

U.S. Jewry Hails Pope's Visit To Rome Synagogue

NEW YORK (WNS) — The visit by Pope John Paul II to the main synagogue in Rome was hailed by American Jewish groups as a major step in the process of reconciliation between the Catholic and Jewish faiths. They also expressed hope that it would lead soon to Vatican recognition of the State of Israel.

The American Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress declared in a joint statement that the Pope's visit "and the content of his eloquent remarks constitute an important and hopeful new chapter in the history of Catholicism's relations with Judaism.

"The Pope's formulation of that relationship bespoke an unusual warmth and friendship that embrace and confirm the considerable progress that has occurred in the past 20 years since Vatican II. More important, it holds the promise of further progress in that relationship," the AJC and WJC said.

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the congregational arm of Reform Judaism in America, declared that the Pope "has given flesh and blood to the pronouncements of Vatican Council II and, in so doing, has given heart to Catholics and Jews alike who

seek to deepen their understanding of each other.

Schindler added, however, that "this does not mean overlooking or ignoring the differences between us that still obtain. Jews can disagree with the Vatican on abortion and on diplomatic recognition of Israel and still work with Catholics on racial equality, economic justice, world hunger and nuclear disarmament," Schindler said.

Rabbi Arthur Schneier, president of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation and spiritual leader of the Park East Synagogue in New York, called the Pope's visit "a significant and symbolic act that will serve as the basis for broadening and deepening the relationship of Catholics and Jews, including eventual recognition of the State of Israel by the Vatican. Schneier also expressed confidence

that the Pope's condemnation of anti-Semitism in all of its forms and from any source "will have a profound effect on the attitude of Catholics to Jews and Jews to Catholics for generations to come."

Dr. Ronald Sobel, chairman of the Intergroup Relations Committee of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, said in a statement that the Pope's visit was "both a symbol and reality

testifying to the revolution that has taken place in Catholic-Jewish relations during the last quarter of a century."

Sobel, who is senior rabbi of Temple Emanu-El in New York, added, "The Pope's recognition and reaffirmation of the irrevocable call to the Jewish people by God also stands as an eloquent witness to the growing sensitivity that permeates the dialogue process between

Catholics and Jews." Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean of the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center, said, "This short journey from the throne of St. Peter to the central synagogue of Rome assures Pope John Paul II a special place of honor in Jewish history. Had such a journey been made by Pious XII, it is unlikely

that Hitler's 'Final Solution' would have reached its demonic proportions." Hier added, "Having ascended the steps of reconciliation with the Jewish people and vigorously condemned anti-Semitism, John Paul II should now ascend the final step by establishing full diplomatic relations with the State of Israel.

Pi Sigma Alpha, UNLV's political science honorary society, will hold its annual awards banquet April 26, 6 P.M., in Moyer Student Union, Room 203.

Rep. Harry Reid, a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, will be guest speaker. His topic is "Congress and U.S. Foreign Policy."

This event is open to the public. The dinner is \$20 per person for non-members.

For further information or reservations, call the Department of Political Science, 739-3307.

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