

# 'We Must Continue To Remind President Reagan That The Holocaust Must Never Be Forgotten'



NEW YORK -- Cardinal-designate John J. O'Connor, Archbishop of New York, accepts a red yarmulke from Rabbi David B. Kahane of the Sutton Place Synagogue prior to joining him on the bimah for a wide-ranging dialogue in the synagogue's Jewish Town Hall series. During the discussion, the Catholic leader told Rabbi Kahane: "We must continue to make clear to President Reagan that it was a mistake to go to Bitburg. That act will be forgiven but not forgotten." He recalled his own visit to Dachau as "the most compelling moment of my life." Some 2,500 New Yorkers watched and listened as Rabbi Kahane elicited Archbishop O'Connor's views on Catholic-Jewish relations, Vietnam, Nicaragua and other issues. The Cardinal-designate said he was deeply touched by the warmth of the welcome given him by the synagogue audience. Photo by Alexander Archer.

NEW YORK — Wearing a red skullcap he had been given as he entered the sanctuary, Cardinal-designate John J. O'Connor told some 2,500 members and guests of Sutton Place Synagogue this week that his visit to Dachau was "the most compelling experience of my life."

Archbishop O'Connor, who flies to Rome next week for his investiture as a Prince of the Church, was warmly received by the Jewish audience in the opening event of the synagogue's Jewish Town Hall series. It was his first appearance in a synagogue since becoming Archbishop of New York over a year ago.

Asked by Rabbi David B. Kahane of Sutton Place Synagogue, who conducted the interview, to comment on the results of President Reagan's visit to Germany, O'Connor replied:

"Perhaps some good did come from it after all. President Reagan seems to have understood more deeply the agony of the Jewish people. But we must continue to make clear to him that it was a mistake to go to Bitburg and that the horror of the Holocaust must never be forgotten."

The Catholic leader called the Holocaust "a mystery that can never be washed away, any more than the Crucifixion can be washed away. Let it be seared into every heart and every being, so that each of us will remember to look at every other human as someone made in the image and likeness of God," he said.

In response to a question on the effectiveness of demonstrations for Soviet Jewry, Archbishop O'Connor replied: "These demonstrations are tremendously important because their ultimate impact is in Washington. We must make it consistently clear that concern for Soviet Jewry in this country is a serious matter, and that our government must respond. This is a valid and legitimate way to influence the makers of public policy -- and we must never falter." The Cardinal-designate had greeted marchers from the steps of St. Patrick's Cathedral during the Soviet Jewry solidarity day demonstration the previous day (May 5).

On Catholic-Jewish relations, Archbishop O'Connor said he was "gratified but not satisfied" at the progress made since the Vatican Council acted 20 years ago in issuing "Nostra Aetate."

"We have come far, but there is still far to go" in strengthening understanding between Jews and Catholics," the Catholic prelate told Rabbi Kahane, adding:

"We Catholics have a major responsibility to stop playing games and come to grips with the reality of our teaching. If we are really to be Catholics, we must recognize the value, the authenticity and the reality of Judaism."

"Catholicism flowered out of Judaism, Catholicism is rooted in Judaism. To be a closet hater of Jews, or to discriminate against Jews, is profoundly sinful. That is the lesson of Nostra Aetate and that is what we must emphasize in

our own teachings."

Religion and Politics

On the issue of religion and politics, in which the leader of New York's Catholic community has been a controversial figure, Archbishop O'Connor said he felt it was his duty as a priest "to teach and preach." He continued: "We cannot stop teaching and preaching at election time, because there is always an election going on in this great democracy of ours. If what I say disagrees with a candidate's position on an issue, I will not and cannot be silent simply because there is an election."

"That does not mean that I favor or oppose any political candidate. But I do have the right to say that certain ideas are, in my judgment, bad for the body politic or violations of fundamental principles of my faith."

"The clergyman does not lose his rights as a citizen when he enters the church. Indeed, it is his right and obligation to express his views, so long as he makes clear these are his personal views and not the views of the church."

"Telling the clergy not to speak out at election time is the Soviet way, not the American way," he declared.

## Jerusalem Day Message 1985/5745

On the 28th day of Iyar, which this year fell on the 19th of May, we in Jerusalem were joined by our friends throughout the world in celebrating the 18th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem.

Eighteen in Hebrew is symbolized by the word "chai" -- life. And this very much reflects the theme of our efforts in the past eighteen years: to preserve the heritage and the history of our city while ensuring that it is a living city; to improve the quality of life for all the city's residents, closing the vast gaps which existed in 1967; to foster tolerance and understanding which will enable each community to live as is its custom.

Jerusalem lived with an ugly division in its midst for nineteen years. The city has now been reunited nearly as long. We have replaced a border town, marked by fortifications, barbed wire and tank traps with a thriving city, marked by parks and gardens, houses of worship, theaters and museums, restored ancient monuments. Perhaps more important, we have replaced a town where two peoples and many small ethnic religious groups lived in strife and enmity with a city where people are learning to live together in good neighborly relations.

We celebrate Yom Yerushalayim -- Jerusalem Day -- on this note of peace.

Jerusalem the ancient, Jerusalem the modern, Jerusalem the focus of world Jewry, Jerusalem the capital of Israel, Jerusalem a center of pilgrimage -- this is Jerusalem of the future.

Teddy Kollek  
Mayor of Jerusalem

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