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## **Editorial**

# **INDIFFERENCE**

It's near the end of year 2008. Time to evaluate Catholic-Jewish progress. Well, I believe the patient is not doing well. The patient is on life support system. Why? Let me share my personal thinking on this matter. I may be wrong, but I don't think so. I'll let you be the judge. Here are some reasons.

1. Most priests and rabbis contacted either don't answer my letters or say they are not interested.
2. Speaking appearances have fallen off.
3. Some leading Catholic and Jewish leaders feel we have accomplished everything.
4. Interfaith services have greatly diminished.
5. Grass-root dialogue meetings are practically non-existent.
6. Most Churches and Synagogues (Temples) do not announce in their bulletins prayers for one another as each celebrate their High Holy Days.
7. A small point but it speaks volumes. Our Dialogue Today magazine costs \$12 a YEAR - exactly ONE DOLLAR A MONTH. Very inexpensive. Yet many members do not subscribe. We mail out about 650 copies. We give several hundred copies free to students. Several generous donors keep us in the black. What can I say? HELP US PROMOTE OUR CATHOIC-JEWISH DIALOGUE CAUSE and OUR MAGAZINE.

By the way, don't forget to check our updated website - [Dialoguetoday.org](http://Dialoguetoday.org). It's great. A seminarian did it.

NOW - what we need is resurgence. We need to be on fire again as we were in the 80's and 90's. Our enemies are never asleep. They want our indifference. They want us divided.

**DON'T BE INDIFFERENT - BE AGGRESSIVE - BE ACTIVE - BE A PART OF THE SOLUTION.**

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RENEWALS - We do not send notices because of postal cost.

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Msgr. Leonard F. Badia, Ph.D. - The Canon  
Publisher - Editor

# Dialogue

TODAY - 2008

## CATHOLIC-JEWISH ARTICLES

### 1. THE MAJOR RELIGIONS

Their Similarities and Differences

#### CATHOLICISM

1. Catholicism comes from a greek word meaning Universal. Roman Catholic means one belongs to the western part of the world while Eastern Catholic means one belongs to the eastern section.

2. Catholics worship in a building called a Church. In size, it may be a small chapel or a great Cathedral.

3. The Catholic Bible consists of the Old and New Testaments which were inspired by God and written by human hands. Catholics do not believe in a literal interpretation of every part of the bible.

4. Rome is important to Catholics because it is the scene of the martyrdom of Peter and Paul (Main Leaders) and is the seat of Church government. Jerusalem is the Holy and Sacred city because it is where Jesus lived, preached, died and rose from the dead. Jews and Muslims hold this city to be holy and sacred.

5. The Basic beliefs of a Catholic are contained in the Apostles' Creed (belief in one God, 3 persons in one God, Heaven, Virgin Mary, Resurrection of Jesus, Judgment day, Baptism for salvation, and the New life). If a Catholic denies willingly and consciously these beliefs, he/she is not a member of the Catholic Church.

6. No divisions or branches exist in the Catholic Church itself. It is one Church. However, there are members who are conservative, moderate or liberal in their interpretation of Church law.

7. Catholics believe in One God but there are three persons in the One God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). Other main beliefs are the Angels, Saints, prayer, Charity, Evil, Heaven, Hell, Purgatory and reward and punishment in the next life.

8. Forgiveness of one's sins are given through the power of the priest who is a representative of God. All Clergy and Lay people must confess their sins especially serious sin's (mortal).

9. Catholics hold in great honor and respect the prophets, saints, and the Virgin Mary.

10. God is personal, loving, gentle, merciful and just. Prayer does not change God but changes a person to do the right thing.

11. Converts are a part of Catholicism. Islam unlike Judaism looks to make converts.

12. Catholicism continues to renew itself through General Councils (Vatican II the latest). They update Church Laws and practices but never touch the Divine Laws (Ten Commandments).

13. In the eleventh and seventeenth centuries, members of the Catholic Church broke and became independent. They are known as Orthodox and Protestant Christians.

## JUDAISM

1. The Jewish place of worship is called a synagogue which has a rabbi and lay leadership.

2. The Jewish Bible (Old Testament) consists of the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings (history etc.). The most sacred section is the Torah (the first five books - Genesis through Deuteronomy) and were revealed to Moses by God.

3. The most sacred and holy city for Jews is Jerusalem because the Temples of Solomon and Herod once stood there. Today, the Wailing Wall stands on the foundations of those Temples. Another reason why Jerusalem is Holy and Sacred is that it was the capital of the famous and loved King David.

4. The word, Judaism, word comes historically from the word, Jew, meaning a descendant from the Tribe of Judah.

5. For all Jews the most basic beliefs are contained in the Ten Commandments. However, the Talmud, Midrash and Mishnah writings are also important to some Jews. The Ten Commandments spell out one's obligation to God and the neighbor.

6. Depending on the branch of Judaism, a Jewish person is required to pray three times a day, morning, afternoon and evening.

7. Like Muslims and Christians, Jews believe in One God, Angels, Prophets, Prayer Life, Charity in the sense of a just and required act rather than just plain Charity, and fasting at certain times.

8. Jews differ with Muslims and Christians about the Virgin Birth and Divinity of Jesus.

9. Jews revere Abraham as their Father. The Muslims too.

10. Jews like Christians and Muslims ask God for forgiveness. For Jews the main period of repentance is a ten day period from Rosh Hashanah (New Year's Day) to Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). Muslims set aside the month of Ramadan for repentance. Christians have the season of Lent, a period of 40 days.

