Mystery. (*Gaudium et spes* 22)

The spirit of God was active in other religions before Christ. (*Ad Gentes Divinitus* 4)

As stated earlier, this declaration of a Church Council, *NA* Note 4 is an irrevocable statement and it would not be over-dramatic to call it a breakthrough. (Lane, 2006, p232) This document more than anything marked a radical break with the ancient axioms of Catholic anti-Judaism and decried antisemitism as incompatible with Catholic teaching. It would be churlish to down-play now how radical *NA* was in its day and in many ways, it became the most successful of documents in its promise.

The next chapter addresses a far more difficult and controversial 1998 document, *We Remember: A Reflection on the Sho'ah*. Without *NA* and the Second Vatican Council, this document would never have come into existence. It is of critical importance to the content of this thesis, because it's the first (and to date the only) document by the Church that sets out its own understanding of itself in the context of the Holocaust.

II

Evaluation of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews: *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah* (1998) and its Significance.

This chapter examines the importance of, *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*, (WR),³⁰ by the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews (CRRJ) and released at a press conference on 16th March 1998. The document was endorsed by Pope John Paul II, with a letter of introduction to the published text and it's the Church's first and only document to date which explicitly addresses the Church's own self-understanding in relation to the Holocaust. Nevertheless, *WR* should be understood as one of a series of documents interpreting and applying the teaching definitively articulated in *Nostra Aetate* Note 4. (as discussed in Chapter I).

Generalisations are fraught with danger. To describe *WR* in the most positive of senses in relation to how the Church understands itself in its relationship to the Holocaust as a totally unprecedented statement by the Church may sound exaggerated, but it's undoubtedly a critically important teaching document.

³⁰ The text of the document, *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah* is attached at Appendix III.

Nevertheless, there is a question: Is it beyond any form of critical assessment? If the task is to try and understand how the Church understands itself in the context of its relationship to the Holocaust, then the answer is no, so an evaluation of this document is essential in understanding how today's Church in the early part of the twenty-first century, understands itself in relation to the Holocaust. It is important to note that *WR* does not stand in isolation. Prompted by the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz (27th January 1945), several European national Catholic Bishops' Conferences promulgated their own declarations, some of which were published by the Secretariat for Ecumenical Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in, *Catholics Remember the Holocaust* (1998). The *Declaration of Repentance*, by the French Bishops' Conference at Drancy on the 30th September 1997 was particularly noteworthy, (see *Catholics Remember the Holocaust*: pp31/37). The significance of this choice of location is that from August 1941 until the 1st July 1944, Drancy was the location of a transit camp for the deportation of 63,000 of the 76,000 Jews deported from France. The French Bishops' declaration has been described as a model of an apology which declared that: -

The time has come for the Church to submit to its own history, during this period in particular, to a critical reading without hesitating to recognize the sins committed by her sons and to ask forgiveness of God and man. (Henry, 2008, p88)

The date of the French Bishops' apology on 30th September 1997 deliberately coincided with both the eve of Rosh Hashanah and the fifty-seventh anniversary of the Vichy French government's antisemitic declarations, laws and decrees against the Jewish people of France.³¹

The responsibility for overseeing production of the document that would emerge as *WR* was given to the Australian Cardinal, Edward Idris Cassidy (1924- to present), then President of the CRRJ. It is a document of about three-thousand words (excluding the preamble and footnotes) and is divided into several sections entitled: -

- I. The tragedy of the Shoah and the duty of remembrance.
- II. What we must remember.
- III. Relation between Jews and Christians.
- IV. Nazi anti-Semitism and the Shoah.
- V. Looking together to a common future.

³¹ See also for a fuller account for example, Sacred Heart University. (1997)

On its publication *WR* immediately became the focus of controversy, in part because it had long been anticipated and much was expected of it. John Paul II referred to the need for a statement about the Church and the Holocaust some ten years before its publication and Rabbi Leon Klenicki, the Director of Interfaith Affairs of the New York based Anti-Defamation League referred to this intention of John Paul II (Boat, 2001, p23). It is also a document that has attracted both praise and opprobrium in various measures, depending on the point of view of how it's seen and understood. An immediate criticism can be gauged from the comments made in Time magazine on 30th March 1998.

And yet last week, when the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews released its 14-page report, *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*, the Jewish reaction was decidedly mixed as was the report itself. Its opening and closing segments were irreproachable and historic. Calling the Shoah an "unspeakable tragedy, which can never be forgotten," the report styles itself an act of *teshuvah*, the Hebrew word for repentance, voicing the church's desire to "express her deep sorrow for the failures of her sons and daughters in every age" and "turn awareness of past sins into a firm

resolve to build a new future." *WR's* middle section is oddly parsimonious about the sins it admits. It includes an unexpectedly blunt denial that Christian anti-Judaism contributed to the Nazis' racial anti-Semitism, quarantining the latter as the product of a "thoroughly modern pagan regime." Similarly, ... *We Remember* also steadfastly refuses to assign any blame to the church as an institution, a notable retreat from recent explicit apologies made by the German and French bishops that acknowledged what the Germans called "the church dimension" of the cataclysm.

Similarly, Catherine Craft-Fairchild observed that although the motivation for the creation of the document was intended to: -

[H]elp "heal wounds of past misunderstandings and injustices" between Catholics and Jews ... this publication mainly succeeded in reopening and salting the wounds it was intended to succour. (Craft-Fairchild, 2006, p69)

This chapter will examine the document's qualities in the order of the sections in which it is arranged.

To place this discussion in context, it's important to note that *WR* is addressed to the Catholic faithful throughout the whole world,

though it could be said that in a sense the Holocaust was a particularly European catastrophe. Although the Holocaust was a tragedy that unfolded on Europe's soil and then, only in those parts of Europe that fell under the control of the Third Reich and its Axis partners; it was nevertheless a terrible global tragedy for worldwide Jewry. Also, because of the responses of the Free-World to the plight of refugees desperately seeking to escape the Third Reich and Nazi occupied Europe there is a world-wide dimension, as Keogh points out. (1998, p194): -

[B]etween 1933 and 1945, about 250,000 refugees from Nazism had reached the United States. That compares with 150,000 who entered Palestine during the same period. Ireland, in contrast, stands with Canada, Australia and New Zealand ... 'illiberal' may be a euphemism, but it describes ... their various policies towards refugees – and Jewish refugees in particular ... It was for Ireland, as for other countries, a vast 'lost chance' to save many lives.

It may be thought with justification that the world was largely silent at this time.³²

³² For further discussion of this issue, see for example, Wyman, 1995 or Laqueur, 1982.

The first of *WR*'s five major sections addresses 'the tragedy of the Shoah and the duty of remembrance'. This short section speaks of the need for the Church to become 'more fully conscious of the sinfulness of her children.' (a theme which *WR* returns to in Part 4), then discusses the nature of the Holocaust. Although candidly acknowledging the wilful extermination of the Jewish people and their humiliating degradation, it says only that 'millions' of deaths occurred, ('millions' could mean only two). This is strange given the consensus that some six-million European Jews died by starvation, disease, work or immediate murder. *WR* does make the laudable statement that no-one, least of all Catholics can in any sense remain in a state of indifference simply because of the Church's shared patrimony with the Jewish people. This promising start elicited the comment by Rabbi Leon Klenicki that: -

It is an invitation to a dialogue and encounter, accepting each other as members of God's people yet aware of spiritual differences. As a listener, a Jew has the obligation to hear but also to respond in a committed manner, aware of past and present historical and religious experiences. (Boadt, 2001, p12)

The second section, 'What we must remember' repeats the theme of the first by again identifying the uniquely terrible nature of the

Holocaust, reflecting that the Holocaust took place in Europe; therefore, it is incumbent on all areas of scholarship to study and reflect on this event. Following the short first two sections, Part III engages with the relationship between both Jews and Christians acknowledging that: -

The history of relations between Jews and Christians is a tormented one. His Holiness Pope John Paul II has recognized this fact in his repeated appeals to Catholics to see where we stand with regard to our relations with the Jewish people. In effect, the balance of these relations over 2,000 years has been quite negative. (Boadt, 2001, p12)

Despite the significance of this acknowledgement the terseness of its description of the 'quite negative' relationship *WR* sadly fails to explain what this negativity consisted of. Instead *WR* continues: -

At the dawn of Christianity, after the crucifixion of Jesus, there arose disputes between the early Church and the *Jewish leaders ... who in their devotion to the Law,* (Italics added) on occasion violently opposed the preachers of the Gospels and the first Christians. (Boadt, 2001, p12)

The italicized text above may be considered insensitive when set against *NA*'s more respectful, even deferential tone; as Klenicki has observed. (Boadt, 2001, p12) Essentially, *WR* seems to infer that the position of the Law (Torah) was merely a source of polarisation between Judaism on the one hand and early Christianity on the other. The centrality of the Law (Torah, both written and oral) to Judaism then and now cannot in any sense be over-emphasised. 'Torah is the starting point, the cornerstone upon which Judaism was built.' (Robinson, 2000, p264)³³ So, to lightly describe the Law as merely a point of focus for devotion is equivalent to saying that the Sacrifice of the Mass in the Catholic Church, is merely a 'devotion'; when, to echo the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, the Mass is the source and summit of all that Catholics believe. (CCC, 1994, para-1324 and *Lumen Gentium*, 1964, No. 11) There is a deeper issue of misunderstanding in *WR* that Klenicki does not touch upon. The cursory and almost dismissive reference to, '[T]he Jewish leaders and people who, in their devotion to the Law', completely misses the sense and meaning that developed out of *NA*, despite the fact that *WR* was published in the last quarter of 1998, thirty-three years after *NA*. In 1998 Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI) stated that: -

³³ For a good 'in depth' introduction to The Torah, see Zucker, 1942 and 2005.

Jesus of Nazareth, who himself as a Jew lived entirely under the Law of Israel ... Jesus did not act as a liberal reformer ... Rather Jesus opened up the Law quite theologically (Ratzinger, 1998, pp38/39)

In recent times it is hopefully true that Christians in general have become a little more aware of the Jewish religious tradition from which Jesus of Nazareth emerged, so there is a perspective that sees Jesus as someone who observed Torah and lived Torah.³⁴ This, from a Catholic understanding implies significant Christological perspectives that one could not expect Jewish people to accept. The fact that such a current of thought exists within a Catholic milieu renders the statement in *WR*'s partial sentence commenting on a mere 'devotion to the Law' surprisingly trite. It could be argued that this criticism is supported scripturally by the Matthean injunction: -

Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets I have come not to abolish but to complete them. In truth I tell you, till heaven and earth disappear, not one jot, not one stroke, is to disappear from the Law until its purpose is achieved. (Matt 5: 17-18 NJB)

³⁴ Examples of this point of view can be explored in Cunningham, 1995, pp1/22. Beck, 2018, p19. Allen and Williamson, 2004, or Allen and Williamson, 2006.

Although it's potentially dangerous to cite isolated scriptural passages divorced from their overall context and this brief excerpt from the Sermon on the Mount is no exception, caution in this particular case is merited because the Matthean Jesus is cast, in the Sermon on the Mount, as the 'new' Moses. Despite parts of the Gospels being redacted in their early histories, the biblical scholar Geza Vermes (2003, pp354/355) considers this assertion by Jesus to be authentic, despite the fact that the Jerome Biblical Commentary ambivalently expresses caution about this passage in the context of the Pauline narrative. (Galatians 2: 15-16 and Romans 3: 21-31) The point here is that the Church in *WR* is not necessarily sensitive to post-Vatican II developments of scriptural understanding.³⁵ Thus it is for the Church to more deeply understand that Torah for the Jewish people is, as Jacob Neusner (2000, p5) explains: -

God's Torah is the way ... to love and serve the one God ...
who called us to serve and sanctify the God's name.

Neusner goes on to state that: -

By the criterion of the Torah, Israel's religion in the time
of Jesus was authentic and faithful, not requiring reform

³⁵ For more on this, see the Pontifical Bible Commission's, *The Jewish People and their Sacred Scripture in the Jewish Bible* (2001) (Roman Curia 2002) and the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Bible, the Jews and the Death of Jesus: A Collection of Catholic Documents* (2004).

or renewal, demanding only faith and loyalty to God and the sanctification of life through carrying out God's will.

So, it is incumbent on the Church to more sensitively grow in understanding both the significance of Torah and the nature of late Second Temple Judaism.

Further to this, *WR* clearly neglects the fact that Judaism was far from 'monolithic' during the late Second-Temple period. To state that intra-religious discord was in a sense the norm would not be too much of an exaggeration. Various groupings within the Judaism of the time included Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, Zealots, Nazaraioi as well as Hellenic converts to Judaism and this was sometimes a volatile mix. For example, the differences which at times existed between the houses of Shammai (circa 50BCE-30CE) and Hillel (circa 110BCE-10CE) are testament to differences of religious perspectives in this Second-Temple period. For *WR* to assert the existence of Jewish-Christian conflict as a unique struggle between an emergent Christianity and a 'monolithic' model of Judaism is an oversimplification ignoring recent scholarship, such as James Dunn's, *Partings of the Ways* (revised edition 2011); Daniel Boyarin, *Borderlines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (2004) and Adam Becker and Annette Reed (eds), *The Ways that*

Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages (2007). Similarly, nascent Christianity was far from the homogeneity that Catholics may wish to believe existed, as is discussed in Bart Ehrman's, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture we Never Knew Existed* (2005).

Part III of WR is characterised by sweeping generalisations and over simplifications. It also refers with little additional commentary to the conversion to Christianity of the Roman emperor Constantine the Great. Although there are divergent views on the nature of this 'conversion', it could hardly be described as edifying. (Simon, 1996, p99, pp126/127, pp229/292, p362). The oversimplification of the document's explanation of events following the conversion of Constantine fails to consider the ensuing events that affected and afflicted the Jewish people at the hands of their Christian neighbours from that time until the modern age throughout Europe. (Braybrooke, 1996, pp18/19 and Solomon, 1996, pp19/22) Equally, WR ignores the adverse polemical statements by some early Church Fathers. Just as parts of the Christian Scriptures have been viewed as antagonistic towards Jews, so too were works by, for example John Chrysostom, (circa 349-407CE), one of whose works was entitled, '*Eight Homilies against the Jews*'. The vitriolic

content of these works was possibly motivated by a desire to warn Christians of the perils of being drawn into 'Jewish religious practices'. Certainly, he states that going: -

[F]rom a church to a synagogue is blasphemous and to attend the Jewish Passover is an insult to Christ. To be with the Jews on the very day they murdered Jesus.
(Sermon II:3)

Part III of *WR* goes on to speak clearly of particular statements made and stances taken by two leading figures of the Catholic hierarchy in pre-war National Socialist Germany condemning racism, but fails to state precisely what their condemnations consisted of. Furthermore, no specific evidence is cited in the document to demonstrate these two churchmen actually condemned the National Socialist dogma which became the regime's eliminatory antisemitism.

The first churchman named in Part III of *WR* is Cardinal Adolf Bertram (1859–1945), appointed Prince-Bishop of Breslau in 1914 and made a cardinal *in pectore*³⁶ in 1916, during the First World War. Confronted with the rise of National Socialism, the position

³⁶ That is, 'secretly, in the heart', by Pope Benedict XV – Papacy 1914-1922.

adopted by Bertram may not be as entirely worthy as *WR* suggests. Bertram was the chairman of the German Catholic Bishops' Conference during the early years of the National Socialist's ascendancy. Initially his stance was oppositional to the new government even as Bertram presided over a conference which was in a state of disunity. In 1938 Bertram exhorted the people of his diocese to support the Third Reich reminding them of the sentiment expressed in St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, 13:1-7 directing obedience to the powers of the state. (Sciolino, 2012, p156). This reference to Paul is important because, from a Christian point of view it is arguably the case that; 'after Jesus, Paul is the most important person in the New Testament'. (Borg, 2012, p19). Furthermore, as Lewy (2000; pxxx) argues, Bertram: -

Favoured a policy of concessions, in order to protect the ability of the Church to fulfil its central role of administering the sacraments. After the outbreak of the war in 1939, Bertram believed that the Church had to practice special restraint to avoid jeopardizing the unity of the nation.

Again, more ambiguity surrounds his leadership as the Third Reich faced its closing days: -

Cardinal Bertram continued to insist that there be no public protest against Hitler and his regime ... when the crimes of the Nazi regime had become all too apparent. (Lewy. 2000, p145)

The Breslau diocesan records disclosed that despite all that had occurred in the short history of the Third Reich, Bertram maintained an unshakable loyalty to Germany and the National Socialist state and its leader right up to the end, maintaining that at the very least Hitler was a nominal Catholic, a view held by Bertram even when the crimes committed by and in the name of the Third Reich were well enough known. (Lewy, 2000, p145) When Bertram learned of Hitler's death in the Reich Chancellery, in Berlin, he allegedly directed the priests of his diocese to celebrate solemn requiems (Masses) for the repose of the deceased Fuehrer's soul and for all the German armed services personnel who died in the defence of the Fatherland, although there may be some uncertainty about this direction being fulfilled. It could be surmised that at the very least Bertram regarded Hitler as the respected legal head of the Third Reich. (Lewy, 2000, p145, Friedlander, 2008, p661)

WR then goes on to speak more directly regarding a second German churchman, Cardinal Michael von Faulhaber (1869–1952) who in 1933, was the cardinal archbishop of Munich and who was created a cardinal by Pope Benedict XV in 1921.³⁷ Faulhaber was highly regarded in the world-wide Church and following his death in 1952, the English international Roman Catholic periodical, *The Tablet*, (21st June 1952; p4), described the late Cardinal Faulhaber as, 'a great leader of German Catholicism'. This article, written just seven years after the end of the Second World War spoke warmly of a wartime leader of the Catholic Church in Germany. It described him being devoted to the study of scripture, particularly the Old Testament, specifically referring to his famous Advent sermons of 1933, preached in the Frauenkirche, Munich, during the first Advent season of the National Socialist regime. The obituary specifically stated that Cardinal Faulhaber: -

[W]as among the very first of the [German] Catholic Bishops [Conference] to perceive and condemn the iniquitous doctrines of the Nazis ... not least because he came from his love of the Old Testament to recognize that from the first, the deeper significance of the anti-Semitism which they taught.

³⁷ It was Cardinal Faulhaber who after the Second World War ordained the young Joseph Ratzinger to the priesthood in 1951 and who later became Pope Benedict XVI.

It would seem, at least from this article that Faulhaber was an avowedly strong opponent of National Socialism and its racial policies. *WR* clearly echoes the sentiment expressed in *The Tablet* forty-eight years earlier in clearly stating that: -

The well-known Advent sermons of Cardinal Faulhaber in 1933, the very year in which National Socialism came to power, at which not just Catholics but also Protestants and Jews were present, clearly expressed rejection of the Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda. (Fisher, 1999, p14)

Is this brief and otherwise unsupported statement of *WR* all that it seems to be? Certainly, if this statement is taken at face value, it clearly could be understood to be highlighting a definitive example of a leader of the German Church's opposition to the newly established German National Socialist government and specifically to its racial policies. Following Saul Friedlander's research, (1997, pp47/48) it is advisable to be cautious about *WR*'s approbation of the Advent preaching of Faulhaber. Friedlander stresses the importance of examining carefully Faulhaber's own qualifications on the content of his sermons. Initially using Faulhaber's own words, Friedlander (1997, pp47/48) says: -

"So that I may be perfectly clear and preclude any possible misunderstanding ... let me begin by making

three distinctions. We must first distinguish between the people of Israel before and after the death of Christ. Before the death of Christ, during the period between the calling of Abraham and the fullness of time, the people of Israel were the vehicle of Divine Redemption ... it is only with this Israel and the early biblical period that I shall deal with in my Advent sermons". The cardinal then described God's dismissal of Israel after Israel had not recognized Christ, adding words that may have sounded hostile to the Jews who did not recognize Christ's revelation. "The daughters of Zion received their bill of divorce and from that time forth, Ahasuerus wanders forever restless, over the face of the earth".

According to Friedlander's commentary, Faulhaber pursued his theme by asserting in his view: -

We must distinguish between the Scriptures of the Old Testament on the one hand and the Talmudic writings of post-Christian Judaism on the other ... The Talmudic writings are the work of man; they were not prompted by the spirit of God. It is only the writings of pre-Christian Judaism, not the Talmud that the Church of the New Testament has accepted as her inheritance.

Friedlander goes on to explain that Faulhaber made a further qualification: -

Thirdly, we must distinguish in the Old Testament Bible itself between what had only transitory value and what had permanent value ... we are only concerned with those religious, ethical and social values of the Old Testament which remains as values also for Christianity.

Later, Faulhaber clearly stated that his Advent sermons (which fifty-five years later are so honourably mentioned in *WR*), were in no definite sense a comment upon what was the developing and contemporary situation in Germany in respect to the Jewish people, but rather a defence of the scriptural tradition and understanding of what the Christian churches call the Old Testament. Friedlander's analysis is corroborated elsewhere. According to Lewy (2000, pp275/276): -

Faulhaber went out of his way to make clear that he was not concerned with defending his Jewish contemporaries ... we must distinguish ... between the people of Israel before the death of Christ, who have become wanderers over the earth ... It therefore is little short of falsification of history when Faulhaber's sermons in 1933 are hailed ... as a condemnation of the persecution of the Jews.

The credibility of portraying Faulhaber as some kind of latter-day 'John the Baptist' style voice crying out in the wilderness of the Third Reich is challenged by a further instance. (Lewy, 2000, p276). The Swiss Basel based newspaper, *National-Zeitung* printed what were supposed to be parts of a text of a sermon by Faulhaber, in which he condemned the tenets of National Socialist race hatred. So effective was the Swiss newspaper's published article that Faulhaber was even praised by the World Jewish Congress for his principled stance against National Socialist ideology. The article proved to have no substance, it was an unintended falsehood. Following publication by the *National-Zeitung*, Faulhaber directed a letter be written on his behalf to the World Jewish Congress complaining of the use of his name by a (Jewish) conference demanding a commercial boycott of Germany that is, economic sanctions. Faulhaber's letter continued: -

In [the] Advent sermons of the previous year [the defending] of the Old Testament [should] not be taken [as] a position with regard to the Jewish position today. (Lewy, 2000, p276).

If Friedlander and Lewy can be judged to be critical of the Church's positive appraisal of Faulhaber in *WR* it is important to acknowledge that a more nuanced or partially reserved appraisal

has also been proposed (Phayer, 2000, p15). Reflecting on the Advent sermons of 1933, Phayer argues the sermons reflected a form of generally existing Christian anti-Judaism, but not what would become National Socialist exterminatory antisemitism. Phayer does make reference to an alleged, but unsubstantiated meeting in 1936 between Hitler and Faulhaber at Obersalzberg, when Faulhaber is supposed to have supported Hitler's racist policies. Such an alleged encounter must remain just that; alleged, but not substantiated and probably untrue. Phayer's assessment of Faulhaber is supported by Biesinger (1999, p150) where the cardinal is depicted opposing the National Socialist assault on Catholic institutions and reflecting differently on the Advent sermons by pointing out that there was no possible base for a racial foundation for Christianity. No matter how Faulhaber's famous sermons have been interpreted, Biesinger, in a similar vein to Friedlander observes that: -

Here was a strong denial of the possibility for any racial foundation for Christianity. Unfortunately, he did not consider the sermons a condemnation of contemporaneous antisemitism. When asked if he was defending contemporary Jewry, Faulhaber replied that he

was only defending the Jews and Judaism before Christ, but not those since. (Biesinger, 1999, p150)

Friedlander and Lewy are not alone in drawing attention to Faulhaber. Rossi (2015, p56/57) argues that before 1939 Church leaders had remained silent about the increasingly severe treatment of Germany's Jews. Faulhaber wrote to a priest in 1933 who expressed concern about the boycott of Jewish businesses. The reply is instructive: -

These proceedings against the Jews are un-Christian in that every Christian, not merely every priest, must act against them [*dagegen auftreten*]. [But] there are far more important problems presently for the ecclesiastical authorities. The schools, the continued existence of Catholic associations, and sterilizations are more important for Christianity in our *Heimat*. Above all we can assume [as we've] already seen, to some extent – that the Jews are able to take care of themselves. Therefore, we have no reason to give the regime a reason to turn the anti-Jewish agitation into an anti-Jesuit agitation.

