

### Rabbi Tanenbaum Sees Vatican Ties With Israel Within A Year

WASHINGTON (WNS) — The Vatican has decided to establish diplomatic relations with Israel and this could happen within a year, according to Rabbi Mark Tanenbaum, director of international relations of the American Jewish Committee, who has maintained close contacts with Catholic leaders since he attended Vatican Council II as an observer 20 years ago.

Tanenbaum based his forecast on recent conversations he had with cardinals and other church officials in the U.S., Europe and South America. "The question is not whether it will happen. The question is when and how it will happen," he says.

In the past few weeks at least two cardinals

told him that "the decision has been made by the Pope and the Vatican Secretariat of State" to formally recognize the Jewish State, Tanenbaum reported. He did not identify the cardinals.

According to Tanenbaum, one possible step would be to appoint an apostolic delegate to Israel. Currently there is what Catholic and Jewish leaders regard as "de facto" Vatican recognition of Israel, whose diplomatic representatives to Italy have full access to Vatican officials. Formal recognition would involve an exchange of Ambassadors.

Tanenbaum explained why the Vatican has refrained from recognizing Israel since its establishment in 1948. There are

unresolved disputes over Israel's boundaries, the rights of Palestinians in the Israel-administered territories and the Vatican's long-standing view that Jerusalem must be an international city, not the capital of a Jewish State.

There is also, Tanenbaum noted, the "genuine fear" of reprisals against Christians in Moslem-dominated Arab states should the Vatican recognize Israel. Citing such concerns, Tanenbaum advised Jewish groups to be patient while the Vatican works out the problem. The fear of reprisals against Christians is "not an abstraction," Tanenbaum said. But he predicted Vatican ties with Israel within a year, "provided the boat is not rocked by extremists on any side."

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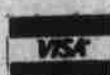
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