In essence the leaders of Germany's Catholic Church considered it more expedient to reflect on and follow what they saw as their own interests rather than consider the state's violent repression of

Germany's Jews as a cause to be taken up. Rossi (2015, p44) does acknowledge that; "Faulhaber's record vis-a-vis Nazism is inconsistent, but he disagreed ... with the regime often enough to have the Gestapo raid his office several times". There was probably no real form of deep-seated enmity harboured by the German Catholic episcopate against their Jewish neighbours; indeed, there was a fair or reasonable measure of amity in the episcopate's overall demeanour towards the Jews. (Phayer, 2000, p17)

Faulhaber was an influential person and was instrumental in the development of the Church's treaty with the Third Reich, known as the *Reichskonkordat*. This, with the Church's acquiescence to the demands of the German government that all Catholic political and social organisations be discontinued under the terms of the *Reichskonkordat*, in return for the state's protection of private religious practise was an agreement signed on 20th July 1933. Essentially this was a diplomatic agreement between the Church and the Third Reich about managing of the Church's relationship with the new state and one that suggests a lack of understanding by both the Vatican and the German Catholic hierarchy of the nature and intention of the new regime. More than this, the *Reichskonkordat* signed so soon after the coming to power of the

National Socialist movement could be seen, at least from Hitler's point of view, as evidence of or, at least a sign that the Church had bestowed upon his regime at least a veneer of respectability in the eyes of the world (Sciolino, 2012, p94). This view has also been clearly expressed by Biesinger (in Coppa, 1999, p142): -

Whether or not intended by the Vatican, the Concordat did provide some respectability and prestige to the Nazi state. Through the Concordat Hitler created his one-party state by eliminating the Center Party and destroying the hated power of political Catholicism.

The importance of Faulhaber's role in the creation of this concordat is reflected on elsewhere (for example, Biesinger, 1999, p126), the important point in this context being that: -

This declaration was a dramatic reversal by the German bishops. ... the new position conditionally withdrew the previous warnings against Nazism and marked an attempt by the bishops to cooperate with the regime.

There is the also the well-known support which Faulhaber provided in conjunction with the papal secretary of state; Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli (1876-1958), in contributing significantly to the preparation of the papal encyclical, *Mit Brennender Sorge*,³⁸ published under

³⁸ With Burning Anxiety.

the authority of Pope Pius XI (1857-1939) on 14th March 1937. Pacelli was close to Pius XI and a leading figure in the Church as the Vatican's, Secretary of State, later becoming Pope Pius XII. The encyclical itself was carefully composed to avoid any seemingly overt confrontation with Germany's National Socialist government, even though its racial policies were becoming clear. The encyclical did not speak directly about the Jewish people, although it defended Jews who had converted to Catholicism. Its general criticism of Nazi racial theory is defined by a core statement in the encyclical and in fairness it could be considered a courageous step to publish such a document at this time: -

Whoever exalts race, or the people, or the State, or a particular form of State, or the depositories of power, or any other fundamental value of the human community – however necessary and honourable be their function in worldly things – whoever raises these notions above their standard value divinizes them to an idolatrous level, distorts and perverts an order of the world planned by God. (*Mit Brennender Sorge*, Para. 8)

Following the events in Germany and the deteriorating circumstances of Germany's Jews and after *Mit Brennender Sorge*, it is fair to make a reference to Pius XI, who in failing health

laboured hard to produce what would have been his final encyclical which never saw the light of day and which it is believed would have vociferously challenged the events unfolding in Germany. The fascinating story of this 'hidden' encyclical is chronicled by Peter Eisner (p214) and in summary he said: -

[W]e must conclude that the publication of the encyclical draft at the time it was written may have saved hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of lives. ... That can never be known. It was clear that Pope Pius XI took a stance in favour of absolute morality and defended to his last breath his principles of decency and humanity.³⁹

The decision in *WR* to cite Faulhaber is questionable, although he was opposed to the racist policies of National Socialism, he, like the majority of the German Catholic episcopate failed to provide any real opposition to the National Socialist government. Certainly, they had no part in, nor offered any support to the state's formulating and enacting of the notorious Nuremberg Laws (1935). Equally it would be wrong to claim the whole of the German Catholic Church was overtly antisemitic, particularly in the Nazis' sense of the term, but there were members of the Catholic clergy

³⁹ For a further discussion see also, George Passelecq and George Suchecky. (1997) *The Hidden Encyclical of Pius XI* or Frank Coppa, <https://www.istor.org/stable/25025140?seq>

who were. For example, the Bavarian Priests' Association in the period following Faulhaber's Advent sermons published an article in its own periodical the *Klerusblatt* stating that Catholic teachers must make clear to their pupils that: -

[T]he sacred books of the Old Testament were not only beyond the Jewish mentality, but in direct conflict with it. The greatest miracle of the Bible is that the true religion could hold and maintain itself against the voice of the Semitic blood. (in Lewy, 2000, p276)

The authors of *WR* do identify, albeit briefly by name one exemplary churchman namely, Bernhard Lichtenberg (1875–1943) the provost of St. Hedwig's Cathedral, Berlin who, following the Kristallnacht pogrom of the 9th/10th November 1938, declared on the 10th November, referring to the destruction of synagogues: -

[T]he temple which was burnt down outside is also a House of God. (Friedlander, 1997, p297)

Following the extensive destruction of Jewish property throughout the Third Reich, Lichtenberg led public prayers specifically for the Jewish people. Fackenheim (1989; p289) touchingly and sensitively describes this 'unique and unprecedented Christian prayer' and Lichtenberg's eventual fate (p290). The National Socialist authorities considered he was 'incorrigible', not least because he

continued his public prayers until his arrest on the 23rd November 1941. He subsequently came to trial on the 22nd May 1942. At his trial the judge asked why he prayed on behalf of the Jews. His response was that he was scandalized by the destruction of Kristallnacht and the indifference of the police, asking of himself what he could do. His reply to the court was (p290): -

Then I told myself that only one thing could still help, namely prayer. That night I prayed for the first time as follows: "Now let us pray for the persecuted 'non-aryan' Christians and Jews.

In prison awaiting the conclusion of his trial and verdict Lichtenberg, when visited by his bishop, said that on his release he hoped to go to the Lodz ghetto (p291). Instead he was sent to Dachau, dying on 5th November 1942 on the journey there as a result of the severe mistreatment he had been subjected to.⁴⁰

It may be wondered whether, if all the German Catholic clergy at every level displayed the same courage as Lichtenberg, history could have been different. This is an extension of a point made by Griech-Polelle (2002, p7), when she says: -

⁴⁰ See also John Weiss (1996, pp351/352) for a similar account.

There were ... Catholic individuals such as Pastor Bernard Lichtenberg ... who recognized the evil inherent in Nazism. But as an entity, the church leadership chose to focus on maintaining or saving Catholic institutional structures on German soil, while losing sight of the larger, ultimate, and more humane questions involved.

Griech-Polelle considers how the Church in Germany narrowed its own concerns to those of "religious questions" and a mindset that considered that whilst governments and regimes may come and go the Church goes on forever. This immediate self-interested concern of the German Church with itself, whilst abandoning the wider applications of the core moral demands of the faith it proclaimed leads Griech-Polelle to conclude: -

The tragedy ... is how little of the immense cultural and spiritual capital of the church was risked in combating a fundamentally anti-Christian regime.

In *WR*, one name that receives little comment is Pope Pius XII, who is mentioned in one brief reference and an extensive footnote. Considering that to all intents and purposes, the entire period of the Second World War and the Holocaust occurred during this

papacy, what the document does say is worth quoting. (Boadt, 2001, p17)

[A]fter the war, Jewish communities and Jewish leaders expressed their thanks for all that had been done for them, including what Pope Pius XII did personally or through his representatives to save hundreds of thousands of Jewish lives.

At the end of this sentence is a numbered and fulsome footnote (16) and it may be wondered why it was not included in the main text of the document. Indeed, it is one of the most controversial elements of *WR* and deserves to be quoted fully: -

The wisdom of Pope Pius XII's diplomacy was publicly acknowledged on a number of occasions by representative Jewish Organizations and personalities. For example, on 7 September 1945, Dr. Joseph Nathan, who represented the Italian Hebrew Commission, stated: "Above all, we acknowledge the Supreme Pontiff and the religious men and women who, executing the directives of the Holy Father, recognized the persecuted as their brothers and, with effort and abnegation, hastened to help us, disregarding the terrible dangers to which they were exposed" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, 8 September

1945, p2). On 21 September of that same year, Pius XII received in audience Dr. A. Leo Kubowitzki, Secretary General of the World Jewish Congress who came to present "to the Holy Father, in the name of the Union of Israelitic Communities, warmest thanks for the efforts of the Catholic Church on behalf of Jews throughout Europe during the War" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, 23 September 1945, p. 1). On Thursday, 29 November 1945, the Pope met about 80 representatives of Jewish refugees from various concentration camps in Germany, who expressed "their great honour at being able to thank the Holy Father personally for his generosity towards those persecuted during the Nazi-Fascist period" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, 30 November 1945, p1). In 1958, at the death of Pope Pius XII, Golda Meir sent an eloquent message: "We share in the grief of humanity. When fearful martyrdom came to our people, the voice of the Pope was raised for its victims. The life of our times was enriched by a voice speaking out about great moral truths above the tumult of daily conflict. We mourn a great servant of peace". (Boadt, 2001, p18)

This long footnote's word content is equal to about 9.07% of the entire main text of *WR*, so it has to be wondered why a statement about such a prominent figure should be presented as a passing observation in a footnote. Pius XII was and remains one of the most controversial figures in the context of the wreckage of the Second World War and certainly, there must be few personages who have attracted as many comments of opprobrium or praise depending upon whom one reads. Daniel Goldhagen (2002, P202) is one of the more outspoken critics: -

Pius XII lived for thirteen years after the war, but he never publicly condemned the extermination of the Jews explicitly. Nor did he repudiate the Church's antisemitism ... He pretended that the German Catholics had been a model and to persuade others, he pronounced the blatant lie that they had "wholeheartedly" opposed Nazism.

The title of John Cornwell's influential study, *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* (1999) also gives a flavour of the tone of the debate and the gravity of the accusations levelled against the wartime pontiff. An alternative and contrary view that is an example of unqualified praise of Pius XII is that he will: -

[G]o down in history as one of the greatest of the pontiffs. Slightly built and ethereal in looks, he

nonetheless managed to shoulder the very heaviest of burdens. That he did so was because he had been granted in the words of Cardinal Spellman, "Christ-like shoulders" and had "a Christ-like sanctity of spirit". (Winterbottom, 2010; pp107/108)⁴¹

Furthermore, Pope Pius XII has posthumously become a controversial and polarizing figure not least because of the introduction of the cause for his canonisation. The controversy over what Pius XII actions were and the sufficiency of them is addressed by Berel Lang (2005, p143), who observes of the conflict between the advocates of silent diplomacy as opposed to speaking out: -

From the question of how active the alleged "silent diplomacy" was, a more substantial question arises in this context: is there no time and no occasion when the Vatican, or the Pope himself, should be willing to place themselves at risk?

Phayer (2000, p54) makes a similar point that excepting the very carefully worded Christmas message of 1942: -

⁴¹ For further defences of Pius XII, see Thomas, 2013; pp23/37. See also Rittner and Roth (eds) *Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust*, or Sanchez, 2002; for a more fully nuanced analysis.

Pope Pius did not speak out publicly about the Holocaust; nor did he disseminate information about it privately through the Vatican's effective network of nuncios.

Phayer continues to argue that claims made on behalf of Pius XII that any denunciations made by him would have made things worse do not merit serious consideration.

As an aside and possibly more telling is the way Pius XII and the Vatican maintained silence and never censured those they could have done and one was Anton Pavelic (1889-1959), the fascist leader of the puppet state of Croatia and a part of the Axis block in the Second World War. As a Catholic leader of a Catholic nation he oversaw the murder of some 200,000 Serb Orthodox Christians who refused to convert to Catholicism and 30,000 Jews with the direct assistance of Catholic priests. (Weiss, 1996, p390). Additionally, there was also the case of Josef Tiso, (1887-1947) a Catholic priest who in heading the Axis-Slovakian government was an ally of the Third Reich (*Tiso Jozef – Archive.org* Accessed 13th November 2018. (*Tiso Jozef – Archive.org* Accessed 13th November 2018. <https://archive.org/details/youtube-dUPXTAG1Bvk>). Or again there is the controversial Archbishop Aloysius Viktor Stepinac (1898-1960), who was the bishop of Zagreb, Croatia, who allegedly

failed to condemn the genocide of the Serbs. (Aloysius Viktor Stepinac.<https://www.catholicnewsagency.co/news/vatican-commision-agrees-to-disagree-on-cardinal-stepinac-44160?>). A full discussion of Pavelic, Tiso or Stepinac is beyond this dissertation's scope.

No matter what debate there may be about the overall conduct and character of Pius XII during the period of the Holocaust,⁴² the intention here is to restrict comment to the contents and significance of footnote 16 in *WR*. This footnote cites three expressions of gratitude to Pius XII from Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. All three tributes are dated 1945, the year the Second World War ended (7th September, 21st September and 29th November). It is a little difficult to understand, much less believe, that so soon after the end of the war when Europe was not yet even beginning to rise from the chaotic maelstrom inflicted by war, that anyone could have been so well informed about what the pope had actually or allegedly done for the Jews of Europe. Susan Zuccotti (in Rittner & Roth, 2002, p205-216) has similarly reflected on this point. The implications of footnote 16 is that Pius XII directed that when and where possible, the Church's extensive

⁴² For further surveys of this controversy, see for example, Rittner and Roth, 2002.

resources must be made available for the rescue of endangered Jews. Certainly, if one accepts this, such action would have been contemporaneous with that stage in the war when German forces occupied Rome in September 1943, so pope and the Church would have to act with great caution. Nevertheless, it remains the case that after seven decades, to date no definitive documents evidencing the pontiff's will that Jews must be sheltered have come to light to support any original written papal directive to this effect. The immediate common-sense answer to this is that should such a document, if it ever existed, fall into the hands of the Reich's security forces, then the probability was that the Vatican's neutrality as an independent state within the confines of Rome would have been severely jeopardised. If it were the case that only an oral instruction was issued it would need to have been promulgated with the authority and authenticity of its origin and clearly this would be difficult, given the number of people that it would have to be circulated to. If there ever was such an instruction at least some senior clergy in the Vatican and the Church's hierarchy would not only have known about it, but probably survived the war. So, the question is, why after the war didn't any of those clergy come forward to give for example, sworn affidavits to the effect that Pius XII did issue such a verbal

direction? The extant literature does not seem to have posed this question, so, it remains unanswerable. If such supporting evidence had been provided, assuming the claim to be true it would go some way to address recurring criticisms against Pius XII remaining 'silent' by not saying or doing anything to overtly condemn the destruction of European Jewry by the Third Reich. This charge of silence is not new. For those who remember (including the writer), in 1963 Rolf Hochhuth's play, *The Deputy* was first performed in Berlin and made in its own way the same controversial point. (discussed in Sanchez, 2002)

Returning to the implications of footnote 16, alongside the continuing uncertainty about the existence of any directive by the pontiff to save the lives of Jewish people, there is an ongoing debate over the alleged number of lives that were supposed to have been saved. Zuccotti (2002, pp205/216) points to *WR*, which asserts without any supporting evidence that: -

[W]hat Pope Pius XII did personally or through his representatives ... save[d] hundreds of thousands of Jewish lives. (Boadt, 2001, p18)

There is no supporting evidence for the figure cited in *WR* and Zuccotti takes issue with various claims as to the numbers

allegedly saved. She states that some papal apologists assert some 860,000 Jews were saved. There is no known independent authority for this figure and she believes that Pinchas Lapide (1922–1997), the historian, theologian and onetime Israeli consul was the initial source for this. However, Zuccotti makes clear that the methodology used to arrive at this figure is far from certain. The numbers alleged to have been saved remains an unknown quantity; even though Zuccotti fully accepts that there were many Jewish people sheltered within the confines of Vatican controlled property in Rome and elsewhere. Nevertheless, the whole issue of expressions of gratitude raises the point of why they were expressed. Although the Church's role in response to the Holocaust is mired in obscurity, recrimination, claim and counter-claim of what it did or did not do abound, there were members of the Catholic Church, lay, religious and clergy who did often and at great risk to themselves aid and shelter Jewish people. Certainly, if one considers the Church as the post-Tridentine and post-First Vatican Council monolith it appears to be with an 'infallible' head, the pope, then it would be natural enough to think that he would have been the all-seeing, all-knowing and directing person behind all acts of heroic charity performed by Church members on behalf of the Jewish people. The simpler truth is probably that those who

acted to support, sustain and shelter Jews were acting out of their own sense of compassion and conscience; not at the pope's behest, no matter how much he may or may not have supported such actions. (Zuccotti, 2002, pp205/216). This view may seem deeply critical, but, further discussion of Pope Pius XII in this thesis would move into areas of debate outside the immediate focus of this chapter. Nevertheless, it remains the case that even today, the approach taken in the document's footnote remains an uncritical one that fails to substantiate the claims made or engage with the extensive counter-arguments on the subject. Yet, it is one that expresses the official position of the Vatican. For example, Pope Francis, in an address to the Jewish community in Rome (11th October 2013) said at the seventieth-anniversary of the deportation of the Jews of Rome in 1943: -

We know that many religious institutes, monasteries and Papal Basilicas themselves, understanding the will of the Pope, opened their doors in fraternal welcome, and how many common Christians offered whatever help they were able to give. (Pope Francis, 2013:1)

Before leaving Pius XII, there is the work of one other author who casts some doubt on the position of Pius XII after the Second World War. Suzanne Brown-Fleming refers to the appointment of the

United States Catholic clergyman, Bishop Aloisius Muench (1889-1962) by Pius XII. In essence Muench was appointed as the 'personal representative' of Pius XII in post-war Germany and who 'reported' directly to him. A detailed discussion of Brown-Fleming's work is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but it is pertinent to mention inasmuch as it underpins a view that neither Pius XII nor the German Church had any real understanding of, or what had taken place, namely the Holocaust, Brown-Fleming reports the story that: -

During a private audience in May 1957, the leader of the universal Roman Catholic Church, Pope Pius XII, told a "story with a great deal of delight" to Archbishop Aloisius Muench, who was then the Vatican papal nuncio to Germany. "Hitler died and somehow got into heaven," began the pope. "There he met the Old Testament prophet Moses. Hitler apologized to Moses on his treatment of the European Jews. Moses replied that such things were forgiven and forgotten here in heaven." "Hitler [was] relieved," continued the pope and "said to Moses that he always wished to meet him in order to ask him an important question. Did Moses set fire to the burning bush?" "Our Holy Father told me the story with a

big laugh,” Archbishop Muench told Monsignor Joseph Adams of Chicago this anecdote in a subsequent letter.

The “delight” and “laughter” described by Archbishop Muench indicates that neither he nor Pope Pius XII appeared to understand the inappropriateness of telling a joke relating to the murder of six million European Jews.

(2006, p1)

Telling as Brown-Fleming’s point may be, it must be borne in mind that such a comment depends upon the reliability of the narrator.

If concerns are to be identified in *WR* then the most contentious part of the document, even more so than the footnote 16 is Part IV entitled, Nazi anti-Semitism and the Shoah. The opening and dare it be said, self-exonerating statement makes clear that from the point of view of the authors and by direct extension, the Church: -

[W]e cannot ignore the difference which exists between anti-Semitism, based on theories contrary to the ... teaching of the Church on the unity of the human race.

(Boadt, 2001, p15)

It continues by defining its particular perspective of what was National Socialist racial theory, crucially differentiating it from

anything that ever emanated from the Church or its long history, concluding this part of the document with the words: -

The Shoah was the work of a thoroughly modern neo-pagan regime. Its anti-Semitism had its roots outside of Christianity. (Boadt, 2001, p16)

According to Klenicki this statement: -

[R]equires careful reflection. It is highly optimistic of the document to say that the anti-Semitism of Nazi ideology had its roots outside of Christianity. By doing so it denies centuries of Christian contempt and persecution. (Boadt, 2001, p35)

Klenicki's well-made observation is both commendably restrained and sensitive. The claim that National Socialist ideology had its deeply antisemitic source completely outside of the Church's own historical anti-Judaism needs some evaluation. The most telling issue in the Christian animus toward Judaism rests on the early Church's subsequently, but much belatedly refuted accusation of Deicide. This point is argued by Flannery (2004, p288), who stated that: -

It was this theological construct that provided the cornerstone of Christian antisemitism and laid the foundation upon which all subsequent antisemitism would

in one way or another build ... thus Christian antisemitism has always remained in its core, theological.

Continuing this theme and underpinning the foundational element of Christian antisemitism is the historically long-established idea of supersessionism, namely the notion of the Church being the '*New Israel*'; the Mosaic covenant with the '*Old Israel*' having been abrogated with the coming of Christ. (See Rubenstein & Roth, 2002, p51 & p332. Griech-Poelle, 2017, pp10, 24, 246 and Wright, 2002, p67/74). Certainly, there was a radically additional element in National Socialist ideology which introduced the false notion of the Jews being a racially degenerate people. A defining description of this idea is reflected by Friedlander (1997, pp87/112) arguing that the innate degeneracy encapsulated within the Jewish people was, for National Socialist dogma, a threatening and deadly force which would bring about the fall of the world's non-Judaic people. The National Socialist struggle was one of survival at all costs; particularly for Aryan humanity. The argument continues at an ever-deeper level. The Reich's crusade against Jewry was understood by them as a '*redemptive*' one. It was not so much a case of destroying Jewry and its so wrongly imagined power. It was a case of 'redeeming' Aryan humanity from the curse of its own destruction by what was perceived as a universal Jewish conspiracy

to take over the world. The seemingly evangelical character of the Nazi model of antisemitism had a millenarian character to it. As Friedlander insightfully states: -

[W]ith regard to the Nazi myth of the Jew, archaic religious themes and so-called modern scientific theories were interwoven in a multifaceted representation of the alchemy of the Volk. (in Rosenfeld, 1997, p133, see also Friedlander, 2008; p xviii-xix).

Before leaving this part of *WR*, it is useful to reflect on one more element of the Catholic *Adversus Judaeos* tradition. James Shapiro, in his work on the Oberammergau Passion Play (2000, p162) refers to Part IV of *WR*: -

Perhaps the weakest claim in the Vatican document is the insistence on a distinction between theological "anti-Judaism" and racial "anti-Semitism. One need look no further than the exterminationist language of the 1934 Passion play to see how quickly this distinction collapses. The current that flowed through medieval anti-Judaism and was channelled through Passion plays like Oberammergau's, continued to flow effortlessly ... into the stream that swept along modern racial anti-Semitism

... For those seeking a link between medieval anti-Judaism and modern anti-Semitism, the 1934 ... Oberammergau play is as good a candidate as any.

Shapiro's analysis of the Passion play includes a comment ascribed to Hitler and allegedly made on 5th July 1942, concerning his demonization of Jews and his interest in the play: -

For this reason alone, it is vital that the Passion Play be continued at Oberammergau; for never has the menace of Jewry been so convincingly portrayed as in this presentation at what happened ... sees in Pontius Pilate a Roman racially and intellectually so superior, that he stands out like a firm, clean rock in the middle of the whole muck and mire of Jewry. (Shapiro, 2000, p168; for discussion of the attempt to revise the script and production of the play, see the *Ad-Hoc Committee Report on the 2010 Oberammergau Passion Play Script*).⁴³

Seemingly, *WR* is presenting a view of the Church as one free of any responsibility for ever being instrumental in any way, of bearing any responsibility for its historically long contribution to what became eliminatory Nazi antisemitism, a view that is difficult

⁴³ For further brief comment on the Oberammergau Passion Play, see Weiss (1996, p3).

to maintain. Section IV of *WR* continues with some recognition that: -

[I]t may be asked whether the Nazi persecution of the Jews was not made easier by the anti-Jewish prejudices imbedded in *some* Christian minds and hearts. *Did anti-Jewish sentiment among Christians make them less sensitive, or even indifferent, to the persecutions launched against the Jews by National Socialism when it reached power.* (Boadt, 2001, p16)

Commentators have observed that within the Church's history there is antipathy towards Judaism. This antipathy may be described as anti-Judaism that is, prejudice against Jews on the basis of their religious beliefs. This antipathy could also be described as antisemitism, that is, antipathy against Jews on the basis of their perceived racial origins as well as their theological beliefs. Did the Church's historical antipathy feed through into what became National Socialist racial antisemitism? This is a major issue for writers such as Goldhagen (2003, pp52/53, pp109/110), whose view is that the Church's historical ideas of Jews did feed through into the mind-set that became the National Socialist dystopia. A more recent example of a view of how the Church's ancient and traditional antipathy towards Jews merged into the murderously

eliminary policies of the Third Reich is by Gabriel Wilensky (2016, p129). The whole argument about the Church's antipathy towards Jews providing fertile ground for the National Socialist's racial antisemitism is a vexed and massive subject and one that is beyond the scope of this thesis. On a balance of probabilities, it could reasonably be demonstrated that it is the case that the Church's historic stance did at the very least indirectly contribute to the National Socialist's dogma of what Goldhagen terms, eliminatory antisemitism, or as Friedlander prefers, 'redemptive antisemitism'. (1997, pp87/112) For *WR* to assert that: -

the *Shoah* was the work of a thoroughly modern neo-pagan regime. Its anti-Semitism had its roots outside of Christianity. (Boadt, 2001, p16)

which it offers as a totally unsupported statement is at worst seriously misleading and at best a simplification of a very complex subject.

This same section of *WR* goes on to present the argument that: -

[M]any people were altogether unaware of the "final solution" that was being put into effect against a whole people. (Boadt, 2001 p17).

At one level this may be true. David Alvarez in his essay, 'The Best Information Service in Europe' (2006, pp187/211) reflects on the

misconception of the Nazis that the Vatican had a pre-eminent intelligence service claiming that the Germans even believed that Jesuits had, “penetrated the Reich’s security organs of the state” (2006, pp188/189). This wildly irrational belief is tempered by the more mundane observation by Alvarez (2006, p205) that, “the Pope [was] often uncertain of events in his own backyard”.⁴⁴ In similar vein Doris Bergen makes the point (2008, pp254/255) that in 1942 Kurt Gerstein (1905-1945), an SS officer witnessed a gassing of Jews at Belzec by diesel fumes. Horrified at what he witnessed, Gerstein went to meet the papal nuncio in Berlin, “to pass the news to the pope. Gerstein’s efforts met with little response” (2008, p255). That senior clergy in Europe and by inference, the Vatican had knowledge of what was unfolding in the occupied territories can be a matter of extensive discussion beyond the scope of this thesis.

If difficulties abound with this document, one of its most sensitive issues is the sentence in Part IV: -

We deeply regret the errors and failures of those sons and daughters of the Church. (Boadt, 2001, p19)

⁴⁴ Nevertheless, Alvarez does make the observation that the British intelligence services were aware of what was happening to Jews in Poland as early as 1939 (2006, p207) and by November 1941 the United States military attaché in Berlin was aware of massacres in the newly occupied areas of the Soviet Union (2006, p209). Other writers also address this question, for example Raul Hilberg 1993.

This is a difficult statement to comprehend. That the Holocaust has prompted strong arguments would be an understatement and in relation to this thesis, Catholic anti-Jewish prejudices of the time may best be described as widespread. To turn this statement into a question is to ask: Did the anti-Jewish prejudices of Catholics in mainland-Europe in some way facilitate, even as bystanders, to at least 'acquiesce' in the almost entire eradication of what was European Jewry? To ask this question allows the possibility that 'some' Catholics at least were sufficiently prejudiced against their fellow Jewish citizens. The greater reality is that not only were 'some' indifferent, rather the word 'some' could be replaced by the words, '*a great many*'. For with these more majority terms encompassing Catholics, it was not just a question of being compliantly indifferent, but also being openly antisemitic. As Wasserstein points out (2012, p37): -

Anti-Semitism was a European-wide phenomenon in the interwar period. Few countries, even those with small Jewish populations were unaffected.

It is important to state that although antisemitism was widespread, it did not have the murderous eliminatory ingredient within it that came to characterise National Socialist dogma. Insofar as Germany was concerned Wasserstein makes a further point that,

“throughout the period Nazi propaganda devoted extensive attention [and drew] on the inventory of Christian anti-Judaism, compounding religious antagonism with new, [but] no less poisonous ingredients”. (2012, p34) Reflecting on the situation in Germany, following the accession of the National Socialists in 1933, the German Catholic Church, although initially not well disposed to the new government and its racial dogma, gradually moved to a stance of gradual acceptance, or at least toleration. As reflected elsewhere (Carroll, 2001, p511. Weiss, 1996, p351), there was a deferential demeanour towards state authority amongst Catholics. For Germany, this was the legacy of a marked and sustained anti-Catholic stance arising from the prevailing earlier memory held by the German Catholic Church of the *Kulturkampf* struggle inaugurated by Otto von Bismarck (1871-1878). This struggle marked an attempt by Bismarck, as the prime-minister of the then state of Prussia, to rein in what was perceived to be the strong influence of the Catholic Church. This memory of this conflict and a new order in Germany came to engender a desire within the German Catholic Church that it should be accepted as being comprised of good German citizens. In this, the calling to mind of St. Paul’s letter to the Romans gives some insight into where the Church wanted to be: -

Everyone is to obey the governing authorities, because there is no authority except from God and so whatever authorities exist have been appointed by God. So, anyone who disobeys an authority is rebelling against God's ordinance and rebels must expect the condemnation they deserve. (Romans 13:1-2 NJB, or similarly see 1 Timothy 2:1-8)

This theme also occurs in the pseudo-Pauline Epistle to Titus (3:2). This reference encapsulates to some degree, a form of scriptural basis for the German Church and its ensuing relationship with its National Socialist government. The new government soon manifested fervent opposition to Bolshevism, perceived by the Nazis as a virulent enemy of Aryan civilization and an enemy created by the Jews themselves. (Friedlander, 1997; p97). Although Catholics may not have thought in such terms, the Church's fear of atheistic Bolshevism was no less real than that of National Socialism's. The fact is that paradoxically, Nazi ideology viewed the Bolshevik menace as a '*creation*' of Judaism, along with the equally threatening Jewish '*creation*' of unfettered world capitalism. Additionally, Nazism and the German Catholic Church both abhorred the fruits of the Enlightenment together with other such notions as parliamentary democracy, liberalism and

modernism. Both National Socialism and the conservative mind-set of Catholicism looked towards what were considered the virtues of the strong, central and essentially authoritarian state. So, in a sense it became the case that to some extent the German Church and Catholics *per-se* wanted to be seen and recognised as supporters of a new, confident and aspiring Germany.

The continual propagation of the ideology of '*blood and soil*' by the Third Reich was not an allusion that was lost on one senior Catholic cleric. Bishop Clemens August von Galen (1878-1946), the Catholic bishop of Munster (1933-1946), declared that in speaking of himself as being a true German: -

If anyone stands up and asserts that German blood speaks in him, I stand up here and assert the same myself. (Griech-Polelle, 2002, p55)⁴⁵

With the passing of time, the majority of the leaders of the German Catholic Church being silent or ambivalent with regard to the developing racial ideology driving the mistreatment of Jews by the Third Reich is arguably something that caused confusion in the minds of ordinary Catholics. As Hans Kung observed: -

⁴⁵ On October 9, 2005, he was beatified by the church, largely because of his role in opposing the T4 Programme. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Blessed-Clemens-August-Graf-von-Galen>. Accessed 14th December 2018. His beatification is not examined in this thesis.

[W]hat would have happened if the German episcopate had warned against the manifestly antisemitic programme of the Nazis, instead of capitulating to National Socialism after Hitler's declaration of the 23rd March 1933 to the dismay of many Catholics? What if they had protested publicly in the face of the acts of terror and violence ...' (Kung, 1991, p242. Phayer, 2000, pp67/81)

It may be asked: What explanation is there supporting the differentiation of failings on the one hand between, '*sons and daughters*', and those of the Church as a whole on the other hand? Cardinal Cassidy (2005) addresses this, citing John Paul II as expressing a particular perspective and argues that the distinction between the Church and her members, that is, those who comprise it, is germane to *WR* as a whole. Cassidy readily admits there are those who do not understand this distinction. He explains that the Church is not synonymous with those who belong to it at any-one time in its history. The theological perspective is that the Church is the bride of Christ, complete whole, entire, perfect and sinless. The Church's doctrine does not speak of the Church as being in anyway sinful, despite the patent reality that the members who as individuals make up the Church are sinful. A similar point was

made by Avery Dulles (in Boadt, 2001, p86). Indeed, it may well be the case that Cassidy was following Dulles in his analysis.⁴⁶

The sense of differentiating the '*sons and the daughters*' of the Church from that which is the Church itself and arguing that it was individual human beings who happened to be Catholics who were at fault and sinful by either act or omission and not the Church itself remains a difficult, sensitive and controversial issue. There is another possible point of view hinted at by Didier Pollefeyt. (in Patterson & Roth, 2004, pp55/68) His essay revolves around the concept of forgiveness and examines this topic from various perspectives. In his section entitled, 'Intergenerational Bonds of Loyalty'; (2002, pp65/66), he explains that he writes as a post-Shoah Catholic, born after 1945; so presumably, can bear no responsibility by act or omission for what happened during the Holocaust. This, he explains, is essentially the view of his Jewish friends, but Pollefeyt is clearly uneasy with this. His reservation is explained in this way as he refers to conversations with his Jewish friends: -

Sometimes my Jewish friends ... say that I am not guilty
of the Holocaust because I was born after World War II ...

⁴⁶ A more detailed explanation of what the Church is, in the context of *WR* and as the '*ideal*', is explored by Sullivan (in Hayes & Gearon, 2004, p316/334); Henri de Lubac (1986) and Avery Dulles (1987).

This assurance is generous of them, but it seems akin to saying, "You are a Jew born after the Shoah, and so you have nothing to do with the Jewish victims of the Holocaust and their sufferings".

This is a challenging point of view and one beyond the scope of this thesis, but he uses this statement as a vehicle for what he says next (2002, p66): -

[A]s a loyal Catholic, I participate in a Church community which bears as an institution and a community some degree of guilt for what happened in the Holocaust. It is not abnormal that the victims of this history (and their descendants) see the descendants of the perpetrators as the representatives of that past. In the same way, Christians today participate in the guilt of the Church vis-a-vis the Jewish people. ... As a Christian I always have to remember that my identity has been built on centuries of supersession ... I can never disconnect myself from this history, just I cannot ask a contemporary Jew to disconnect himself or herself from the collective and intergenerational pain of the Holocaust. As he or she suffers when confronted with the catastrophe that struck the Jewish people during the Holocaust.

There could be a view that Pollefeyt is expressing a form of collective guilt and perhaps infers that all Catholics are antisemites as a 'mirror-image' form of saying that all Jews are complicit in deicide. This is a difficult point, which is impossible to rationalise. Pollefeyt is seemingly saying that the Church is a trans-historical community made up of individual people. The Church as a community has always in a sense been the sum of its parts, a point made by St. Paul when he says that: -

For as the human body, which is a unity though it has many parts – all the parts of the body, though many, make up one single body. (I Cor, 12:12, NJB)

This Pauline theme of individuals making up the one body which is the Church, where Christ is its head, is also reflected in Romans 12: 4-5 and Ephesians 4:7 and so essentially this is an important Pauline theme. If the Church can quote in the context of itself in *Nostra Aetate* (Note 4 para.4) the Pauline theme of the wild olive branch (Romans 11:24), surely it must explore the Pauline themes of many parts making up one body. If the Church sees itself as a sacrament (de Lubac, 1986; p203/235), then should it not also see itself as trans-historical? This is again another debate beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the point remains that *WR's* statement which separates the '*sons and daughters*' of the Church

from that which is the Church itself needs to be either more clearly explained or more carefully examined.

Part V of *WR* entitled 'Looking together to a common future' examines how Catholics should respond to Judaism by examining its own roots growing from within the Jewish religious faith. It readily acknowledges that as the end of the twentieth century approached the Church expressed: -

Her deep sorrow for the failures of her son and daughters in every age. This is an act of repentance (teshuvah), since, as members of the Church, we are linked to the sins as well as the merits of all her children. (Boadt, 2001, p20)

The theme of sorrow in this final section is evident, clear and certainly it would be churlish to consider it as anything other than sincere. As a teaching document of the Church it explicitly states that any idea of antisemitism within the Church today is totally irreconcilable with its teaching. As a document, its status is such that no Catholic can promote or maintain at any future time a revisionist position of Holocaust denial. As a document it could also be seen as a rebuttal to any non-Catholic revisionist seeking to

deny the Holocaust. A point made clearly by Judith Banki (Cassidy, 2005): -

We Remember: ... stands [as] a clear rebuttal to an entire industry of Holocaust denial and revision. To some 800 million Catholic faithful and to the world at large, the Catholic Church has said "it happened."

WR is a teaching document of the Church, but it is a flawed document in the sense that, on reflection, it makes a number of bold but unsupported assertions and at points uses unsound examples to support its case. It is a document that in reality is best accepted as sincere and honest, but at the same time better understood in relation to its weaknesses rather than its strengths.

WR remains important because it is the first⁴⁷ document that directly expresses the Church's self-understanding in its relationship to the Holocaust. Like other documents referred to in this thesis, it is definitively one of the fruits of *NA* (Note 4). Although it does not enjoy the irrevocable status of its parent document, it is nevertheless important. *WR* was a document addressed to Catholics worldwide, but it would be foolish to think otherwise than that the non-Catholic world would also read it. The

⁴⁷ To date it is the only comprehensive document addressing the Holocaust.

expectations of the non-Catholic world were arguably unrealistic and therefore disappointed in that it failed to address much of what may have otherwise been hoped for, particularly amongst Jewish readers and certainly it contains no apology, if that was what was being hoped for. There's no escaping the fact the document is flawed in several ways. It has been noted how, for example, there is no real substance in *WR's* engagement with what some perceive as the Church's ancient anti-Judaism and in what way, if any this contributed to the emergence of what became the Nazi programme of elimination of the Jews in the Second World War. In this lack of engagement there is also a measure of insensitivity towards the depiction of Judaism, as well as not explicitly and realistically noting the actual number of Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Equally, it does not address the failures of the '*sons and daughters*' of the Church, differentiating itself as it does from the actions of errant individuals. In fact, *WR* only briefly touches upon the failures of '*the sons and daughters*', seemingly resisting suggestions that the Church as an institution was at fault. The choice of characters cited from the German Church at the time of Nazi ascendancy is dubious or careless. Both Cardinals Faulhaber's and Bertram's histories from this time are complex, but as leaders of the German Church, they must have been aware of the German Church's

cooperativeness in releasing information to the government. For example, the demand for records of births, baptisms and marriages, even only for individuals to prove their Aryan antecedents, for example in terms of their 'fitness' to marry. The release of information from Church records helped to identify those Jews who had converted to Christianity, thus making it impossible or at least very difficult for a Jew to conceal their family origin. (Black, 2009, pp103/4, p113, pp155/6) As an adjunct to this: -

Later, when baptized Jews along with other Jews were marked with a star, Adolf Cardinal Bertram of Breslau agonized over separate services for baptized Jews.

(Hilberg, 1993, p261)

How could it be that a 'prince of the Church' could even think in this way?

The controversy surrounding the reputation of Pius XII during the wartime period is well known. So, surprisingly the only mention of Pius XII is a mere footnote. Failings aside, there is one major positive and important element in respect to *WR* and it is simply this. The histories of the Second World War and the Holocaust are so numerous that there is little point in trying to count them. However, there has emerged a genre of historical revision which in effect denies the Holocaust. One of the prominent figures of

Holocaust deniers is David Irving, who brought a civil action for libel against Deborah Lipstadt and Penguin Books who successfully defended the civil case in the English courts. (Busfield, 2000). Irving is not alone; there are other examples of Holocaust denial such as; Peter Winter's *The Six Million, Fact of Fiction*, Benton L Bradbury's, *The Myth of German Villainy* and Carlo Mattogno's *The Myth of the Extermination of the Jews*.⁴⁸ The point here is that no matter what Holocaust deniers may say, no matter how they may attempt to re-write history, it remains the case that in *WR*, the Church definitely says that the Holocaust *did* happen.

Twenty-one years have elapsed since the publication of *WR*. As noted earlier, *Nostra Aetate* (Note 4) enjoyed a significant and lengthy restatement in 2015, so the door is always open for the Church to re-examine *WR*. With developing scholarship there is opportunity for the Church to consider a future document about its relationship to and understanding of itself in the context of the Holocaust.

It now remains to examine another way in which the Church acts. The last two chapters have examined the act of producing

⁴⁸ There are numerous internet published surveys which indicate varying and significant levels of both worldwide Holocaust denial and antisemitism.

documents and the importance of *Nostra Aetate* and *We Remember* in understanding the Church in the context of its relationship to Judaism and the Holocaust, it now remains to look at another and unusual way that the Church makes statements of what it believes about itself.

III

An Analysis of Controversies Stemming from Causes for Canonisations of Persons from the Period of the Holocaust.

Following the earlier observation on the importance and necessity of documents and their various levels of importance promulgated by the Church, it was noted that documents are of great importance, because documents 'reveal' the mind or disposition of the Church in relation to particular subjects. Yet there is another arguably more profound way in which the mind of the Church can be discerned. Within Catholicism, although not exclusive to it, there is the powerful significance of 'examples' as a means of deepening, promoting, explaining and experiencing the mysteries of the faith and this is the veneration of saints. This chapter will examine two causes for canonisation arising between 1933 and 1945. These two causes⁴⁹ of victims of the Third Reich are figures whose cults have attained a significant measure of worldwide recognition, but equally both proved highly controversial. They are Raymond Kolbe (8th January 1894–14th August 1941), now known as St. Maximilian⁵⁰ Mary Kolbe and secondly, Edith Stein (12th October 1891–7th August 1942) now known as St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. It is

⁴⁹ A 'cause' is a term used to describe the process employed of promoting a candidate for canonisation.

⁵⁰ Alternatively known as 'Maksymilian', but the more usual spelling of Maximilian is used here.

critically important to emphasize at the outset of this chapter there is no intention or desire in any way to denigrate the characters of these two people whose lives and deaths will be reflected upon. Nor is there any suggestion whatever that they should not be 'saints'. Rather the intention is to examine their canonizations and the surrounding controversies and for what they reveal about how the Church sees itself in the context of the Holocaust. Before reflecting on these lives, it is helpful to briefly sketch out the process of being 'made a saint', which is not always a very quick one.

In the Church's recent history, the remembrance of past holy men and women has become increasingly significant. The late Pope (now Saint) John Paul II in his pontificate of twenty-seven years canonized four hundred and eighty-two men and women. (Vatican News. Canonisations. 1982). Pope St John Paul II's own canonization was on 27th April 2014, (together with Pope John XXIII) only nine years after his death; his probably being the fastest canonisation processes in the modern era. (Tablet Magazine, 7th May 2018). To this number there can be added 1,341 candidates who reached the stage of beatification attributable to his pontificate. (Felak, 2014, p555)

The Church's veneration of saint's springs from a belief in the Church as a communion that unites all her members together with and through the redeeming Person of Jesus Christ and in the cultic veneration of the saints the Church celebrates in a particular way the redemption won by Christ. So, the Church on earth draws upon the examples of the saints as models for the faithful to emulate by following their example. It is overall a theological concept that sees the Church transcending death and the present world as well as time. In the doctrine of the Communion of Saints, the faithful are united in this world and in the world to come and through prayer, the faithful in this world can invoke the intercession of the saints in the heavenly world. The 1994 Catechism of the Catholic Church explains this doctrine in the following way: -

We believe in the communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are being purified and the blessed in heaven, all together forming one Church; and we believe that in this communion, the merciful love of God and his saints is always (attentive) to our prayers. (CCC, 1994, pp218/220)

It is a more difficult matter to explain the means by which saints are 'made' or 'created'.⁵¹ Canonisation is the posthumous process by which someone whose life is recognised at a 'local level' as one of outstanding holiness and is in due course elevated to a position where their memory can be publicly venerated by the faithful. In the earliest history of the Church it was almost always the martyrs who by their death witnessed their faith for and in the Person of Jesus Christ. The cult of persons who were venerated was essentially enacted through a process that was both locally based and informal in nature. Leaving aside the status of the first apostles, examples of early saints of the Church include those whose names are invoked in the Roman Canon, to name two, Saint Agatha (circa 231-251) and Saint Lucy (circa 283-304), little if anything is known of their lives or the nature of their deaths, except for the tradition that they died as martyrs.⁵² Despite scant historical knowledge of the lives of many of the Church's earliest saints it is still by early tradition they are recognised as canonised. With the ascendancy of Christianity, martyrdom became a less frequent occurrence and it became the norm for those whose lives were heroically exemplary in holiness to be recognised as

⁵¹ The Church's directives established in the pontificate of John Paul II are extensive and the 26,549-word directive is available, see *Process of Canonisation*. Congregation for the Causes of Saints. 2008).

⁵² For an 'in depth' examination of the phenomenon of martyrdom in the early Church, see Moss, 2013.

candidates for canonisation. It was not necessarily the manner of their deaths that was always the issue, although it could be, but the outstanding holiness of their lives that was of importance. Eventually over several centuries a more formalised process developed that recognized the life of those whose exemplary holiness in this world was worthy of veneration. Although within the first centuries of the Church's history, final approval of a candidate being raised to the altars always subsisted in the Roman pontiff, today, the process is governed by the Code of Canon Law, of which canon 1403 makes special reference in respect to the provisions of special pontifical law. The earliest modern requirements of defining holiness integral to the process of canonization are founded on the precepts established by Pope Benedict XIV (papacy 1740-1758). Causes to initially promote a deceased member of the faithful recognised as being either a martyr or of living a heroically outstanding life of holiness always tends to subsist with the 'local' Church.

Once it is the case that within a 'local Church' that a deceased member is recognized as worthy of veneration, then they become the subject of what amounts to a form of judicial enquiry. There are three stages. Once a cause is instigated, a subject is described

as being venerable. This merely marks out a case considered worthy of investigation and in no sense implies that honour can be directed in any publicly devotional way. The second stage is that of beatification followed by the final stage of canonisation. A person beatified can be publicly venerated in their own country, but not throughout the universal Church, a canonised saint can be venerated universally. A brief example of this process aids understanding of how the norms for canonisation occur in the present time.

The Englishman, John Henry Newman (1801–1890), originally an Anglican clergyman, a member of the Oxford Movement and a person of towering intellect and literary accomplishment converted to Catholicism in 1845 and later established the Birmingham Oratory. Created Archbishop of Westminster in 1879, until his death he was noted for his holiness of life and scholarship. Newman was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI in Cofton Park, Birmingham on 19th September 2010. Compared with other causes Newman's point of beatification was quite short. His cause was introduced in 1958, following the Norms to be Observed in Enquiries made by Bishops in the Causes of Saints. Newman was declared venerable by the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of

Saints in 1991. Just thirty-three years separated his cause being initiated and being declared 'venerable'. Only another nineteen years passed before he was declared blessed.⁵³ For a candidate's beatification there is an exacting examination of their entire known writings as well as the examination to support the claims of holiness of life. In addition, there has to be a proven miracle, invariably one of some form of physical healing. In Newman's case it was the healing of Deacon Jack Sullivan from severe back-pain caused by a spinal-cord disorder and who lived in Massachusetts, USA, which was adjudged as the qualifying miracle which occurred as a result of Newman's heavenly intercession. (Pope Benedict XVI in the United Kingdom).

This brief account serves to explain what a long and protracted examination of the entire circumstances of the life of a candidate for canonization can be. In Newman's case there still has to be a further proven miracle before he can finally be declared a 'fully fledged' saint in the Church's calendar. It may only be a matter of years; it could be a century or two, or never⁵⁴. In the end, within Catholic theology it is not the Church that 'makes the saint', it is

⁵³ That is, he was 'beatified'.

⁵⁴ A second miracle has been attested and attributable to Newman's intercession. So, it may now be possible for his canonisation to proceed. (Hallet, 2018)

God. The Church's formulae of beatification and ultimately, canonisation is one of discerning and declaring that it is permissible for the faithful to venerate the memory and seek the intercession of a person who has been declared suitable for veneration.

An important question is: - What sort of saints does the Church get? This strange question is a matter of some relevance. Pope Francis I (b 17:12:1936) whose pontificate commenced on the 13th March 2013 has carried out several canonisations in his papacy. Key elements of his pontificate, at least until the present time has been the ideas or theological concepts of mercy, forgiveness and evangelisation; all concepts that have been expressed in some way in his apostolic exhortation, published in the year of his consecration as pope, namely, *Evangelii Gaudium*.⁵⁵ In essence causes which accord most closely to the aspirations of how the Church (and the pontiff) wishes to present itself to the world at any particular time are those causes most likely to be successful. This theme is presented by Henderson in his reviewing of canonisations by Pope Francis I (2015, pp 62/67). Of six causes reviewed, the most historically recent was Junipero Serra, a native of Mallorca who became a missionary to the New World. He was

⁵⁵ 'Joy of the Gospel'.

born in 1730 and died in 1784. Beatified in 1988, his canonisation took place on the 23rd September 2015. The historically earliest of those recently canonised by Pope Francis I and whose life and work is illustrative of this pope's aspirations was a French priest, Peter Faber born in 1506 and became a Jesuit priest and a notably devoted educator during what became known as the Counter-Reformation who died in 1546. None of these lives could be described as recent, but these examples serve to illustrate Henderson's claim that a successful promotion of a cause is often one which reflects the contemporary mind or mission of the Church at a particular time.

A further significant aspect of the process of canonisations is financial. Canonisations are not cheap and involve significant expenditure, so the promotion of a cause must be supported by sufficient resources. Although little public attention is paid to the financial aspect of canonisations, it was reported that to promote a cause to the point of beatification will cost about 50,000 Euros, with the possibility of further charges amounting to as much as 15,000 Euros. And to promote a cause to canonisation may well bring the overall cost to something in the order of 750,000 Euros, (*Daily Telegraph*, 5th November 2015 p22 author not attributed).

An obvious consequence of this is that currently, only well-funded causes are likely to progress to sainthood. This outline of both what the Communion of Saints is and the outline of the procedure for the creation of a saint in this present age underscores the importance of the subject and leads on to the examination of the two particular cases of Kolbe and Stein both of which shed light on how the Church understands itself in the context of the Holocaust.

The first of the two lives is Raymond Kolbe, a native of Poland and better known to the world by his religious name of St. Maksymilian Mary Kolbe⁵⁶. Kolbe was a priest of the order of Friars Minor (OFM Conv.), an order based upon the Rule of St. Francis of Assisi. The narrative of Kolbe's life is quite well known as are the circumstances of his death; however, a brief narrative outline of his life is important because it helps to place the manner of his death in a particular context. The best place to start is his death and the immediate antecedent events that led to it, rather than his earlier life; although his early life is a critically important element in appreciating the manner of his death.

⁵⁶ Kolbe is also known by the alternative English spelling of his name as Maximilian; the spelling which will be used here.

Germany's invasion of Poland on the 1st September 1939 was the means to achieve Hitler's aim of creating new living space (*Lebensraum*) for the expansion of the German population. Poland was a predominately Catholic country and one issue for the Reich was that it would have to eradicate the influence of the Church. (Snyder, 2015, pp103-107) To achieve this objective, the Nazis targeted amongst others, Catholic clergy as potential catalysts for opposition to the Third Reich, as well as others, such as members of the military, politicians, doctors, lawyers and members of the intelligentsia. (Phayer, 2000, pp21/30). The level of persecution was such that: -

The atrocities to which Polish Catholics were subjected led to an outcry for papal intercession. (Phayer, 2000, p22)

Yet, as Phayer also observes (2000, p30), no protest ever came from Rome in regard to the plight of the Church in Poland. This brief reference to repression in Poland, which is an extensive subject in itself, sets the context of what was to unfold as the backdrop to Kolbe's later life and death.⁵⁷

A biographer of Kolbe claims that he anticipated the probable invasion of Poland and as the leader of a Franciscan community,

⁵⁷ For a further examination of this issue, see also Robert Modras' work 1994.

made efforts to prepare his brethren for what was to come. In fact, one biographer attributed to Kolbe an almost 'prophetic insight' (Dewar, 1982, p80) into the likelihood of Germany's war against Poland and his own death, given that he allegedly predicted: -

I think ... [it] ... will be my lot shortly. I'd like to die in a knightly manner ... Christ himself said, 'Greater love hath no man than this that he lay down his life for his friends'.

Kolbe firmly believed in the importance of printed media and to his order's ministry that embraced the publishing of religious periodicals at the friary of Niepokalanow, this activity continuing after the German occupation of Poland. Another biographer maintains that one of Kolbe's activities at this time was the sheltering some three-thousand refugees at Poznan, of whom about fifteen hundred were Jews. (Stone, 1997). In due course Kolbe was arrested on the 17th February 1941 and the Friary closed down. Kolbe had been arrested previously and briefly imprisoned, but this second arrest was to be the one that led to his death. Interned in Pawiak prison, Warsaw he was transferred to Auschwitz in May 1941. That Kolbe suffered severe mistreatment and privation in his two incarcerations cannot be doubted and as someone described as being in poor health and never robust throughout his life, his sufferings would understandably have been

all the more severe. At the time Kolbe was incarcerated in Auschwitz, it has to be borne in mind that it had not yet become a death camp, but was rather a concentration camp established in a former Polish Army barracks that the Germans utilized for incarcerating of their prisoners; the greatest number of prisoners at this time being gentile Poles. Auschwitz II, otherwise known as Birkenau and where the process of the mass-murdering of Jewish people would be carried out, was yet to be constructed. Many prisoners in Auschwitz I at this time were people that the occupiers deemed to be criminal, subversive or in some way a threat to the new orders, as well as Polish military prisoners of war. (Rees, 2004, p27)⁵⁸

The camp's policy in 1941 for dealing with escapees was to mete out reprisal punishments to the remaining prisoners as a means of enforcing a sense of collective responsibility; selecting hostages and holding them in starvation conditions until such time as the escapees were recaptured⁵⁹. During a roll call in July/August following an escape, ten prisoners from the escapees' block were selected as hostages for incarcerating in the cells of block 11 until such time as the escapees' recapture. During this selection Kolbe

⁵⁸ Auschwitz will be discussed in more detail in chapter IV.

⁵⁹ For a fuller account of this process, see Gutman and Berenbaum (1994, pp503-531).

volunteered to take the place of a hostage and after two-weeks of severe privation, Kolbe was finally murdered by the administration of a lethal injection of phenol. (Memorial and Museum, Auschwitz-Birkenau and Woodward, 1996, p144). The prisoner whom Kolbe substituted himself for was Franciszek Gajowniczek (1901–1995), a Polish army sergeant prisoner-of-war captured after the fall of the Modlin Fortress. (Lucas, 2014, pp188/189). According to a contemporary imprisoned in Auschwitz at that time, the Polish resistance leader Witold Pilecki stated that (2012, p127): -

The heroic priest went to his death and the other inmate returned to the ranks. This is the famous case of Father Maksymilian Kolbe, who took the place of Franciszek Gajowniczek, who had a family.

Captain Witold Pilecki survived the war. He had allowed himself to be captured by the SS in 1940 in order to evaluate what was happening in Auschwitz I and to co-ordinate Polish resistance groups. He was designated as Auschwitz Prisoner No. 4859. Escaping in 1943, in order to report back to his superiors in the Polish Home Army, he later fought in the Warsaw Uprising (1944), was captured again and imprisoned in Germany until the end of the Second World War. (Klimova. 2015). Sergeant Gajowniczek also survived the war. It would be natural to think that Gajowniczek

would be a marked man insofar as the camp authorities were concerned. Certainly Dewar (1982, p120) asserts this to be the case observing that: -

The SS harried him after Kolbe's sacrifice for they felt cheated by Gajowniczek continuing to live. His number had been written down but it seemed he had swindled the system.

It seems unlikely in such an environment that anyone could escape murder by the SS, if that is what the SS wanted. A more prosaically different account makes the case that: -

Afterwards the camp authorities more or less left Gajowniczek alone. (Pilecki, 2012, p127)

Given Pilecki's situation and the measured tone of the reports on Auschwitz he wrote for his superiors, his view is more likely to an accurate one. Although the story of Kolbe is a much publicised one, in Jeremy Kowalski's brief (undated) biography of Captain Pilecki, there is no mention of Kolbe despite the number of references Kowalski makes to his subject's time in Auschwitz. The account of the death of Kolbe as an act of personal self-sacrifice was and remains a compelling narrative of selfless heroism, which is solemnly commemorated annually at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. Equally, the life that he led until his death is one that was

an example of compelling holiness, enacted essentially through seeking the good of others above himself. His detractors may well point out that just as the Third Reich was antisemitic, so was Kolbe (Cargas H [Ed], 1994, pi) Nevertheless, it has to be clearly stated that there is no evidence at all to suggest that any sentiments of antisemitism Kolbe may have held were in any way eliminatory and murderous.

There is a further dimension to Kolbe's story that should not be overlooked. Kolbe was born and raised in a very culturally Polish and religiously Catholic environment within both his own family, his wider community and the nation in which he lived. A Catholicism which retained what can only be succinctly put as a belief in the divine or supernatural impinging on the earthly world. For example, Marian apparitions are a feature of Catholic religious history and life. One of the most famous of these was the series of apparitions at Lourdes, France, commencing on the 11th February 1858. Another example is the single apparition at Knock, in Co. Mayo, Ireland on the 21st August 1879. (Knock Museum Collection).⁶⁰ Poland had and still has a strong Marian tradition, a famous example being the pilgrimages to venerate 'Our Lady of

⁶⁰ Both Lourdes and Knock are places well known to the writer of this thesis.

Czestochowa'. The devotion of Poland's Catholics to this shrine is difficult to overstate and the actual image (or icon) of 'Our Lady of Czestochowa' is a significant element of Polish Catholicism, described as: -

The most famous and the most venerated holy image in Poland ... the image is a kind of cultural icon, instantly recognisable. (Niedzwiedz, 2010, p1)

It is not surprising to note that a personal devotion to the 'Mother of Christ' was a compelling element in the early life of Kolbe and this devotion remained a fundamentally steadfast feature of his whole life.

The young Raymond Kolbe is reported to have been a boisterous child according to one biographer (Stone, 1997). A point was reached in the twelve-year old boy's life when suddenly he became better behaved and clearly pious, to the consternation of his mother, who noted his sudden change in demeanour. It was at this point in his early life that he admitted that whilst in prayer before an image of 'Our Lady of Czestochowa' he received a personal vision of the 'Mother of Christ'. His biographer (Dewar, 1982, p17/18) describes this event: -

He went to pray before the altar of the Virgin Mary in the parish church and asked the Holy Mother to tell him what kind of man he would become. At once Mary appeared before him, holding two crowns, one white, and the other red. She told him the white crown was for purity, the red for martyrdom. With love in her face she looked at him and asked which he would choose. 'I will take both', he said. Mary gazed at him as tenderly as any mother and disappeared.

Similarly, another biographer (a member of the religious order which Kolbe joined) explains the event in similar language. (Smith, 1951) This book is interesting in that the present title uses the term 'saint' for Maximillian Kolbe, but the original publication predates Kolbe's canonization. It is also a biography that predates others and may have been the source of later authors' works. A more objectively scholarly essay (Komaryczko, 1998, pp46/65) strongly corroborates the powerful religious and cultural influences on the young Kolbe, but makes no reference to the supernatural Marian vision that others referred to. A supernatural occurrence is impossible to prove (or disprove) in the ordinary course of events, but it matters not if anyone does believe it or not; the young Kolbe certainly did and the experience remained with him throughout his

life, underpinning it until the time of his death. When speaking of the Mother of Christ, he almost always used the term 'the Immaculate' one. In all probability, this term referred to the ancient Catholic (and Orthodox) belief that at her conception Mary the Mother of Christ was preserved from the effects of original sin, a belief dogmatically proclaimed by Pope Pius IX (1792–1878) in 1854; forty-years before the birth of Kolbe and which accorded the Mother of Christ, the title of the Immaculate Conception. (CCC 490) The measure of Kolbe's early adolescent conversion experience and its aftermath can be gauged from Kolbe's own writings. His own work (Kolbe, 2013), little known in English, is a comprehensive reflection of the measure and depth of his Marian devotion where he explains: -

Our dependence on Mary is greater than we can imagine.
We receive all graces, absolutely all of them, from God
through the Immaculate, who is our universal mediatrix⁶¹
with Jesus.

It may be that his Marian theology is open to discussion or clarification, but from his own work there is no escaping the fact that his early life experience was formative for all his subsequent actions and it is difficult, if not impossible to understate this point.

⁶¹ The title ascribed to Mary as, 'Mediatix of all Graces' is a controversial one.

Following Kolbe's ordination to the priesthood his life remained eventful, but it is important to note that he achieved a number of things including the promotion of Catholic Christianity through the printed medium of newspapers and periodicals. Feeling called to do so, Kolbe left Europe on the 26th February 1930 travelling to Japan with four companions and there established a community near Nagasaki. Overall, Kolbe's religious conviction and drive was such that amongst other things, he co-founded the Mission of the Immaculata, an international Catholic organisation promoting Catholic Christianity in the context of patronage and protection of the Immaculate Conception. (Militia of the Immaculata). It is now necessary to leave Kolbe to consider another personage, before returning to him again.

Of the countless number of fascinating, even outstandingly extraordinary lives that have ever been lived, the second person named above and reflected on in this thesis is Edith Stein, now known as St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. Although elements of her extraordinary life must be reflected upon; like Kolbe, it is in the first instance, the circumstances of her death that must first be examined. Edith Stein died in a gas chamber on or about the 7th August 1942 at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Although the precise date or

time of Stein's death may not be known, the antecedent events leading to her death are reasonably well chronicled. Stein and her sister Rosa (also a convert to Catholicism), were arrested by the Gestapo about 5:00 pm on Sunday 2nd August 1942 at the Carmel in Echt, in the Netherlands. They were initially transported to Amersfoort and then Westerbork, these being transit camps from which prisoners were later transported, for example, to Auschwitz-Birkenau. In the case of Stein and her sister they were murdered at Auschwitz-Birkenau in all probability on the day and probably within hours of their arrival. Why was Edith Stein arrested then subsequently murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau? The reason for this appears to be simple, but as Paul Hamans, one of many writers on Stein explains, it is not quite as simple as it seems. (2010, pp58/87) A brief outline of her life will demonstrate the nature of the circumstances of her death.

Stein was born on the 12th October 1891 in Breslau which in 1891 was part of Germany. Her father was Siegfried Stein and her mother was Auguste Stein (nee Courant), Edith was one of eleven children born to Siegfried and Auguste; four of whom died before

they were four years of age. (Hamans, 2010, p58)⁶² Stein was born into a large observant Jewish family, so by birth and upbringing she was definitively Jewish. In her unfinished autobiography (Stein, 1986, p23) she hints in an almost veiled but prophetic way at the fate that would befall her and by implication, millions of others: -

Recent months have catapulted the German Jews out of the peaceful existence they had come to take for granted. They have been forced to reflect upon themselves, upon their being and upon their destiny.

The event to which Stein alluded was Adolf Hitler's appointment as German Chancellor on the 30th January 1933.

By the age of fourteen or fifteen Edith had reached a point where she had abandoned religious observance, as she says of herself, when she was then living with members of her extended family in Hamburg: -

Deliberately and consciously, I gave up praying here. I took no thought of my future, although I continued to live with the conviction that I was destined for something great. (Stein, 1986, p148)

⁶² After the redrawing of national boundaries at the end of the Second World War, Breslau became part of Poland and was renamed Wroclaw.

Subsequent to this and as her life unfolded Stein began her search for the meaning of Christianity and in 1922 was received into the Catholic Church. Deeply influenced by the writings of St. Teresa of Avila among others, Stein embraced the religious life, entering the Carmel in Cologne in 1933 and making her final vows a member of the Order of Carmelites Discalced⁶³ in 1938. (Murray, 2015, pp145/150) Despite Stein's embrace of Catholicism, Nazi racial dogma still considered her a Jew and as such the infamous Kristallnacht pogrom against the German Jewish communities on the 9th and the 10th November 1938. (Gilbert, 2006, pp24-41), was the singular event that persuaded both Stein and the Cologne Carmelite community that it would be better and safer for her to leave Germany. On the night of 31st December 1938, a Dr. Paul Strerath, a supporter and friend of the community drove Edith and Rosa to the Carmelite community in Echt, in the Netherlands, a place which for the time being at least was relatively safe. (Cavnar, 2002, p133)

Following the invasion of Holland by the Germany on the 14th May 1940 and the subsequent establishment of German rule, the Catholic Episcopal Conference of the Netherlands viewed with

⁶³ Discalced. Barefoot or sandal wearing.

increasing alarm the inhumane treatment of Jews by the occupying power and on 11th July 1942, in concert with other Christian churches in the Netherlands, sent the following telegram to the occupying power. It was in essence a brief declaration which stated that: -

The undersigned Dutch churches, already deeply shocked by the actions taken against the Jews in the Netherlands that have excluded them from participating in the normal life of society have learned with horror of the new measures by which men, women, children, and whole families will be deported to the German territories and its dependencies. The suffering that this measure will bring upon tens of thousands of people, the knowledge that the measures are contrary to the deepest moral consciousness of the Dutch people, and, above all, the hostility of these measures against divine norms of justice and mercy urge the churches to direct to you the urgent petition not to execute these measures. Our urgent petition to you is also motivated by the consideration that, for the Christian Jews, these measures would make it impossible for them to participate in the life of the Church. (Kohler, 1998, pp154/155)

Despite the statement made on behalf of the Jewish people, principle concern was for Jews who had converted to Christianity. A result of this statement was that an assurance was given to the effect that Christian Jews would not be deported if they had belonged to one of the Christian churches before January 1941. (Hamans, 2010, pp19/20). This assurance gravely concerned the Catholic Church in the Netherlands and it was on the 26th July 1941 that the Catholic Bishops' letter was read out from the all the pulpits in the Catholic churches of the Netherlands. (Cavnar, 2002, p143). The occupying power was to say the least, enraged, for as Harster⁶⁴ wrote: -

Because the Catholic bishops have meddled in this affair (the Jewish persecution) in which they were not involved, all Catholic Jews will be deported. (cited in Hamans, 2010, p23)

At Harster's trial in 1967, he declared that the reason for the deaths of the Catholic-Jews was motivated by the anger directed at the Catholic bishops. This was at least in part because the bishops had not confined themselves and their concern just for Catholic Jews, but that as Hamans points out (2010, p24): -

⁶⁴ Wilhelm Harster (1904-1991) was a German SS and SD officer based in the Netherlands during the German occupation. He was captured by the British in 1945. (Bartrop P and Dickerman M (Eds) (2017) *The Holocaust: An Encyclopaedia and Document Collection. Vol 1. A-K*. ABC-Clio LLC. Santa Barbara, California.

The bishops had, after all, spoken about the Jews instead of Catholic Jews.

As a result of the retaliatory action taken by the occupying power one week later, Stein, her sister Rosa, together with many others who were Catholic Jews were arrested and interned in the Netherlands and prior to their final journey to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Raymond Kolbe to give him his birth name and Edith Stein are now known to the world respectively as St. Maximilian Mary Kolbe and St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. There is in some ways a certain commonality to both of them despite the fact that their backgrounds were so very different. Both died at the hands of the Third Reich during the Second World War, both died in fairly close proximity to each other (but not at the same time) in Auschwitz and Auschwitz-Birkenau, now in western Poland, but at the time a region absorbed into the Greater Reich. Most significantly for the purposes of this enquiry, both are now venerated as martyr-saints within the world-wide Church. It is the manner of their deaths more than their lives that are of interest in the context of this thesis.

To ask the question: 'What is a martyr?' seems easy enough and the answer would seem to be equally straight forward until the point is reached where some agreed definition may have to be worked out. Then, it becomes a difficult term to address. As it has been observed:-

In its various forms of common usage, martyrdom is a slippery term that is hard to define ... because ... there are many different forms of martyrdom, emerging out of a range of historical, political and religious settings.
(Mitchell, 2012, p1)

This observation does not make the task any easier. The history of Christianity is replete with the lives of the martyrs, so a straightforward text-book definition ought to exist and the Catechism of the Catholic Church may help.

Martyrdom is the supreme witness given to the truth of the faith: it means bearing witness even unto death. The martyr bears witness to Christ who died and rose, to whom he is united by charity. He bears witness to the truth of the faith and of Christian doctrine. He endures death through an act of fortitude. (CCC 2473)

Leaving aside the outdated gender specific 'he', it seems that the Catechism makes explicit that the death has to be a sacrifice of life

for the faith and doctrine of the Church. According to the Catholic Dictionary of 1953: -

Benedict XIV ... gives the modern law of the Church on the recognition of martyrdom with great fullness. He defines martyrdom as, "voluntary endurance of death for the faith, or some other virtue relating to God".

The point is that when the causes of both Kolbe and Stein were in their earliest stages of enquiry, this (above) understanding of martyrdom would be the one that was most likely to be the prevailing one at that time. (Addis, 1953, p535)

The original meaning of the word, martyr conveyed that a person was a witness proclaiming their adherence to and faith in Christ. (CCC No. 273/274, p527). It was with the persecutions of Christians to the point of death that it acquired its present meaning of witnessing to the point of death. The meaning of martyrdom has not always enjoyed universal support. There have always been divergent views in understanding martyrdom: -

Attitudes to and interpretations of martyrdom varied among the early Church from enthusiastic embrace to outright denial of its value. (Middleton, 2011, p49)

Following Freeman (2011, pp19/20) in martyrdom there was a belief that: -

[T]ransformation from a physical to a spiritual body could ... be achieved. Early examples of this belief [feature] in the letter from Ignatius ... arrested for refusing sacrifice in honour of the emperor ... was taken to Rome for judgement.

The Ignatius referred to is St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch (circa 50–98 to 107CE) who died in Rome. It is allegedly said that in foreseeing the ravages of the wild beasts, he readily enthused: -

Let me be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts that I may be found the pure bread of Christ.

A death like that suffered by Ignatius was in essence seen a century later by Quintus Septimus Tertullian (circa 155–240 CE) as a type of death that transcends the world of mortal flesh and it was considered also the case that the transformed (martyr) would feel no pain.⁶⁵ The points that emerge from this discussion are that martyrdom should not be actively sought nor courted. The act and consequent death should be for witnessing, that is personally proclaiming the witness of faith in the Person of Jesus Christ. The person who is to be martyred has at least some opportunity of

⁶⁵ There is a similar Jewish tradition that the martyr dying for Kiddush Hashem (The Sanctification of the Divine Name) feels no pain.

recanting their faith or other means to save their life, but consciously refuses to do so. In the case of Ignatius, it was his refusal to offer sacrifice to the person of the emperor by making an offering of incense. In the world of the Roman Empire this demand was seen very much as a test of conformity of the state and a requirement of maintaining citizenship as much as anything else. So, by definition, anyone refusing to sacrifice was seen from a Roman perspective to be against the state and empire. (Middleton, 2011, p38)⁶⁶

It is necessary to reflect on the nature of the canonisations of both Kolbe and Stein. Those whom the Church chooses to canonise are matters for itself, it being an ecclesial decision, but whatever the Church does is never limited solely to itself, a stone thrown in a pond will always cause ripples. It may be stated that while the canonisation of Kolbe was controversial, it was not as controversial as that of Stein. In the immediate post-war period the cause for promoting Kolbe was initially established in 1946, five-years after his death and this was an almost unprecedented brief interlude between the death of a candidate and the cause being commenced

⁶⁶ A summary but broader discussion can be followed in, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture we Never Knew* (Ehrman B, 2003; pp137/140)

in modern times. The cause for his canonisation was one based very much on a life which was recognised as being of extraordinary holiness and virtue (Stone, 1997). The unfolding timetable of events was that Pope Paul VI beatified Kolbe on the 17th October 1971 and was subsequently proclaimed a martyr, namely Saint Maximilian Mary Kolbe, by Pope John Paul II on 10th October 1982, his festal day is the 14th August, this also being the anniversary date of his death.⁶⁷ The nature of the circumstances of Kolbe being declared a martyr is of particular relevance to this discussion. His death, as noted above arose because he exchanged his life for that of a condemned man and so suffered the fate that the saved prisoner would otherwise have undergone. After Kolbe's beatification, his cause was based on a life committed to exemplary virtue and he was declared a confessor for the Faith. However, Pope Paul VI received a delegation of senior Catholic clerics from Poland (Woodward, 1996, p145) one of whom was Archbishop Karol Wojtyla.⁶⁸ This Polish delegation pressed Paul VI to have Kolbe declared a 'martyr of charity' and not a confessor for the Faith. The term, 'martyr of charity' was something of a misnomer in that it is a term for which there was no theological basis at that

⁶⁷ This is the day before the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which occurs annually on the 15th August.

⁶⁸ Archbishop Karol Wojtyla became Pope John Paul II on 16th October 1978.

time. Later a delegation of German Catholic clergy to Poland who had visited the cell where Kolbe died, gave their support to have Kolbe recognised as a martyr. Following the death of Pope Paul VI in 1978, his successor Albino Luciani (1912–1978), taking the name John Paul I reigned for barely one month before dying. A hastily re-convened conclave, saw the Cardinal Archbishop of Krakow, Karol Jozef Wojtyla elected the first Polish pope and the first non-Italian for over four-hundred years. So, it was that a Polish pope declared at the canonization Mass that the now St. Maximilian Kolbe was to be venerated as a martyr; that is a 'martyr to charity'. The saint's courageous act of self-sacrifice was in the full spirit of the Gospel injunction: -

This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you. No one can have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. (John 15: 12-13)

There are two possible concerns with regard to the decision of John Paul II to proclaiming Kolbe a martyr. Firstly, to repeat a point, Catholicism is a faith that deems it possible for the supernatural to impinge upon the profane. One of the ways that this may happen is the experience of an individual (or individuals) receiving a

supernatural vision. Whether anyone chooses to believe this or not is beside the point. The fact is that the person or persons who have experienced a vision do believe it. This was the case with Kolbe. Returning to his biographer (Dewar, 1982, pp17/18) it is appropriate to mention again the defining experience of Kolbe receiving a vision of the Virgin Mary and choosing from her the two crowns of both holiness and martyrdom. Another reference to the intervention of the supernatural was that whilst working (possibly) in Japan, he revealed to his compatriots: -

[T]hat he had been granted "an assurance of heaven.

(Woodward, 1996, p145)

In a posthumous way, Kolbe seemed to be recognised as a visionary in another sense. Travelling to Japan in 1930 he could not really know what to expect on his arrival, when the local bishop assured him of no financial support whatever, Kolbe's trust in his protectress, the Mother of Christ was sufficient, advising the local bishop he only needed his permission, not his support. The Japanese city chosen by Kolbe for his foundation was Nagasaki. He eschewed the advice to establish the community in the city, selecting instead a site some distance away and separated from it by a natural high rising topographical feature. On 9th August 1945,

the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki⁶⁹. The community Kolbe founded did not share in the total destruction that was inflicted on Nagasaki; indeed, the first-aid provided to the stricken city, minimal that it was came from the Franciscan community. Thus, it was that posthumously Kolbe was viewed as a person of great foresight. (Dewar, 1982, p65/68. Stone, 1997)

It is important to repeat again that there is no intention here to denigrate the life of holiness that was Kolbe's. However, there is no known recorded information anywhere about the state of mind that Kolbe was in when he offered to exchange his life in 1941. In living out his life with the formative experience of his childhood vision always in his mind and if he had truly received supernatural intimations of the 'assurances of heaven', then one may suggest other possible motives. Did he seek his own death on the basis of his assurances? How could he ever have known that the man he saved would in fact survive to tell the tale? Considering Kolbe's reported health at the time antecedent to his death, what were the realistic chances of him ever surviving? A reasonable person must have been able to conclude that given his age and personal circumstances, his chances of surviving in Auschwitz to the end of

⁶⁹ This was the second of two atomic explosions over Japan towards the end of the Second World War, the first bomb having been dropped on Hiroshima on the 6th August 1945, by the American Army Air Corps. By coincidence the 9th August is the feast day of Edith Stein.

the war were remote. Indeed, at the time no one could even have known if Germany would even be defeated. So, if a person knows they are in all probability going to die and are living in a state of abject misery and having received supernatural intimations of their eternal future, why not undertake a selfless action to precipitate one's own death, one last roll of the dice? ⁷⁰

The final arbiter in causes for canonisation is the pope of the day and as noted above John Paul II effected the completion of many causes of canonisation on an unprecedented scale, many of whom were martyrs. Following his biographers there are two pertinent points to make about him. Firstly, like Kolbe his fellow countryman, John Paul II, had a very strong lifelong devotion to the Mother of Christ. There is plenty of evidence for this, not least in his choice of motto at the beginning of his papacy, namely; *Totus Tuus*, meaning, 'I am completely yours, Mary'; indicating that John Paul II was possessed of a well-developed Mariology. (Leahy, 2003, pp69/93)⁷¹ In addition, John Paul II had a strong affinity to the notion of martyrdom in the cause or name of religion. Deeply committed to his native Poland it would be fair to call him a

⁷⁰ This comment may seem shocking to some. However, in her treatment of martyrdom in the early Church, Candida Moss (2013, p212) makes a not totally dissimilar observation in respect to the way martyrs' deaths could be viewed.

⁷¹ See also Whale J, 1980 for a general overview of this subject.

patriotic son of Poland. So close to him were the twin notions of patriotism and martyrdom that one biographer notes that: -

John Paul II is extremely sensitive to martyrdom ... He regards as martyrs the thousands of Polish soldiers who died in May 1944 in the battle for the hilltop Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino ... Polish regiments were in the vanguard of the assault, an unbelievably bloody one ... on the fiftieth anniversary of the ... battle, John Paul said: "The Church commemorates her martyrs in martyrologies. We cannot allow that in Poland today, the martyrlogy of the Polish nation should not be recomposed". (Szulc, 1995, p37)

These components of his thinking cannot have been absent when he considered the plight of his native homeland. Since his election in 1978, Poland passed through a particularly distressing period in her recent history. The Polish government was Communist; being a part of the Warsaw Pact and Comecon community of Eastern European nations, dominated by the (then) Soviet Union and in Poland there was a convulsive struggle being waged against the Polish government by the Solidarity movement. (Huener, 2003, pp207/210/223/232) When John Paul II canonised Kolbe on 10th October 1982, it was against a background of turmoil in Poland,

where between 13th December 1981 and 22nd July 1983, a state of martial law was imposed. As John Paul's biographer explains, (Szulc, 1995, p381), the leaders of the Solidarity movement in Poland always maintained that it was supported in its struggle by John Paul and particularly by his visit to Poland in 1983. In considering the mind-set of John Paul II, his faith and sense of national identity, he essentially saw his native homeland, as the 'Christ among the nations', a theme explored by Huener (2003) in the last chapter of his book. (*Auschwitz, Poland, and the Politics of Commemoration, 1945-1979*).

Leaving Maximilian Kolbe for the moment, the other example in this thesis on the significance of canonisations as a Catholic response to the Holocaust is that of Edith Stein. The relevant elements of her life and more importantly her death collectively created the circumstances by which her cause was introduced. She was beatified in Cologne on 1st May 1987 a mere forty-five years after her death and subsequently canonised at St. Peter's, Rome on the 11th October 1998. It was and remains the case that her beatification and subsequent canonisation were sources of great controversy. Following Stein's beatification Rabbi Daniel Polish (1994, p14) articulated that: -

At the heart of the Jewish response to the beatification of Edith Stein is the perception that it has the effect (and perhaps, one fears, the intent) of legitimizing efforts to promote conversion among Jews. [by the Catholic Church].

Polish (1994, p16) then expresses a second anxiety in that: -

Jews see the [Catholic] Church as acting in a way that would suggest that it is appropriating the Holocaust ... to itself.

These observations serve to crystallize an understandably major concern within the Jewish world about the nature of the Church's action and motives. Edith Stein's elevation to the altars was not the only cause for serious misgivings from a Jewish perspective. With regards to the concerns of Rabbi Polish and the issue of supersessionism there is the example of a view expressed by Zev Garber (2004, pp186/187) who links a Jewish view of Catholic supersessionism with Stein's beatification. He argues that in the papal homily at the ceremony: "Knowingly or not, elements of *Veritas Israel* are inserted in the Pope's homily: earthly Jerusalem is replaced and Jesus refers to himself as the true Messiah". Garber goes on to argue that because the Church defines martyrdom as a Christ-like sacrifice it is, "signalling supersessionist Christology".

Although he clearly neither dispute the holiness or courageousness of Stein as an individual, he nevertheless saw her beatification and the reasons for it as a promulgation of a continuing supersessionist element of Catholic theology. A further concern is expressed by Judith Hershcopf Banki (1994, pp43/49) who whilst admiring and respecting the sincerity of her religious decisions and the work of Stein as a person, echoes the view of Daniel Polish; namely that her canonisation was definitely a very controversial and provocative step. Several points are made; Banki speculates whether if Stein (or someone like her) had been born at a different time or in a different place, converted from Judaism to Christianity, lived an exemplary life of faith and perhaps died violently as a missionary in another country, would there have been the same concerns about the impact of her elevation to proclaimed sainthood? Probably not; the controversy subsists not in her life, nor her religious conversion, nor even the holiness of her life, but in the manner, reason and circumstances of her death, thus the claim that she was murdered because of her devotion to her Catholic faith is deeply questionable. There is the argument that her arrest and murder was a direct result of retaliation against the Dutch episcopate's defiant letter condemning the Reich's actions against Jews and she, like others became identified by the Church

as suffering for their Catholic faith, not their Jewish origins. Although it is a hypothetical point, had the Dutch bishops not promulgated their letter, then Stein's arrest and those in her situation may well have been delayed, but, as the terrible genocidal juggernaut inflicting the destruction of Jews rolled on, it would in due course have claimed her life and those of her companions.

The context of Edith Stein's posthumous elevation is an important factor to consider. According to Woodward, (1996, p138/139) although her cause was already established, it was on 3rd March 1983 that the German Catholic hierarchy via Cardinal Joseph Hoeffner (1906–1987), petitioned Pope John Paul II to have Stein's cause progressed as that of a martyr and not as that of a heroic confessor for the faith. In this Hoeffner was supported by Cardinal Jozef Glemp (1929–2013) on behalf of the Poland's Catholic Church. They argued that Stein's death was a direct consequence of an act of retaliation by the agencies of the Third Reich against the (Dutch) Church and that her death should therefore be deemed as an act of martyrdom. There is some advantage to this in the labyrinthine path to declared sainthood, as a martyr she could be beatified without the need for a proven miracle, although two miracles would still be required for the next step to canonisation. It

is also the case that the German and Polish episcopates' requests for the recognition of martyrdom were addressed to a pope who was, as noted above someone who had his own very clear ideas on the witnessing to faith to the point of death. Furthermore, Stein would have been of interest to John Paul II as someone who was deeply influenced by the philosophical ideas surrounding phenomenology and who worked with Edmund Husserl (1859-1968). John Paul II was deeply influenced by the philosophical tenets of phenomenology; his own philosophical thesis being based on the work of Max Scheler (1874-1928), a formative exponent of this approach in this field of thought. It is also significant that as 1987 marked the beatification of Stein it took place against the backdrop of a bitter dispute, known as the Carmelite controversy.⁷²

Kolbe and Stein are cited as outstanding examples of faith to the point of death and as saints, the examples of their holy lives are intended to be models for emulation by the faithful. Equally, they can of course be presented as unimpeachable images for the contemporary mission of the Church. In concrete terms what does this mean? Turning first to Kolbe, in his life he promoted the

⁷² Briefly, in 1984 a Carmelite Convent was established in the vicinity of Auschwitz, a location which was chosen in part because of its proximity to where both Kolbe and Stein died. This development became the focus of an acrimonious dispute about the alleged 'Christianization' of Auschwitz, which may well have influenced responses to Stein's beatification. This controversy received widespread media coverage and will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Mariology of the Immaculate One. Certainly, the Militia Immaculata, a movement he co-founded on 6th October 1917 is one that encourages Catholics to make their personal commitment to Mary Immaculate and is now a worldwide Catholic organisation strongly represented in parts of the English-speaking world. Linking the 'Immaculate One' with the presentation of the work of the Militia Immaculate is its presence in the town of Lourdes, in the south west of France. Lourdes, a renowned place of pilgrimage for Catholics in particular is where Bernadette Soubirous, now known as St. Bernadette of Lourdes (1844–1879), who at the age of fourteen received a series of visions between 18th February 1858 and 16th July 1858 of a woman who in these visions revealed herself to Bernadette as, the Immaculate Conception.⁷³ The story of Lourdes has been written about extensively.⁷⁴ What today links Lourdes with Kolbe is the established presence of members of the Franciscan order who maintain an exhibition about the work of the Militia Immaculata. The connection is made all the more obvious because they now occupy the building in Lourdes known as the Cachot, 7 Rue des Petits Fosses; the place where Bernadette lived at the time she witnessed to the Lourdes apparitions. The

⁷³ As mentioned earlier, a title dogmatically defined on 8th December 1854 by Pope Pius IX.

⁷⁴ A literary contribution by Rene Laurentin (1999) using the original documentation surrounding the story that developed after the apparitions, is an accessible source of information.

exhibition in the Cachot prominently promotes the work of the Militia and the life and death of Kolbe, making prominent reference and clearly associating his death with Auschwitz. There is even a small oratory with a relic of the saint. This may seem strange as his body was cremated and the ashes disposed of, but providentially during the time Kolbe was in Japan part of his beard was clipped and the clippings kept, hence a piece of his beard is now in Lourdes, a place visited on pilgrimage by about four to five million Catholics a year. In this exhibition there is nothing overtly stating that Kolbe was a Holocaust victim, although the images are sufficiently redolent of the Holocaust itself, so a visitor could assume that he was. Certainly, it is the explicitly spoken views of the friars of the OFM Minor Coventual who staff the St. Maximilian Kolbe Centre in Lourdes who consider their patron died a victim of the Holocaust.⁷⁵

The canonization of Kolbe arguably ushered in a sea-change for causes of those deemed to be martyrs, (Woodward, 1998, p147). Between 1982 and 1987 the Congregation for the Causes of Saints whilst taking up causes of those deemed martyrs dying between 1939 and 1945 in occupied Europe now had a precedent to rely

⁷⁵ The writer of this thesis was for ten years the Lourdes Pilgrimage Director for the Catholic Diocese of Clifton and is a 'veteran' of twenty-five visits to Lourdes and who is familiar with and has visited the Franciscan centre in Lourdes.

upon. No longer would promoters of causes have to prove that the Third Reich was ideologically opposed to the Catholic faith; that is something they could safely assume. Causes presented on the basis of heroic virtue could, if the individual's death was at the hands of the agencies of the Third Reich could now promote such candidates as martyrs for the faith. By implication, not only were the Jews the victims of National Socialist policies, so too were Catholics and by implication, the Catholic Church. It should be pointed out that there is a fundamental difference; one could always cease to be a Catholic and stay alive, whereas a Jew could never cease to be a Jew in order to avoid death.

On 1st October 1999, Pope John Paul II issued a *Moto Proprio*, (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1999) which proclaimed that St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross together with Ss Bridget of Sweden and Catherine of Siena were to be jointly recognised as Co-Patronesses Europe. This document, part of which specifically refers to Stein, it states that (paragraphs 8 & 9): -

She brings us to the heart of this tormented century, pointing to the hopes which it stirred, but also the contradictions and failures which have disfigured it. ... we look upon ... her witness as an innocent victim ... as Co-

Patroness of Europe [it] is intended to raise on this Continent a banner of respect, tolerance and acceptance.

This document arguably makes it all the more significant in that it avoids reflecting on the implication of the Jewishness in Stein's life. Equally, it sets the context of her death as that of an innocent victim of the Holocaust, although without explicitly saying so, because anyone with knowledge of her life would know the circumstances of her death. Of these three women, Edith Stein was the only one a martyr saint of the modern era.

The debate and evidence to be drawn upon is massive. Can it be said that Kolbe and Stein, from the point of view of the Church, were victims of the Holocaust? At the very least their perceived association with it is such that it does in a tangible sense seem that the Holocaust is appropriated, at least to some degree as a Catholic event. That is to say that the Church promotes elements of Catholic witness with the attendant suffering of persecution, martyrdom and as a focus for devotion. The reasons for this are, firstly, in the widest of senses, their deaths were the result of the policies of the Third Reich, albeit from quite different perspectives. Kolbe died as a result of his own self-offering, to become a hostage destined for death in the place of another. His death occurred in Auschwitz, the place that has increasingly come to be emblematic

of, even synonymous with, the Holocaust. No matter how one looks at the person of Stein, the difficulty will always remain. There is no doubting that she was a remarkably outstanding woman of great learning, deep holiness and piety; her cause could well have succeeded on this basis alone. Her canonisation as a martyr was and remains a questionable decision. To repeat the point earlier, the Third Reich would always have viewed her as a Jew and for this reason alone, she was a person destined for death.

Given the association Kolbe's and Stein's deaths with Auschwitz and that Auschwitz has become associated in the popular mind of what the Holocaust was, it is now appropriate to consider the place of Auschwitz itself and the role it has come to play in the Catholic imagination and a source of conflict between Catholics and Jews.

IV

Auschwitz. A Place of Remembrance and of Jewish-Christian Conflict.

This chapter will reflect on the establishment of Auschwitz and its emblematic significance, examining the events of the post-war history of what became the Auschwitz complex and how this history would test the Catholic Church's commitment to the spirit and letter of Note 4 of *Nostra Aetate*. This would prove to be especially so in Church's commitment to *NA* during the unfolding of the post-war Catholic memorialising of Auschwitz.

The town of Oswiecim, in southern Poland is more widely known by the German name of Auschwitz, the history of which dates to the late twelfth century and its history broadly reflects that of the wider nation of Poland over some 760 years. In 1917 a brick-built barracks was constructed. At various times this complex accommodated a National Employment Office to address the needs of migratory workers and between the First and Second World Wars, some buildings were used for housing Polish refugees from Cieszyn; other parts of the complex were utilized as barracks by

the Polish army.⁷⁶ Following Germany's invasion of Poland on 1st September 1939, Oswiecim was quickly overwhelmed and the town and surrounding hinterland was speedily incorporated into the occupied territories of the Third Reich and the name of the town was Germanized, becoming known as Auschwitz. This original Polish establishment and its subsequent development as KL (Konzentrationslager) Auschwitz will be forever remembered as the place of the industrialised murders of hundreds of thousands of people whose lives were obliterated by the Third Reich. (Dwork & Pelt, 1996, pp17/38. Rees, 2017, Snyder, 2015)

Generally, it was only from the mid-1980's to the mid-1990's that Auschwitz came to dominate western perceptions of the Holocaust and more so after the fiftieth anniversary of its liberation in 1995. Initially American and British attention had focused on the western camps they liberated in Germany, e.g., Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Dachau or Mauthausen, but it is Auschwitz which has now become synonymous with the crimes of the Third Reich, (a point discussed further below). It is important to recognise that KL Auschwitz as a whole comprised not just one single camp or location, but three, as well as smaller sub-camps within an

⁷⁶ For a fuller history of the site, see Dwork and van Pelt 1996/2006; Rees 2004; Steinbacher 2005, or Auschwitz.org/en/history.

'interest-zone' of (circa) 40km². The Auschwitz *Stammlager* (the main-camp later becoming known as Auschwitz I) was established within the site of the existing Polish barracks and controlled by the Reich's *Schutzstaffel* (SS) and the first commandant of Auschwitz I was SS Hauptsturmführer Rudolf Hoess (1901–1947) who became commandant on 30th April 1940. (Rees, 2004)

The largest part of the Auschwitz complex in area and capacity was the adjacent camp established near the village of Brzezinka, now (like Auschwitz) known to the world by its Germanized name of Birkenau.⁷⁷ The in-depth history of Birkenau's construction from 1941 onwards is complex and beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is important to note that the original camp was largely built by and for Soviet POWs. Circumstances and the tide of war changed by the spring of 1942 and this impacted on the plans for this camp's extension and so it came to play an important role in the mass-murder of Jews, thus Birkenau became a significant site of the Holocaust primarily in the spring and summer of 1944, with the transportations of Jews from Hungary, the liquidation of the Theresienstadt Family Camp and the liquidation of the Lodz ghetto. (Rees, 2004; Gilbert, 1987, pp452/3, pp685/686, Snyder, 2015,

⁷⁷ Or Auschwitz II or Auschwitz-Birkenau.

p113, p203, p223. Griech-Polelle, 2017, pp152, p172,190, p193, pp201/2, p213, p215) A third camp was Monowitz, also known as Auschwitz III or, the Buna-Monowitz concentration and slave labour camp-complex built in partnership with I. G. Farben, (Interessen-Gemeinschaft Farbenindustrie),⁷⁸ a German industrial and chemical manufacturer, specializing in producing synthetic rubber for the Reich's war effort. (Gilbert, 1987, pp452/3, pp353/355. Rees, 2017, p323, p325) The Auschwitz complex became the largest single complex of its kind established by the Third Reich and as Wachsmann (2015, pp8/9) comments in speaking of the concentration camp system: -

[T]he KL later took a more radical turn and developed along far more lethal lines, culminating in the Auschwitz extermination complex, which had no equal ... anywhere else.

Estimates are that between 1940 and 1945, some one-million and eighty-two thousand people were murdered within the Auschwitz complex. So, it is not unreasonable to ask the question; who died? The widely accepted numbers of the groups of those who died at the Auschwitz complex are: -

⁷⁸ Interessen-Gemeinschaft Farbenindustrie.

<u>Group:</u>	<u>Transported To Auschwitz:</u>	<u>% of Total Prisoners:</u>	<u>Died:</u>
Jews	1,095,000	84%	960,000
Poles (Non-Jewish)	147,000	11%	74,000
Other Nationalities	25,000	2%	12,000
Roma	23,000	2%	21,000
Soviet POW's	15,000	1%	15,000
Totals	1,305,000		1,082,000

(Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the numbers are rounded estimates)⁷⁹

Clearly, the single largest group of people to suffer imprisonment and death within the overall Auschwitz complex were those identified by the Nazis as being Jewish in origin. The second largest group were non-Jewish Poles, although approximately 147,000 Poles were sent to Auschwitz and 74,000 died there, the Polish mortality rate was about 50%. Of the 1,095,000 Jews sent into the camp complex, about 88% died. It may seem cold-bloodedly trite to make comparisons of death rates, but they do place a certain

⁷⁹ Franciszek Piper the then senior historian of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum's research department published these statistics in the late 1980s and early 1990s and his figures are now widely accepted, e.g., by the USHMM, Yad Vashem.

perspective on what was to become the post-war significance and the continuing relevance of Auschwitz. It is also important to note there's very clear distinction between the first phase in the history of KL Auschwitz (14 June 1940 to mid-1942) as a concentration camp and later, when it expanded, becoming predominantly a site for mass-murder. With Jews constituting by far the largest percentage both of victims and the camp's population.

When considering Auschwitz's post-war history, it is important to contextualize this within the broader history of Poland, which after centuries of partitions under foreign rule briefly regained its independence in the interwar period (1919-1939), only to lose this under a combination of Nazi and Soviet occupation in 1939. Whilst it formally regained 'independence' at the end of the Second World War II, it became part of the Eastern Bloc, under Soviet domination until the collapse of Communism in 1989. (Huener, 2003, pp25-26, 30, p187 pp206/207, p239) On 5th March 1946, at Westminster College, in Fulton, Missouri, Winston Churchill, in what became one of the most famous speeches of the time, utilized the image of the 'Iron Curtain', by which he meant those particular countries of eastern Europe that had fallen under the dominance of the Soviet Union and from this time, one-time allies of the Second World War

became 'Cold War' enemies. (Churchill, This day in History) It was a 'conflict' that would continue for the next four decades and would affect how the memory of Auschwitz was managed, a complex matter addressed by Huener. (2003)

What is it that makes Auschwitz, (that is, the Auschwitz complex as a whole) so notorious? Certainly, it's known as a concentration camp, because that is what Auschwitz I was. It is remembered as a death camp and a slave labour complex where the prisoners who were not murdered upon immediate arrival were worked to death.⁸⁰ Even the appalling statistics of death in no way explain the experience of abject misery that was Auschwitz. There were other camps which strictly speaking, were death camps under the control of the Third Reich and the names of the better-known ones are, Belzec, Chelmno, Sobibor and Treblinka, as well as Majdanek which had a similar multi-functionality to Auschwitz. (Wachsmann, 2015, pp306/307. See also Rees, 2017) Importantly, any emphasis placed upon Auschwitz in no sense diminishes the recognition of the suffering, misery and death that was inflicted on the almost entirely Jewish victims in these and many other places.

⁸⁰ Extermination through work.

Auschwitz at the height of its activity was by far the largest of all the Reich's camps and when it was liberated by the Red Army on 27th January 1945 it was captured largely intact. Thus, it stood in grotesquely mute testimony of the crimes of the Third Reich. As Snyder states (2015, p207): -

Auschwitz symbolizes the intention to murder all Jews under German control, and Jews from every corner of the German empire were murdered in its gas chambers. Some Jews survived Auschwitz because it remained, to the end, a set of camps as well as a death facility, where Jews were selected for labor as they entered. Thus, a story of survival at Auschwitz can enter the collective memory. Almost no Jew who stood on the edge of a death pit survived, and literally [almost] no Jew who entered Treblinka or Belzec or Sobibor or Chelmno survived. The word, "Auschwitz" has become a metonym for the Holocaust as a whole. Yet the vast majority of Jews had already been murdered, further east, by the time that Auschwitz became a major killing centre. Yet while Auschwitz has been remembered, most of the Holocaust has largely been forgotten.

Snyder further argues that this reduction of the Holocaust to just one locality makes it a manageable symbol for a post-war world, both east and west. Although the emblematic status of Auschwitz and its conflation with the Holocaust as a whole somehow reduces the real appreciation of the massive horror that the Holocaust was in all its diverse and complex manifestations. So, just as the lives of martyrs (see chapter 4) 'commence' their significance after their deaths, so in a sense it is the same with Auschwitz. Nevertheless, there is no other location so associated with the Holocaust that has been so deeply riven with post-war controversy as Auschwitz has been. What are these controversial events? Steinlauf explains that in 1947 the Polish Parliament accorded legitimacy to the notion that Auschwitz was a place where Polish citizens and people of other nationalities died as martyrs. Indeed, from its creation by the Polish parliament it was dedicated to remembering 'the martyrdom of Poland' and other people; combining martyrology, national memory and internationalization from the outset.⁸¹

Auschwitz also came to be regarded as a monument to the internationalist struggle against the barbaric tyranny of fascism;

⁸¹ For an extensive study, see: -Woyicka Z. (2013) *Arrested Mourning: Memory of the Nazi Camps in Poland, 1944/1950 (Warsaw Studies in Contemporary History Book 2)*. Peter Lang, gmbH, Frankfurt.

with limited attention being paid to the fact that the overwhelming majority of people who died there were Jews, many of whom came from outside of what were the pre-war and post-war borders of Poland (Huener, 2003, pp59/79) and who died precisely because they were Jews and for no other reason. A particular focus of controversy at Auschwitz was the International Monument to the Victims of Fascism at Birkenau which combined ideas of 'Polonization' and 'internationalization', featuring an inscription on memorial plaques in multiple languages; this inscription was subsequently removed and updated. The text of the original inscription read; 'Four million people suffered and died at the hands of the Nazi murderers between the years 1940 and 1945'. Following the collapse of Communism, this text was removed because, firstly, even though the figure of four million victims itself generally accepted by the Soviet bloc countries (see Steinlauf, 1996, p117), is now proven to be inaccurate in light of Piper's research (mentioned above at footnote 74) and secondly, because of its failure to acknowledge that by far the largest number of victims were Jews. This memorial and its original inscription in multiple languages embodied the principles of 'Polonization' and

internationalism; that characterized the post-war site of Auschwitz under Communism.⁸²

For the Jews, the use of the Auschwitz complex as a place for their destruction dawned with the construction of Auschwitz–Birkenau in 1942. It was not the first place specially created in the attempt to expunge them from the human race, the murders started at the death camp at Chelmno on 8th December 1941. It is very difficult to calculate the number of people who were murdered in the death camps of Belzec, Chelmno, Sobibor and Treblinka, but collectively they may have accounted for the murder of more than two million Jews.⁸³ Whereas the Auschwitz complex was liberated largely intact, the other four camps were destroyed by the Third Reich in an attempt to hide their crimes. Together with a small but viable number of witness-survivors, Auschwitz became the 'place' of the Holocaust, the metonym for Jewish sufferings, de-humanisation and the ultimate destruction of the Jewish people. (Bartoszewski, 1991, pp9/14). Thus, the Auschwitz complex is now remembered as the one place where the single greatest numbers of Jews were

⁸² For an in-depth discussion of this see Jonathan Webber, *The Mythologization of the Holocaust* in (in DAVIES J & WOLLASTON I (Eds.) *The Sociology of Sacred Texts*. Sheffield Academic Press Ltd. Sheffield. pp45/58.

⁸³ See particularly Rees (2005) and Snyder (2015) for detailed discussions.

murdered. (See Snyder, 2015, pp207/225. Rees, 2017, pp357/375, or generally, Weiss, 1996) Auschwitz I remains even today recognisable for what it was, together with the immediate proximity of Auschwitz-Birkenau. As a consequence, Auschwitz continues to be a place that is a potent symbol for two major and conflicting memories, that is, as an historical symbol for the wartime sufferings of the Polish people and equally a place of memorialisation for Jews. A series of controversies because of perceived conflicts between these two 'meanings' of Auschwitz was rooted in what Jews and some Catholics perceived to be its hallowing or Christianization as a sacred site, particularly for Polish Catholics, developments that are closely related to issues of Polish national identity in the post-war years.

The central role of Catholicism in Polish national identity played a significant role in what became known as the 'convent and crosses' controversies at Auschwitz, contributing to the multiple meanings of Auschwitz today, notably its identification with both the undoubted sufferings of the Polish people at the hands of the Third Reich and the sufferings of European Jewry and this dichotomy generates the conflict over who 'owns' the memory of the iniquitous tragedy that was Auschwitz, or whose sensitivities should

take precedence in any disputes over how the site should be remembered. (Zubrzycki G, 2015, pp16/45)

On 22nd November 1964, with little or no world attention, a Carmel (Carmelite Convent⁸⁴) was established at what little remained of Dachau concentration camp, near Munich, in Germany. (Rittner & Roth, 1991; p19) The convent of '*Heilig Blut*' (Carmel of the Precious Blood) was located adjacent to what was once the camp's guard tower. Dachau was never a 'death-camp' in the sense that Belzec, Chelmno, Sobibor, Majdanek and Auschwitz were, but it is of symbolic importance as the first concentration camp established by the Third Reich. The relevance of the establishment of a Carmel at Dachau is that arguably, once a precedent has been created in one place, it can be applied in another. This is what was to happen at Auschwitz, albeit some twenty or so years later and this would prove far more controversial.

Firstly, what is the unfolding narrative of events affecting the immediate vicinity of Auschwitz I and II? Following the unexpected death of Pope John Paul I who died on 28th September after reigning for only thirty-three days, a second conclave was called.

⁸⁴ Strictly speaking all Carmelite establishments are called monasteries irrespective of the gender of the inhabitants. However, in most if not all the literature in the Carmelite controversy at Auschwitz, the term 'convent' is used, so for simplicity the term 'convent' is used in this thesis.

In this second papal election of 1978 it was Karol Wojtyla, the Cardinal Archbishop of Krakow who was elected on 16th October 1978 as the 264th leader of the universal Church taking the name of his predecessor. (Szulc, 1995, pp278/281) Known popularly as the 'Pope from Poland' and quickly making an impression on the world stage, he returned to his native Poland for nine days in August of 1979. Steinlauf (1996, p129) highlights the actual and potential effect of this papal visit stating that: -

For nine days, the pope's presence transformed the nature of social relations. [In Poland]

During this return to his home-land, among other things, he celebrated a large outdoor Mass in a field near the city of Krakow as well as one at Birkenau. As noted earlier this was a time of political ferment in Poland and the Catholic Church was essentially seen as a bastion against the Polish communist government. On 7th June 1979 John Paul went to make his first visit as pope to Auschwitz I and Birkenau.⁸⁵ At Birkenau⁸⁶ he celebrated a Mass where the altar was dominated by a large wooden cross, about twenty feet high (Carroll, 2001, p20. Huener, 2003. p30, p208/209, p220) For the Polish state this was also a time of

⁸⁵ A place where the vast majority of victims were Jews.

⁸⁶ The reason Birkenau was chosen for the celebration of the Mass was pragmatic. It had a large open space capable of accommodating the pilgrims, whereas Auschwitz I provided no such space to accommodate the anticipated numbers.

sensitivity in accepting what happened to Poland's Jews during the time of the Holocaust. As Huener points out (2003, p199): -

The Polish state and Polish society were not willing to admit in 1978 – nor have ever been willing to admit – any sort of collective and nationwide collaboration in the crimes of the Holocaust.

More or less contemporaneous with this mindset was a sense that, despite the dominance of Poland's Marxist government, the vestiges of Catholic religious observance had been manifested at the site since the end of the Second World War in the form of, as Huener put it, (2003, p201): -

The vocabulary of commemoration at Auschwitz.
(martyrdom-golgotha (sic)-sacrifice)

Huener explains that there persisted a continuing element of Catholic observance as the nation advanced towards a position where the Church enjoyed a much greater tolerance in the 1970's, in a context where Poland's Catholicism and national self-identity became a powerful underpinning contribution to the fall Communism. (Huener, 2003 pp25/26, p30, p187, pp206/207, p239)⁸⁷

⁸⁷ For a further discussion, see also Genevieve Zubrzycki. (2006). *The Crosses of Auschwitz: Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communist Poland*.

The first relevant and really significant controversy between Christians and Jews in relation to Auschwitz was the so-called 'Carmelite Convent' controversy, (1985-1993). On or about 1st August 1984, a small group of Carmelite sisters (Rittner & Roth Eds, 1991, p20) with approval from the Polish hierarchy of the Catholic Church and the civil authorities took possession of what was known as the *Theatergebäude* (Old-Theatre), a building adjacent to Auschwitz I. In the granting of the lease to the Carmelite community, the question probably never arose in regard to anyone's potential sensitivities. The initially little noticed establishment of the Carmelite Convent at Auschwitz would prove to have international repercussions and controversy began in 1985. Bartoszewski's narrative of the sequence of events is particularly clear (1990, p6). In May, John Paul II made a pastoral visit to the Benelux countries.⁸⁸ A Catholic priest, Father Wilfried van Straaten, founder of the worldwide Catholic charity, *Aide a l'Eglise en detresse*⁸⁹ was active in the Benelux countries; the organisation having a record of supporting Catholic communities in countries that were behind the *Iron Curtain*. Given that the Pope was Polish and Poland was an *Iron Curtain* country and so within the area of interest of this organisation, it was suggested that a religious

⁸⁸ 16th to 21st May 1985.

⁸⁹ In English, known as Aid to the Church in Need or abbreviated to ACN.

community be funded as a gift to the Holy Father. So, the ACN, based in Konigsten⁹⁰ launched an international appeal for funding.

(Sanders, 2006, p2/3) The wording of the appeal is instructive: -

After the Pope's visit [in 1985], we wish to present him as a gift from benefactors in the Benelux countries ... the sum of money to found a convent which will become a spiritual fortress and a guarantee of the conversion of strayed brothers from our countries as well as proof of our desire to erase the outrages so often done to the Vicar of Christ.

This appeal was hardly going to be a private affair and it attracted considerable publicity, not least because such a statement would be antagonistic to Jewish opinion. Thus, it is at this point in the chronology of events that the Jewish communities in France and Belgium became aware of the Carmelite nuns' presence at Auschwitz voicing concerns thus raising tensions between Jewish and Catholic communities. Certainly, from some Jewish perspectives the establishment of the Carmel prompted accusations that it represented a seizure of the memory of Auschwitz by essentially transforming it into a Catholic and a Polish one. As Klein explains (2001, p4), fifteen Carmelite nuns took possession of the

⁹⁰ In what was West Germany at that time.

Theatergebäude having been granted a ninety-nine-year lease by the local authority, at the request of Cardinal Franciszek Macharski, archbishop of Krakow. In a sense this event could be interpreted as an act of co-operation between 'Church and State' and as such, probably unthinkable in the early years of Poland's communist rule. The *Theatergebäude* is technically outside the main perimeter of Auschwitz I, but observably close and it has always been considered a part of Auschwitz, although it is important to note there are several different, potentially contradictory legal definitions of the 'boundaries' of Auschwitz, such as the legal boundaries of the Museum and those relating to Poland's application that the site be recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, an application accepted in 1979.⁹¹

During the utilization of Auschwitz by the Third Reich the building was used amongst other things to store Zyklon B used both as a disinfectant and in the gas chambers of KL Auschwitz. The opening of a Carmel in a building in such close proximity to Auschwitz I, which had such historical associations, ignited a controversy that threatened to de-rail progress in Jewish-Catholic relations and became the focus of international media coverage. The serious

⁹¹ For further discussion of this, see, UNESCO, or Pam Jenoff, Managing Memory. The Legal Status of Auschwitz-Birkenau and the Resolution of Conflicts in the Post-War Communist Era. *Polish Review* 4:2 (2001, pp131/153).

nature of the continuing acrimony resulted in meetings of the disputants in Geneva, the second of which brokered an agreement, the outcome being the *Declaration Concerning the Carmelite Convent at Auschwitz by the Official Delegation of Catholics and Jews, Geneva, July 22, 1986*. This was followed by a tranche of other statements between February 1987 and December 1989.⁹² Following this agreement, the sisters were supposed to have vacated their Carmel in the *Theatergebäude* by 1989, but because of what was seen by many, not unreasonably so, as Catholic procrastination, this did not occur. Tensions grew and a small group of Jews from New York, led by Rabbi Avraham Weiss, entered and occupied the grounds of the convent. Acrimony and recrimination followed, with Cardinal Macharski suspending the implementation of the Geneva Agreement. The sisters finally vacated the building in 1993 when John Paul II directly intervened in the dispute. (Zubrzycki, 2006, p7. Klein 2001)

The second deeply relevant controversy focused on Auschwitz I and it became known as the 'Crosses of Auschwitz' controversy. Initially, a monumental cross was erected in the grounds of the Carmel and allegedly clearly visible from within the precincts of

⁹² See the examples in Rittner and Roth, 1991, pp209/239.

Auschwitz I, although this is not strictly true as it could not be seen from ground level within the camp. This cross was thought to have been erected in this location in the autumn of 1988, after the negotiations in Geneva in 1986 were thrashed out, the cross being brought to the Carmel (as it still was a Carmel at the time) by a local Polish Catholic priest. Significantly, this was the same cross that had been displayed during the 1979 papal Mass celebrated by John Paul II at Birkenau. (Zubrzycki, 2006, pp6/7) In 1998 there was political pressure from the United States for the cross to be removed, a pressure that was felt by the Polish government because Poland was at the time awaiting the vote that would allow it to become a member of NATO. The controversy over the cross developed and Cardinal Jozef Glemp, then Polish Catholic primate at the time, was strongly opposed to its removal. (Carroll, 2001; p4. Klein, 2001, pp72/78. Zubrzycki, 2006, pp141/170) If things were not bad enough and could hardly get any worse, they did.

In June 1998 Kazimierz Switon a one-time Solidarity activist and veteran of several hunger strikes initiated a hunger strike in the grounds of the *Theatergebäude* at Auschwitz. (Klein, 2001, p72) He demanded that the recently erected cross remain in place and after forty-two days he ended his self-imposed fast, appealing for the

placing of one hundred and fifty-two crosses at the gravel pit of Auschwitz I, the pit being deeply significant insofar as Poles are concerned. Located adjacent to Block 11 and the *Theatergebäude*, the gravel pit was used for the execution of Polish prisoners during the time the camp was operated by the Nazis. His was an appeal that found its response and by May 1999, three hundred and twenty-two small crosses had been placed there, but were subsequently removed at the instigation of the Polish government. The Carmelite sisters had legally sublet the site, so the Polish government had to change the law to give them the legal right over the site to intervene and remove the crosses. Overall, between the placing of the first cross in September 1998 until the removal of all of them, the area had become the focus of Polish-Catholic prayer vigils, the celebration of Masses and other religious demonstrations. (Zubrzycki, 2006, pp6/7. Klein, 2001, pp72/83. Jenoff, 2001)

To try and understand the impact of these events and the widespread protests that accompanied them, a salient comment is made by Herman Langbein, a former Austrian, part-Jewish political prisoner and one of the leaders of *Kampfgruppe Auschwitz*⁹³ who

⁹³ The international resistance movement in the camp.

became an influential historian of resistance movements and of Auschwitz. (Langbein, 1991, p97. Klein, 2001, pp72/78)

With the protests appeared that which I wanted to hinder. Auschwitz was discussed and written about the world over – but not the crimes of Nazism, their causes, their scope and the consequences that subsequent generations would have to bear. The topic was Polish antisemitism and who had the principal claim to grieve and pray at Auschwitz.

Although Langbein, himself a survivor of Auschwitz, is appreciative and aware of the fact that there were many non-Jewish victims who died within the overall Auschwitz complex, in answer to his own question about who is most qualified to speak of Auschwitz, he states it is the Jews, simply because they represent by far and away the greatest number of victims. Whether this is a good argument or not is a little beside the point, because it captures the understandable sense of victimhood that pervades much contemporary Jewish consciousness about the Holocaust. Langbein equally points out from his own experience that there were Polish prisoners at Auschwitz with what he describes as important functions (Langbein, 1991, p98) who being favoured by their SS overseers, gave a free and brutal expression to their own antisemitism.

The whole Auschwitz complex is a place of quite different memories, the dominant ones being the remembrances of both Poles (who were not Jews) and Jews from almost all the countries subjugated by the Third Reich. Surprisingly, Jews living in Poland had to fight for their distinctive perspective – identifying as both Poles and Jews - to be heard. (Leddy, 1991, pp169/176. Krajewski, 2004, pp21/27. Konstanty, 2004, pp159/165) It is also the case that Auschwitz was a traumatic place of remembrance for others, namely Soviet prisoners of war and the Roma people. To understand the emerging tensions between Poles and non-Polish Jews a further significant contextual factor has to be taken into account, namely a growing Polish and Catholic nationalism during the time when Poland broke free of its post-war Soviet domination. That is to say from about 1970 when Edward Gierek assumed power in Poland and continued in office until September 1980. (Davies, 2001, p12) As a backdrop to the events at Auschwitz, this was volatile time for Poland, a time when, broadly speaking, the emerging bitter controversy of the convent and the crosses arose and has been explained succinctly in the following way: -

Following the turmoil surrounding the discrediting of the Gomulka government in 1970 the Church used the opportunity of the new Gierek regime to assert itself by

making declarations that inextricably linked the Catholic faith and Polish national self-determination and culture. As with the Communists, Auschwitz would become a symbol of oppression, but this time the emphasis would be on Polish Catholic martyrdom. Certainly, the de-Judaising of Auschwitz by the Communist authorities allowed the Catholic Church to reclaim Auschwitz more easily. (Charlesworth, 1994, p582)⁹⁴

The apparent Catholicising of Auschwitz, whether intentional or not is seemingly apparent in what Pope John Paul II said during the Mass celebrated at Birkenau on 7th June 1979. Drawing on the New Testament text of I John 5:4 he reflected at length on Maximilian Kolbe and his death.⁹⁵ The Pope also spoke (incorrectly⁹⁶) of the deaths of some four million people at Auschwitz. He then reflected on the death of Edith Stein, which would have been at Birkenau and mentioned that she was Jewish. Although in his homily he made relatively little reference to the eighty-nine percent of all the victims who were Jews whose deaths were caused within the Auschwitz complex and who died precisely because they were Jews and for no other reason. His words were: -

⁹⁴ See also Huener, 2003 for further discussion.

⁹⁵ As noted in the previous chapter, Kolbe was executed in Auschwitz I and not at Birkenau which was not even constructed at the time.

⁹⁶ See page 166 above for the more accurate number of deaths at the Auschwitz complex.

It was impossible for me not to come here as Pope. I have come then to this *special shrine*, the birthplace, I can say, of the patron of our difficult century, just as nine centuries ago Skalka was the place of the birth under the sword of Saint Stanislaus, Patron of the Poles. I have come to pray with all of you who have come here today and with the whole of Poland and the whole of Europe. Christ wishes that I who have become the Successor of Peter should give witness before the world to what constitutes the *greatness and the misery* of contemporary man, to what is *his defeat and his victory*. I have come and I kneel on this Golgotha of the modern world, on these tombs, largely nameless like the great tomb of the Unknown Soldier. I kneel before all the *inscriptions* that come one after another bearing the memory of the victims of Oswiecim in languages: Polish, English, Bulgarian, (sic) Romany, Czech, Danish, French, Greek, Hebrew, Yiddish, Spanish, Flemish, Serbo-Croat, German, Norwegian, Russian, Romanian, Hungarian, and Italian. In particular I pause with you, dear participants in this encounter, before the *inscription in Hebrew*. This inscription awakens the memory of the People whose sons

and daughters were intended for total extermination. This People draws its origin from Abraham, our father in faith ... It is not permissible for anyone to pass by this inscription with indifference. Finally, the last inscription: *that in Polish*. Six million Poles lost their lives during the second world war: a fifth of the nation. Yet another stage in the centuries-old fight of this nation, my nation, for its fundamental rights among the people of Europe. Yet another loud cry for the right to a place of its own on the map of Europe. Yet another painful reckoning *with the conscience of mankind*. (John Paul II, 1979)

Whilst the singling out for special mention the 'People of Abraham' was significant, the overall context of his speech is notably Christian (Catholic), Polish and nationalist in tone. The reference to 'Golgotha', the ancient place of execution of the 'founder of Christianity', in a place where the vast majority of victims were Jewish would likely be understood by those who heard it as linking all the deaths with that of Christ's and hence making an implicit Catholic and dare one say a supersessionist claim to Auschwitz-Birkenau. This is closely followed by the statement that six-million

Poles died in the period of the Second World War, but such inclusivism is misleading because it ignores the fact that some three million were actually Jews, who were often not considered to be 'true Poles' by their fellow Poles even at that time, or subsequently. It is also sandwiched between comments on Christian martyrdom and reflections on the long history of Polish suffering at the hands of other nations.

At a consistory creating fourteen new cardinals at the Vatican on 30th June 1979, John Paul II in part essentially repeats the theme of his sermon at Birkenau inasmuch as he refers again to the 'Golgotha' of Auschwitz. What is different here is that he refers to his sermon at the Mass on 7th June 1979 being at Auschwitz (not at Birkenau) and the reference to this is set in the wider context of his pilgrimage throughout Poland in June 1979. In this address to the consistory the only death he clearly makes reference to at Auschwitz is that of Maximillian Kolbe. It could be assumed that John Paul's audience may have known the number of deaths of Jews at Auschwitz-Birkenau, but because his speech so deeply refers to the context of his pilgrimage through Poland, then it would be equally reasonable for a listener to assume that the

sufferings there were solely a Polish and Catholic tragedy. (Pope John Paul II, 1979)

Expressions of Polish and Catholic suffering fused together in the way they are in John Paul II's sermon, is just one example of several statements, papal and otherwise, coupled with the establishment of the Carmelite convent and then the Polish nationalist sentiment expressed in the planting of the crosses, that can be either intentionally, carelessly or recklessly taken as a collective expression of ownership; an expression of ownership of a memory of acute suffering. No one can doubt that the Polish people did suffer, because Auschwitz I, which is at least identifiably intact, has become one of the key places at which the Polish nation memorializes its pain. In the same way, the name, Auschwitz is for the Jewish people the metonym, the symbol of the total collective suffering of the whole of European Jewry. In a sense it matters not whether the suffering, death and dehumanisation for the Jew was at Auschwitz, or at any other death camp, or at the hands of the *Einsatzgruppen* formations in Ukraine, Russia or elsewhere. The reality is that Auschwitz is the one place that now epitomises for the Jewish people the place of their suffering during the Holocaust. One way to summarise this perspective is to reflect on both the

potency and poignancy of the reporting of the following observation: -

The monument at Auschwitz-Birkenau illustrates the tension between Jewish and Polish memory. The latter emphasizes the population's heroic struggle against Fascism. Pride of place is given to the Nazi campaign against the Polish elite, symbolized by the opening of the Auschwitz concentration camp in June 1940. Thus, Auschwitz is seen both as the symbol of martyrdom and extermination which affected the majority of families and a shrine visited annually by hundreds of thousands of Polish mourners. Poles see themselves as the primary victims of World War II, the experience of which served to give further credence to the romantic myth as 'the Christ among the Nations'. Stanislaw Krajewski summarizes this perspective and indicates the nature of the problem it poses. 'Poles perceive themselves as victims of history. They cannot tolerate the thought that someone else might have suffered even more. It is they who were victims and that is the end of the argument. So, firstly, Jews could not have suffered more than we did and secondly, we could not have added to their suffering, because a victim cannot

cause suffering to others'.⁹⁷ ... antisemitism in Poland should be seen as ... the conflict of two sacred myths: 'there is no room for *two* chosen nations in the same land'. (Wollaston, 1993, pp43/44)⁹⁸

The confusing and painful paradox remains. Again, as expressed by Wollaston, (2000, p18) there have been elements of both Christian (Catholic) triumphalism coupled with what seems to amount to single-minded thoughtlessness, yet such actions should not be considered as being motivated by malice, but rather as an attempt to struggle with the awfulness of what Auschwitz was and the memory of what it is. That so many Jews could not accept or understand the reasons for the establishment of the Carmel or the placing of crosses underscores the fundamental dynamic of difference of how the two faiths construct their memorial narrative of Auschwitz and what happened there. Much more can be written to expand on what is recognized here as only a brief summary. The essential point is that it remains the case that if there is one place in which there is a clear expression of how the Church seems to have explicated its understanding of its relationship to the

⁹⁷ Krajewski S. (1990) quoted in A Polansky pp 102/103 (ed.) *My Brother's Keeper? Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust*. Routledge, London.

⁹⁸ See also Seidler, 2000, p51.

Holocaust, it is in what may fairly be thought is the *Catholicizing* of Auschwitz.

Conclusion.

The aim of this thesis was to address the question: -

What Currently is the Roman Catholic Church's Self-Understanding of its Relationship to the Holocaust? A Critical Investigation of Controversies Surrounding the Holocaust (or Sho'ah) since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965)

To what extent has this question been answered? The answer is neither clear-cut nor concise.

The thesis commenced with an examination of Note 4 of *Nostra Aetate*. Although this document does not tell us anything of the Holocaust nor the Church's understanding of its relationship to it, it is nevertheless a remarkable document and one extremely important to the discussion in this dissertation, because without precedent in Church tradition it sets out the Church's own and now contemporary understanding of its relationship to Judaism and the Jewish people. Once and for all it repudiated the ancient canard of deicide, supersessionism and acknowledged the validity of the God's Covenant with the Jewish people, together with Christianity's indebtedness to Judaism. This significance was enthusiastically acknowledged fifty-years later in the Church's document, "*The Gifts*

and the Calling of God are Irrevocable" (2015). Although *NA* says nothing of the Holocaust, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the event of the Holocaust itself was a formative influence in the minds of the Church fathers when deliberating on *NA*, this being reflected in the comment by Heenan at the Second Vatican Council.⁹⁹ In the ensuing years following *NA* numerous documents were promulgated by the Church directing, deepening and further refining the Church's rapprochement to Judaism. It could be said that *NA* is '*the pearl of great price*' of the Second Vatican Council, because its very coming into existence sets an affirming seal on the work of the Council as a whole.

Thirty-three years after *NA*, the document, *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah* (1998) was published and the examination of which is an integral part of this thesis. It was a document long in its gestation, having been mooted some ten-years before its final publication. This was the first document that the Church issued which is closest in its content to the title of this thesis. It is easy to be critical of it with the hindsight of twenty-one years, yet it is a document that does not easily rebut the concerns and criticisms surrounding it. The suggested 'fallibility' of the clerics named in it

⁹⁹ See pp26/27 above.

does little to enhance its stature, neither does the document examine in any detailed way the stance of the German Catholic Church during the coming to power of the National Socialist government, nor Germany's conduct during the Second World War. Equally it is seemingly self-exonerating in separating the misdeeds of the *'sons and daughters of the Church'* from the *'institution'* which is the Church itself. It is trenchantly differentiating, even rejecting any connection between the Church's history of past anti-Judaism and the National Socialist's racial antisemitism, a point explicitly repeated a year later in the, *International Theological Commission, Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past*. It could be said that although honestly intended, *'We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah'* falls short of addressing the issues that may reasonably be expected of a document of such stature on this crucial, difficult and sensitive subject. The placing of the reference to Pius XII in a lengthy footnote detracts from the serious intention of the document, because insofar as the Church was concerned, Pius XII was the pivotal figure in the Church between 1939-1945 and indeed until to his death in 1958. Nevertheless, it's churlish to condemn or dismiss *WR* for shortcomings, for if nothing else, the document contained one great, albeit implicit achievement; namely that the Holocaust did

happen, it was a real and deeply tragic historical event and the Church's understanding of what did happen largely accords with contemporary scholarly opinion. As such it is a laudably total refutation of all who would seek to go down the road of Holocaust denial and historical revisionism.

In Chapter III it was explained that one way the Church's own understanding of itself is expressed is through documents. Another way the Church promotes its message is by actions and one significant action in this context is canonisation, a topic examined in Chapter IV. In this chapter it was explained that the Church is more likely to promote particular causes at specific times in order to reflect that which it wishes to communicate to the faithful and to the world at that time. Particular attention was paid to the elevation to the altars of, St. Maximilian Kolbe and St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. Their designation as martyrs was seen not only as exceptional by the pertaining standards of the day, but the elevation of these two individuals also proved to be highly controversial, particularly the latter of these two. Again, there is no argument here that in any way denigrates the integrity or the remarkable holiness of their lives, the key question is whether their designations as martyrs was an appropriate one, in that the

context of their declarations as martyrs identified them with the Holocaust. A more appropriate and arguably more sensitive decision would have been to declare them as confessors for the faith.¹⁰⁰ This alternative would have been of much greater value because the example of their respective lives of faith and holiness would have been in a context of having been exemplary expressions of lives lived out in the face of the dystopian culture of death and destruction imposed on much of the European mainland by Nazism and the Third Reich. Declaring them as confessors may well have avoided the controversy over their canonisations as martyrs and would have identified them less explicitly with the Holocaust.

The final chapter considered the place of Auschwitz in the Church's understanding of itself in the context of the Holocaust. This is the most sensitive and debatable area of this study. Auschwitz has become and remains a metonym for the Holocaust, one reason for this being that it was captured largely intact by the Red Army in January 1945, whereas other death-camps such as Belzec Sobibor and Treblinka had already been dismantled by the Nazis. The polarity of views of 'ownership' of memory at Auschwitz became a

¹⁰⁰ Pope Paul VI's original intention for Kolbe.

point of conflict between the Catholic and Polish memory and its implications within the larger mindset of Polish national identity in a post-war and post-Warsaw Pact world, just as it was and remains a potent memory for the Jewish people whose members were numerically by far the greatest number of victims there. Certainly, prominent Catholic speakers (none being more prominent in a Catholic context than the Pope!) employing terms such as 'Golgotha' to describe the suffering at Auschwitz, or more widely identifying Poland as the 'Christ of the Nations' does little to assuage Jewish anxieties. Hence the recurrent accusations that the Church is seeking to 'Christianize' or 'Catholicize' Auschwitz. Yet, granting Jewish sensitivities precedence when it came to the presence of Christian religious symbols at Auschwitz, as was the case with the Geneva Declaration that sought to resolve the Carmelite controversy, led a number of Polish Catholics to feel that their particular sensitivities were being ignored, thus leading towards the unintended consequence expressed in what became known as the 'War of Crosses'.

Two dangers were identified at the outset of this thesis. Firstly, there was the risk that this thesis would not achieve its objective. The remaining problem is to assess the extent to which this thesis

answers the original question. It has not been definitive in finding or establishing a simple answer. Such a hope would be impossible to achieve, because in reflecting on the fate of so many groups of victims of the Second World War, there are many competing memories. Chapter III concerning, *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah* (1998) is arguably a very difficult area of discussion in this thesis. In comparison with the theme of Chapter IV, neither Kolbe nor Stein can be 'un-canonised' or have their status changed from martyr to confessor. Nevertheless, the subject matter addressed in *We Remember* can be re-examined. It can be reassessed and it can be re-written to reflect a more open and self-critical understanding. To a degree, there is a precedent for this. The Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews published '*The Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable*', as a reflection on the significance of *NA* to mark its 50th anniversary in 2015. This document is fulsome in its praise for *NA* but, also clearly reflects on the subsequent development of the teaching and fruits of *NA*, taking the Church's thinking beyond that of the original document. So, in the same way, the Church could take *WR* and reassess and refine definitively how it should understand itself in its own understanding in relation to the Holocaust. This would prove both challenging and painful, but in the end, cathartic. The likelihood of

this happening soon is vanishingly small and given the age of this writer, I will not live to see it! More importantly, such a document could reach out and express the notion of *Teshuvah*. A concept which many books on Judaism describe as: -

“[R]epentance”. That is certainly a key element in the concept, but its literal meaning, “turning” captures another aspect of the process of *teshuvah*. To make *teshuvah* is to turn inward in self-evaluation, to turn back, to look on one’s deeds ... to return to God. (Robinson, 2000, p92)

There is perhaps one final point. Does an enquiry, a thesis like this matter? Is it something so obscure and of interest only to those whose inquisitiveness is dedicated to such a subject? The answer depends on whether or not six-million deaths by murder in the most appalling of circumstances are deaths worth thinking about. The Church of the present day stands in the shadow of its own recent past and part of this past is the shadow of the Holocaust. Out of this past there emerged the Second Vatican Council and *Nostra Aetate* and a partial response to the Holocaust.

The Church proclaims God's universal love which demands of God's creatures a reciprocal love manifested as love for others. Truth is essential to the service of the love of which the Church speaks. Interestingly the relationship of love and truth is a subject that exercised the mind of Abraham Joshua Heschel struggled with in his last work before his death (1973, p45) and one point he made was that: -

The central issue is not Truth in terms of doctrine, but veracity, honesty, or sincerity.

So, it must be that the Church must assess and re-assess again its own recent past in the light of the Holocaust. Such a task is neither easy nor pleasant.

A second risk was identified at the outset of this thesis. Namely, would the pursuit of it 'fundamentally' change the Catholic writer's own understanding of the experience of faith from what it was to what it is, or may become. The answer is definitive; it is 'yes', it has!¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ 39.963 words.

Appendix I

Time Line

	General Events	Church Events	Document Dates
1933	Hitler comes to power. Establishment of the Third Reich. 30 th Jan.	Reichskonkordat between the Vatican and the Third Reich 5 th July Cardinal Faulhaber's Advent Sermons. 3 rd , 10 th , 17 th 24 th December.	
1935	Third Reich passes Nuremberg Race Laws 15 th September		
1937			Pope Pius XI issues <i>Mit Brennender Sorge</i> . 14 th March.
1938	Kristallnacht, Germany. State sponsored pogrom against Jewish property. 9 th /10 th November.		
1939	Germany invades Poland and the Second World War commences. 1 st September.	Pope Pius XII elected.	
1940	Establishment of Auschwitz I. 20 th May.		
1941	Himmler visits Auschwitz I And orders construction of Auschwitz II (Birkenau). 1 st March. Germany invades Russia (Operation Barbarossa). 22 nd June.		
	First gassings at Auschwitz I take place. 3 rd September.	St. Maximillian Kolbe. Death by starvation and lethal injection. 14 th August.	

1942	Operation Reinhard camps established, e.g. Belzec, Sobibor Treblinka.	St. Teresa Benedicta (Edith Stein) gassed in Birkenau. 9 th August.	
1944	Transportation of Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz. May.		
1945	Soviet troops reach Auschwitz-Birkenau. 27 th January. Adolf Hitler commits suicide in Berlin. 30 th April. Germany surrenders to the Allies. 4 th May.		
1958		Pope Pius XII dies. 9 th October. Pope John XXIII elected. 28 th October.	
1962		Second Vatican Council Convened. 11 th October.	
1963	Rolf Hochhuth's play, <i>The Deputy</i> first Performed in Berlin.	Pope John XXII dies. 3 rd June. Pope Paul VI elected to papacy. 21 st June.	
1965		Second Vatican Council closes. 8 th December.	<i>Nostra Aetate</i> promulgated. 28 th October.

1974		<i>Guidelines and Suggestions for the Implementing the Conciliar Declaration: Nostra Aetate</i> (No. 4). Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews.
1978	Pope Paul VI dies. 6 th August.	
	Pope John Paul I elected to papacy. 26 th August.	
1978	Pope John Paul I dies. 28 th September.	
	Pope John Paul II elected to papacy. 16 th October.	
1979	John Paul II celebrates a large outdoor Mass at Birkenau. 7 th June.	
1984	Carmelite Convent Established in the <i>Theatergebäude</i> at Auschwitz. 1 st August.	
1985		<i>The Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church.</i> Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews.
1986		Declaration Concerning the Carmelite Convent at Auschwitz by the Official Delegation of Catholics and Jews, Geneva. 22 nd July.
1988	Erection of large Cross in the grounds of the <i>Theatergebäude</i> at Auschwitz.	

1991		<p><i>Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflections and Orientations on Inter-Religious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.</i> Pontifical Council for Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelisation of People.</p>
1993	Carmelite Sisters vacate the <i>Theatergebäude</i> at Auschwitz.	
1994	Establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the State of Israel. 19 th January.	<p><i>Fundamental Agreement Between the Holy See and the State of Israel.</i> Secretariat of State of the Holy See and the State of Israel.</p>
1998	War of Crosses at Auschwitz. August.	<p><i>We Remember: A Reflection on the Sho'ah.</i> Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. 16th March.</p>
2005	Pope John Paul II dies. Pope Benedict XVI elected to papacy. 19 th April.	
2013	Pope Benedict XVI Abdicates papacy. 28 th February. Pope Francis I elected to papacy. 28 th February.	
2015		<p><i>The Gifts and the Calling of God Are Irrevocable. (Rom 11:29)</i> Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews.</p>

Appendix II

DECLARATION ON
THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS
NOSTRA AETATE
PROCLAIMED BY HIS HOLINESS
POPE PAUL VI
ON OCTOBER 28, 1965

1. In our time, when day by day mankind is being drawn closer together, and the ties between different peoples are becoming stronger, the Church examines more closely her relationship to non-Christian religions. In her task of promoting unity and love among men, indeed among nations, she considers above all in this declaration what men have in common and what draws them to fellowship.

One is the community of all peoples, one their origin, for God made the whole human race to live over the face of the earth. (1) One also is their final goal, God. His providence, His manifestations of goodness, His saving design extend to all men, (2) until that time when the elect will be united in the Holy City, the city ablaze with the glory of God, where the nations will walk in His light. (3)

Men expect from the various religions answers to the unsolved riddles of the human condition, which today, even as in former times, deeply stir the hearts of men: What is man? What is the meaning, the aim of our life? What is moral good, what is sin? Whence suffering and what purpose does it serve? Which is the road to true happiness? What are death, judgment and retribution after death? What, finally, is that ultimate inexpressible mystery which encompasses our existence: whence do we come, and where are we going?

2. From ancient times down to the present, there is found among various peoples a certain perception of that hidden power which hovers over the course of things and over the events of human history; at times some indeed have come to the recognition of a Supreme Being, or even of a Father. This perception and recognition penetrates their lives with a profound religious sense.

Religions, however, that are bound up with an advanced culture have struggled to answer the same questions by means of more refined concepts and a more developed language. Thus, in

Hinduism, men contemplate the divine mystery and express it through an inexhaustible abundance of myths and through searching philosophical inquiry. They seek freedom from the anguish of our human condition either through ascetical practices or profound meditation or a flight to God with love and trust. Again, Buddhism, in its various forms, realizes the radical insufficiency of this changeable world; it teaches a way by which men, in a devout and confident spirit, may be able either to acquire the state of perfect liberation, or attain, by their own efforts or through higher help, supreme illumination. Likewise, other religions found everywhere try to counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing "ways," comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites. The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims, and ever must proclaim Christ "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself. (4)

The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men.

3. The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth, (5) who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honour Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the day of judgment when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.

4. As the sacred synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it remembers the bond that spiritually 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 her election are found already among the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets. She professes that all who believe in Christ-Abraham's sons according to faith (6)-are included in the same Patriarch's call, and likewise that the salvation of the Church is mysteriously foreshadowed by the chosen people's exodus 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 His inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles. (7) Indeed, the Church believes that by His cross Christ, Our Peace, reconciled Jews and Gentiles. making both one in Himself. (8)

The Church keeps ever in mind 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 fathers and from them is the Christ according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:4-5), the Son of the Virgin Mary. She also recalls that the Apostles, the Church's main-stay and pillars, as well as most of the early disciples who proclaimed Christ's Gospel to the world, sprang from the Jewish people.

As Holy Scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation,(9) nor did the Jews in large number, accept the Gospel; indeed not a few opposed its spreading.(10) Nevertheless, God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their Fathers; He does not repent of the gifts He makes or of the calls He issues-such is the witness of the Apostle.(11) 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 shoulder to shoulder" (Soph. 3:9).(12)

Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred synod wants to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues.

True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ;(13) still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures. All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.

Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.

Besides, as the Church has always held and holds now, Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of men and out of infinite love, in order that all may reach salvation. It is, therefore, the burden of the Church's preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows.

5. We cannot truly call on God, the Father of all, if we refuse to treat in a brotherly way any man, created as he is in the image of God. Man's relation to God the Father and his relation to men his brothers are so linked together that Scripture says: "He who does not love does not know God" (1 John 4:8).

No foundation therefore remains for any theory or practice that leads to discrimination between man and man or people and

people, so far as their human dignity and the rights flowing from it are concerned.

The Church reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against men or harassment of them because of their race, color, condition of life, or religion. On the contrary, following in the footsteps of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, this sacred synod ardently implores the Christian faithful to "maintain good fellowship among the nations" (1 Peter 2:12), and, if possible, to live for their part in peace with all men, (14) so that they may truly be sons of the Father who is in heaven. (15)

NOTES

1. Cf. *Acts* 17:26
2. Cf. *Wis.* 8:1; *Acts* 14:17; *Rom.* 2:6-7; 1 *Tim.* 2:4
3. Cf. *Apoc.* 21:23f.
4. Cf 2 *Cor.* 5:18-19
5. Cf St. Gregory VII, *letter XXI to Anzir (Nacir), King of Mauritania* (Pl. 148, col. 450f.)
6. Cf. *Gal.* 3:7
7. Cf. *Rom.* 11:17-24
8. Cf. *Eph.* 2:14-16
9. Cf. *Lk.* 19:44
10. Cf. *Rom.* 11:28
11. Cf. *Rom.* 11:28-29; cf. dogmatic Constitution, *Lumen Gentium* (Light of nations) AAS, 57 (1965) page. 20
12. Cf. *Is.* 66:23; *Ps.* 65:4; *Rom.* 11:11-32
13. Cf. *John.* 19:6

14. Cf. *Rom.* 12:18

15. Cf. *Matt.* 5:45

Appendix III

COMMISSION FOR RELIGIOUS RELATIONS WITH THE JEWS

WE REMEMBER: A REFLECTION ON THE SHOAH

*At a press conference on March 16, 1998, Cardinal Cassidy, President of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, presented for publication the document, *We Remember: A Reflection on The Shoah*. Joining him in the presentation were Bishop Pierre Duprey, Vice President of the Commission, and Father Remi Hoeckmann, O.P., its Secretary.*

We publish here Cardinal Cassidy's presentation of the document, along with Pope John Paul II's letter to the Cardinal about the document, and the text itself.

Presentation by Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy

The Holy See has to date published, through its Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, two significant documents intended for the application of the Second Vatican Council's Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, n. 4: the 1974 *Guidelines and Suggestions*; and the 1985 *Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Catholic Church*.

Today it publishes another document, which the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews has prepared at the express request of His Holiness Pope John Paul II. This document, which contains a reflection on the *Shoah*, is another step on the path marked out by the Second Vatican Council in our relations with the Jewish people. In the words which His Holiness wrote in his letter to me as President of the Commission, it is our fervent hope "that the document [...] will help to heal the wounds of past misunderstandings and injustices".¹

It is addressed to the Catholic faithful throughout the world, not only in Europe where the *Shoah* took place, hoping that all Christians will join their Catholic brothers and sisters in meditating on the catastrophe which befell the Jewish people, on its causes, and on the moral imperative to ensure that never again such a tragedy will

happen. At the same time, it asks our Jewish friends to hear us with an open heart.

On the occasion of a meeting in Rome on 31 August 1987 of representatives of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews and of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, the then President of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, announced the intention of the Commission to prepare an official Catholic document on the *Shoah*. The following day, 1 September 1987, the participants in this meeting were received at Castel Gandolfo by His Holiness Pope John Paul II, who affirmed the importance of the proposed document for the Church and for the world. His Holiness spoke of his personal experience in his native country and his memories of living close to a Jewish community now destroyed. He recalled a recent address to the Jewish community in Warsaw, in which he spoke of the Jewish people as a *force of conscience* in the world today and of the Jewish memory of the *Shoah* as "a warning, a witness, and a silent cry" to all humanity. Citing the Exodus of the Jewish people from Egypt as a paradigm and a continuing source of hope, His Holiness expressed his deep conviction that, with God's help, evil can be overcome in history, even the awesome evil of the *Shoah*.

We can read in the Joint Press Communiqué which was released at that time, that the Jewish delegation warmly welcomed the initiative of an official Catholic document on the *Shoah*, and expressed the conviction that such a document will contribute significantly to combating attempts to revise and to deny the reality of the *Shoah* and to trivialize its religious significance for Christians, Jews, and humanity.

In the years following the announcement, the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews engaged in a process of consciousness raising and of reflection on several levels in the Catholic Church, and in different places.

In the *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration Nostra Aetate*, n. 4, published on 1 December 1974, the Holy See's Commission recalled that "the step taken by the Council finds its historical setting in circumstances deeply affected by the *memory* of the persecution and massacre of Jews which took place in Europe just before and during the Second World War". Yet, as the *Guidelines* pointed out, "the problem of Jewish- Christian

relations concerns the Church as such, since it is when "pondering her own mystery" (*Nostra Aetate*, n. 4) that she encounters the mystery of Israel. Therefore, even in areas where no Jewish communities exist, this remains an important problem".

Pope John Paul II himself has repeatedly called upon us to see where we stand with regard to our relations with the Jewish people. In doing so, "we must *remember* how much the balance [of these relations] over two thousand years has been negative".² This long period "which", in the words of Pope John Paul II, we must not tire of reflecting upon in order to draw from it the appropriate lessons³ has been marked by many manifestations of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism, and, in this century, by the horrifying events of the *Shoah*.

Therefore, the Catholic Church wants all Catholics, and indeed all people, everywhere, to know about this. It does so also with the hope that it will help Catholics and Jews towards the realization of those universal goals that are found in their common roots. In fact, whenever there has been guilt on the part of Christians, this burden should be a call to repentance. As His Holiness has put it on one occasion, "guilt must always be the point of departure for conversion".

We are confident that all the Catholic faithful in every part of the world will be helped by this document to discover in their relationship with the Jewish people "the boldness of brotherhood".⁴

1 The letter of His Holiness is dated 12 March 1998.

2 Cf. *Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Catholic Church* (24 June 1985).

3 Speech delivered on the occasion of the visit of His Holiness to the Synagogue of Rome (13 April 1986), 4: *AAS* 78 (1986), 1120.

4 Pope John Paul II in his address to the Diplomatic Corps on 15 January 1994.

LETTER OF POPE JOHN PAUL II

*To my Venerable Brother
CARDINAL EDWARD IDRIS CASSIDY*

On numerous occasions during my Pontificate I have recalled with a sense of deep sorrow the sufferings of the Jewish people during the Second World War. The crime which has become known as the *Shoah* remains an indelible stain on the history of the century that is coming to a close.

As we prepare for the beginning of the Third Millennium of Christianity, the Church is aware that the joy of a Jubilee is above all the joy that is based on the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God and neighbour. Therefore, she encourages her sons and daughters to purify their hearts, through repentance of past errors and infidelities. She calls them to place themselves humbly before the Lord and examine themselves on the responsibility which they too have for the evils of our time.

It is my fervent hope that the document: *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*, which the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews has prepared under your direction, will indeed help to heal the wounds of past misunderstandings and injustices. May it enable memory to play its necessary part in the process of shaping a future in which the unspeakable iniquity of the *Shoah* will never again be possible. May the Lord of history guide the efforts of Catholics and Jews and all men and women of good will as they work together for a world of true respect for the life and dignity of every human being, for all have been created in the image and likeness of God.

From the Vatican, 12 March 1998.

JOHN PAUL II

COMMISSION FOR RELIGIOUS RELATIONS WITH THE JEWS

WE REMEMBER: A REFLECTION ON THE SHOAH

I. The tragedy of the Shoah and the duty of remembrance

The twentieth century is fast coming to a close and a new Millennium of the Christian era is about to dawn. The 2000th anniversary of the Birth of Jesus Christ calls all Christians, and indeed invites all men and women, to seek to discern in the passage of history the signs of divine Providence at work, as well as the ways in which the image of the Creator in man has been offended and disfigured.

This reflection concerns one of the main areas in which Catholics can seriously take to heart the summons which Pope John Paul II has addressed to them in his Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*: "It is appropriate that, as the Second Millennium of Christianity draws to a close, the Church should become more fully conscious of the sinfulness of her children, recalling all those times in history when they departed from the spirit of Christ and his Gospel and, instead of offering to the world the witness of a life inspired by the values of faith, indulged in ways of thinking and acting which were truly forms of counter-witness and scandal".(1)

This century has witnessed an unspeakable tragedy, which can never be forgotten: the attempt by the Nazi regime to exterminate the Jewish people, with the consequent killing of millions of Jews. Women and men, old and young, children and infants, for the sole reason of their Jewish origin, were persecuted and deported. Some were killed immediately, while others were degraded, illtreated, tortured and utterly robbed of their human dignity, and then murdered. Very few of those who entered the Camps survived, and those who did remained scarred for life. This was the *Shoah*. It is a major fact of the history of this century, a fact which still concerns us today.

Before this horrible genocide, which the leaders of nations and Jewish communities themselves found hard to believe at the very moment when it was being mercilessly put into effect, no one can remain indifferent, least of all the Church, by reason of her very close bonds of spiritual kinship with the Jewish people and her remembrance of the injustices of the past. The Church's relationship to the Jewish people is unlike the one she shares with any other religion. (2) However, it is not only a question of recalling the past.

The common future of Jews and Christians demands that we remember, for "there is no future without memory". (3) History itself is *memoria futuri*.

In addressing this reflection to our brothers and sisters of the Catholic Church throughout the world, we ask all Christians to join us in meditating on the catastrophe which befell the Jewish people, and on the moral imperative to ensure that never again will selfishness and hatred grow to the point of sowing such suffering and death.(4) Most especially, we ask our Jewish friends, "whose terrible fate has become a symbol of the aberrations of which man is capable when he turns against God", (5) to hear us with open hearts.

II. What we must remember

While bearing their unique witness to the Holy One of Israel and to the *Torah*, the Jewish people have suffered much at different times and in many places. But the *Shoah* was certainly the worst suffering of all. The inhumanity with which the Jews were persecuted and massacred during this century is beyond the capacity of words to convey. All this was done to them for the sole reason that they were Jews.

The very magnitude of the crime raises many questions. Historians, sociologists, political philosophers, psychologists and theologians are all trying to learn more about the reality of the *Shoah* and its causes. Much scholarly study still remains to be done. But such an event cannot be fully measured by the ordinary criteria of historical research alone. It calls for a "moral and religious memory" and, particularly among Christians, a very serious reflection on what gave rise to it.

The fact that the *Shoah* took place in Europe, that is, in countries of long-standing Christian civilization, raises the question of the relation between the Nazi persecution and the attitudes down the centuries of Christians towards the Jews.

III. Relations between Jews and Christians

The history of relations between Jews and Christians is a tormented one. His Holiness Pope John Paul II has recognized this fact in his repeated appeals to Catholics to see where we stand with regard to our relations with the Jewish people. (6) In effect, the balance of

these relations over two thousand years has been quite negative.
(7)

At the dawn of Christianity, after the crucifixion of Jesus, there arose disputes between the early Church and the Jewish leaders and people who, in their devotion to the Law, on occasion violently opposed the preachers of the Gospel and the first Christians. In the pagan Roman Empire, Jews were legally protected by the privileges granted by the Emperor and the authorities at first made no distinction between Jewish and Christian communities. Soon however, Christians incurred the persecution of the State. Later, when the Emperors themselves converted to Christianity, they at first continued to guarantee Jewish privileges. But Christian mobs who attacked pagan temples sometimes did the same to synagogues, not without being influenced by certain interpretations of the New Testament regarding the Jewish people as a whole. "In the Christian world—I do not say on the part of the Church as such—erroneous and unjust interpretations of the New Testament regarding the Jewish people and their alleged culpability have circulated for too long, engendering feelings of hostility towards this people". (8) Such interpretations of the New Testament have been totally and definitively rejected by the Second Vatican Council. (9)

Despite the Christian preaching of love for all, even for one's enemies, the prevailing mentality down the centuries penalized minorities and those who were in any way "different". Sentiments of anti-Judaism in some Christian quarters, and the gap which existed between the Church and the Jewish people, led to a generalized discrimination, which ended at times in expulsions or attempts at forced conversions. In a large part of the "Christian" world, until the end of the 18th century, those who were not Christian did not always enjoy a fully guaranteed juridical status. Despite that fact, Jews throughout Christendom held on to their religious traditions and communal customs. They were therefore looked upon with a certain suspicion and mistrust. In times of crisis such as famine, war, pestilence or social tensions, the Jewish minority was sometimes taken as a scapegoat and became the victim of violence, looting, even massacres.

By the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, Jews generally had achieved an equal standing with other citizens in most States and a certain number of them held influential positions in society. But in that same historical context, notably in the 19th century, a false and exacerbated nationalism took hold. In

a climate of eventful social change, Jews were often accused of exercising an influence disproportionate to their numbers. Thus, there began to spread in varying degrees throughout most of Europe an anti-Judaism that was essentially more sociological and political than religious.

At the same time, theories began to appear which denied the unity of the human race, affirming an original diversity of races. In the 20th century, National Socialism in Germany used these ideas as a pseudo-scientific basis for a distinction between so called Nordic-Aryan races and supposedly inferior races. Furthermore, an extremist form of nationalism was heightened in Germany by the defeat of 1918 and the demanding conditions imposed by the victors, with the consequence that many saw in National Socialism a solution to their country's problems and cooperated politically with this movement.

The Church in Germany replied by condemning racism. The condemnation first appeared in the preaching of some of the clergy, in the public teaching of the Catholic Bishops, and in the writings of lay Catholic journalists. Already in February and March 1931, Cardinal Bertram of Breslau, Cardinal Faulhaber and the Bishops of Bavaria, the Bishops of the Province of Cologne and those of the Province of Freiburg published pastoral letters condemning National Socialism, with its idolatry of race and of the State.(10) The well-known Advent sermons of Cardinal Faulhaber in 1933, the very year in which National Socialism came to power, at which not just Catholics but also Protestants and Jews were present, clearly expressed rejection of the Nazi anti-semitic propaganda.(11) In the wake of the *Kristallnacht*, Bernhard Lichtenberg, Provost of Berlin Cathedral, offered public prayers for the Jews. He was later to die at Dachau and has been declared Blessed.

Pope Pius XI too condemned Nazi racism in a solemn way in his Encyclical Letter *Mit brennender Sorge*,(12) which was read in German churches on Passion Sunday 1937, a step which resulted in attacks and sanctions against members of the clergy. Addressing a group of Belgian pilgrims on 6 September 1938, Pius XI asserted: "Anti-Semitism is unacceptable. Spiritually, we are all Semites".(13) Pius XII, in his very first Encyclical, *Summi Pontificatus*,(14) of 20 October 1939, warned against theories which denied the unity of the human race and against the deification of the State, all of which he saw as leading to a real "hour of darkness".(15)

IV. Nazi anti-Semitism and the Shoah

Thus, we cannot ignore the difference which exists between anti-Semitism, based on theories contrary to the constant teaching of the Church on the unity of the human race and on the equal dignity of all races and peoples, and the long-standing sentiments of mistrust and hostility that we call anti-Judaism, of which, unfortunately, Christians also have been guilty.

The National Socialist ideology went even further, in the sense that it refused to acknowledge any transcendent reality as the source of life and the criterion of moral good. Consequently, a human group, and the State with which it was identified, arrogated to itself an absolute status and determined to remove the very existence of the Jewish people, a people called to witness to the one God and the Law of the Covenant. At the level of theological reflection, we cannot ignore the fact that not a few in the Nazi Party not only showed aversion to the idea of divine Providence at work in human affairs, but gave proof of a definite hatred directed at God himself. Logically, such an attitude also led to a rejection of Christianity, and a desire to see the Church destroyed or at least subjected to the interests of the Nazi State.

It was this extreme ideology which became the basis of the measures taken, first to drive the Jews from their homes and then to exterminate them. The *Shoah* was the work of a thoroughly modern neo-pagan regime. Its anti-Semitism had its roots outside of Christianity and, in pursuing its aims, it did not hesitate to oppose the Church and persecute her members also.

But it may be asked whether the Nazi persecution of the Jews was not made easier by the anti-Jewish prejudices imbedded in some Christian minds and hearts. Did anti-Jewish sentiment among Christians make them less sensitive, or even indifferent, to the persecutions launched against the Jews by National Socialism when it reached power?

Any response to this question must take into account that we are dealing with the history of people's attitudes and ways of thinking, subject to multiple influences. Moreover, many people were altogether unaware of the "final solution" that was being put into effect against a whole people; others were afraid for themselves and those near to them; some took advantage of the situation; and still others were moved by envy. A response would need to be given case

by case. To do this, however, it is necessary to know what precisely motivated people in a particular situation.

At first the leaders of the Third Reich sought to expel the Jews. Unfortunately, the governments of some Western countries of Christian tradition, including some in North and South America, were more than hesitant to open their borders to the persecuted Jews. Although they could not foresee how far the Nazi hierarchs would go in their criminal intentions, the leaders of those nations were aware of the hardships and dangers to which Jews living in the territories of the Third Reich were exposed. The closing of borders to Jewish emigration in those circumstances, whether due to anti-Jewish hostility or suspicion, political cowardice or short-sightedness, or national selfishness, lays a heavy burden of conscience on the authorities in question.

In the lands where the Nazis undertook mass deportations, the brutality which surrounded these forced movements of helpless people should have led to suspect the worst. Did Christians give every possible assistance to those being persecuted, and in particular to the persecuted Jews?

Many did, but others did not. Those who did help to save Jewish lives as much as was in their power, even to the point of placing their own lives in danger, must not be forgotten. During and after the war, Jewish communities and Jewish leaders expressed their thanks for all that had been done for them, including what Pope Pius XII did personally or through his representatives to save hundreds of thousands of Jewish lives. (16) Many Catholic bishops, priests, religious and laity have been honoured for this reason by the State of Israel.

Nevertheless, as Pope John Paul II has recognized, alongside such courageous men and women, the spiritual resistance and concrete action of other Christians was not that which might have been expected from Christ's followers. We cannot know how many Christians in countries occupied or ruled by the Nazi powers or their allies were horrified at the disappearance of their Jewish neighbours and yet were not strong enough to raise their voices in protest. For Christians, this heavy burden of conscience of their brothers and sisters during the Second World War must be a call to penitence. (17)

We deeply regret the errors and failures of those sons and daughters of the Church. We make our own what is said in the Second Vatican Council's Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, which unequivocally affirms: "The Church ... mindful of her common patrimony with the Jews, and motivated by the Gospel's spiritual love and by no political considerations, deplors the hatred, persecutions and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and from any source". (18)

We recall and abide by what Pope John Paul II, addressing the leaders of the Jewish community in Strasbourg in 1988, stated: "I repeat again with you the strongest condemnation of anti-Semitism and racism, which are opposed to the principles of Christianity". (19) The Catholic Church therefore repudiates every persecution against a people or human group anywhere, at any time. She absolutely condemns all forms of genocide, as well as the racist ideologies which give rise to them. Looking back over this century, we are deeply saddened by the violence that has enveloped whole groups of peoples and nations. We recall in particular the massacre of the Armenians, the countless victims in Ukraine in the 1930s, the genocide of the Gypsies, which was also the result of racist ideas, and similar tragedies which have occurred in America, Africa and the Balkans. Nor do we forget the millions of victims of totalitarian ideology in the Soviet Union, in China, Cambodia and elsewhere. Nor can we forget the drama of the Middle East, the elements of which are well known. Even as we make this reflection, "many human beings are still their brothers' victims". (20)

V. Looking together to a common future

Looking to the future of relations between Jews and Christians, in the first place we appeal to our Catholic brothers and sisters to renew the awareness of the Hebrew roots of their faith. We ask them to keep in mind that Jesus was a descendant of David; that the Virgin Mary and the Apostles belonged to the Jewish people; that the Church draws sustenance from the root of that good olive tree on to which have been grafted the wild olive branches of the Gentiles (cf. *Rom 11:17-24*); that the Jews are our dearly beloved brothers, indeed in a certain sense they are "our elder brothers".(21)

At the end of this Millennium the Catholic Church desires to express her deep sorrow for the failures of her sons and daughters in every age. This is an act of repentance (*teshuva*), since, as members of the Church, we are linked to the sins as well as the merits of all her

children. The Church approaches with deep respect and great compassion the experience of extermination, the *Shoah*, suffered by the Jewish people during World War II. It is not a matter of mere words, but indeed of binding commitment. "We would risk causing the victims of the most atrocious deaths to die again if we do not have an ardent desire for justice, if we do not commit ourselves to ensure that evil does not prevail over good as it did for millions of the children of the Jewish people ... Humanity cannot permit all that to happen again". (22)

We pray that our sorrow for the tragedy which the Jewish people has suffered in our century will lead to a new relationship with the Jewish people. We wish to turn awareness of past sins into a firm resolve to build a new future in which there will be no more anti-Judaism among Christians or anti-Christian sentiment among Jews, but rather a shared mutual respect, as befits those who adore the one Creator and Lord and have a common father in faith, Abraham.

Finally, we invite all men and women of good will to reflect deeply on the significance of the *Shoah*. The victims from their graves, and the survivors through the vivid testimony of what they have suffered, have become a loud voice calling the attention of all of humanity. To remember this terrible experience is to become fully conscious of the salutary warning it entails: the spoiled seeds of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism must never again be allowed to take root in any human heart.

16 March 1998.

Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy

President

The Most Reverend Pierre Duprey

Vice-President

The Reverend Remi Hoeckman, O.P.

Secretary

TYPIS VATICANIS MCMXCVIII

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- (1) Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 10 November 1994, 33: AAS 87 (1995), 25.
- (2) Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Speech at the Synagogue of Rome*, 13 April 1986, 4: AAS 78 (1986), 1120.
- (3) Pope John Paul II, *Angelus Prayer*, 11 June 1995: *Insegnamenti* 181, 1995, 1712.
- (4) Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Address to Jewish Leaders in Budapest*, 18 August 1991, 4: *Insegnamenti* 142, 1991, 349.
- (5) Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 1 May 1991, 17: AAS 83 (1991), 814-815.
- (6) Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Address to Delegates of Episcopal Conferences for Catholic-Jewish relations*, 6 March 1982: *Insegnamenti*, 51, 1982, 743-747.
- (7) Cf. Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, *Notes on the correct way to present the Jews and Judaism in preaching and catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church*, 24 June 1985, VI, 1: *Ench. Vat.* 9, 1656.
- (8) Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Speech to Symposium on the roots of anti-Judaism*, 31 October 1997, 1: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 1 November 1997, p. 6.
- (9) Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Nostra Aetate*, 4.
- (10) Cf. B. Statiewski (Ed.), *Akten deutscher Bischöfe über die Lage der Kirche, 1933-1945*, vol. I, 1933-1934 (Mainz 1968), Appendix.
- (11) Cf. L. Volk, *Der Bayerische Episkopat und der Nationalsozialismus 1930-1934* (Mainz 1966), pp. 170-174.
- (12) The Encyclical is dated 14 March 1937: AAS 29 (1937), 145-167.
- (13) *La Documentation Catholique*, 29 (1938), col. 1460.
- (14) AAS 31 (1939), 413-453.

(15) *Ibid.*, 449.

(16) The wisdom of Pope Pius XII's diplomacy was publicly acknowledged on a number of occasions by representative Jewish Organizations and personalities. For example, on 7 September 1945, Dr. Joseph Nathan, who represented the Italian Hebrew Commission, stated: "Above all, we acknowledge the Supreme Pontiff and the religious men and women who, executing the directives of the Holy Father, recognized the persecuted as their brothers and, with effort and abnegation, hastened to help us, disregarding the terrible dangers to which they were exposed" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, 8 September 1945, p. 2). On 21 September of that same year, Pius XII received in audience Dr. A. Leo Kubowitzki, Secretary General of the World Jewish Congress who came to present "to the Holy Father, in the name of the Union of Israelitic Communities, warmest thanks for the efforts of the Catholic Church on behalf of Jews throughout Europe during the War" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, 23 September 1945, p. 1). On Thursday, 29 November 1945, the Pope met about 80 representatives of Jewish refugees from various concentration camps in Germany, who expressed "their great honour at being able to thank the Holy Father personally for his generosity towards those persecuted during the Nazi-Fascist period" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, 30 November 1945, p. 1). In 1958, at the death of Pope Pius XII, Golda Meir sent an eloquent message: "We share in the grief of humanity. When fearful martyrdom came to our people, the voice of the Pope was raised for its victims. The life of our times was enriched by a voice speaking out about great moral truths above the tumult of daily conflict. We mourn a great servant of peace".

(17) Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Address to the New Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Holy See*, 8 November 1990, 2: AAS 83 (1991), 587-588.

(18) *Loc. cit.*, no. 4.

(19) Address to Jewish Leaders, Strasbourg, 9 October 1988, no. 8: *Insegnamenti* 113, 1988, 1134.

(20) Pope John Paul II, *Address to the Diplomatic Corps*, 15 January 1994, 9: AAS 86 (1994), 816.

(21) Pope John Paul II, *Speech at the Synagogue of Rome*, 13 April 1986, 4: AAS 78 (1986), 1120.

(22) Pope John Paul II, *Address on the occasion of a commemoration of the Shoah*, 7 April 1994, 3: *Insegnamenti* 171, 1994, 897 and 893.

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