11. All three Religions worship God once a week: Muslims on Friday, Jews on Saturday and Christians on Sunday.

12. The Ark in the main part of the Synagogue contains the Torah. It reminds Jews of the original Ark which was present in the Great Temples of Jerusalem. They contained the Ten Commandments.

13. Western Jews face east towards Jerusalem during their prayer time. Western Muslims face northeast towards Mecca during their prayer time.

14. The Jewish calendar is neither solar (Sun) like the Christian nor lunar (moon) like the Muslims but a combination of Lunar-solar.

15. There are three main branches of Judaism: Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform. Each group has its own interpretation of the Jewish Scriptures. Christianity and Islam also have their divisions.

## ISLAM

1. The place of worship and prayer is called a Mosque.

2. The Qur'an, also called the Koran, is Islam's most sacred book. The contents were revealed by the Angel Gabriel to Muhammad and is the final authority.

3. Mecca is the most sacred city because it houses the KABAHA, a cube-shaped building whose foundations were originally constructed by Abraham. It is also sacred because Muhammad was born in Mecca and Ishmael, son of Abraham lived in Mecca. Only Muslims are allowed to enter the city.

4. The word Islam means peace and surrender to God.

5. Islam's basic beliefs are the Five Pillars which are: profession in One God, and Muhammad his prophet; prayer five times a day, fasting during the month of Ramadan, charity to the poor, at least 2% of one's wealth, and a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in one life time.

6. The Muslim rosary, DHIKR, consists of various phrases repeated over and over to help focus on God.

7. Muslims recognize the Jewish Bible (Old Testament) and the New Testament as authentic but the Qur'an is the most authoritative book from God to Muhammad. The Qur'an mentions Jesus 97 times, Muhammad 25 times and Abraham several times. The Qur'an recognizes many Jewish prophets.

8. Islam accepts the Virgin birth of Jesus and his Messiah role to the Jews. However it denies Jesus was the Son of God and his death.

9. Islamic beliefs about God, angels and prophets are closely related to Judeo-Christian beliefs.

10. Muslims like Christians and Jews consider themselves the children of Abraham. Muslims are the descendants of Ishmael, son of Abraham from his servant girl, Hagar. Ishmael settled in Mecca.

11. Jihad does not mean Holy War in the literal sense unless the homeland is invaded. It is similar to the Judeo-Christian concept of a Just War where people have the right to defend their homeland with physical force. The fanatical approach of some Muslims is condemned by Islam, that is, any form of Terrorism is condemned. Jihad means any exertion in the cause of God such as study, work and other peaceful ideas.

12. Islam like Christianity has a group of ascetics called Sufis, who reject worldliness and wish for better communion with God. They are similar to the monks in Christianity.

13. Islam split into two groups after the death of Muhammad. The Sunni Muslims comprise 90% of the population. They accept the first four caliphs as Muhammad's rightful successors. They regard themselves as Orthodox to the teachings of Muhammad through his successors, the Caliphs. The Shiites reject the first three caliphs, insisting that Muhammad's son in law, Ali, was the rightful successor to Muhammad. From this group comes the Imam who is the authoritative person to interpret Islamic Law and Theology.

## 2. CATHOLIC-JEWISH QUESTIONS

1. Q. How much study does it take to become a priest?

A. After high school, it takes eight years to become a priest, four years of college and four years of theology. If you were a college student, it would take five.

2. Q. What are a Cardinal, Archbishop, Bishop and Deacon?

A. **Cardinal** is a person who is one of the Pope's closest advisors. It's the highest rank a priest can be given. Cardinals elect a Pope. However, cardinals over 80 years old cannot elect a Pope.

**Archbishop** is a priest in charge of a large historic area of land. Under Church law, an archbishop has no more power than a bishop.

**Bishop** is a spiritual leader like a cardinal and archbishop of a geographic or ethnic area called a diocese. An ordinary priest may be named a bishop, archbishop or cardinal. By the way, an auxiliary bishop does not mean he is not a fully ordained bishop. It means he is assigned to help a bishop in the administration of the diocese.

**Deacon** is a man who can be married and assists a pastor by performing some Church liturgical services such as baptisms, marriage, etc.

3. Q. Do Angels exist?

A. Yes, most people (85%) believe Angels exist. Allow me to give you a lengthy answer.

**Angels** - Angels are popular today. Statistics show 82% of American people believe in angels. Even teenagers believe in angels. The sale of books on angels has sky rocketed. For example, Billy Graham's book on angels sold over 3 million copies. Joan Wester Anderson's book on *Where Angels Walk* made the New York Times best seller list. Several TV programs are about angels such as *Touched by an Angel*. Our two religions believe in Angels. We will briefly examine Jewish and Catholic beliefs in Angels.

**Definition** - Angels come from the Greek word meaning messenger. There are many references to them in the Bible. They appear in human and spiritual form. They speak, sit, stand, walk, protect, or attack evil. At times, they sing or act as intermediaries between God and humans. In general, they are divine messengers sent by God to humans to instruct, inform, or command them.

## THE JEWISH BIBLE (OLD TESTAMENT FOR CHRISTIANS)

Angels in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) come from God. The word Angel in Hebrew is Malak meaning messenger.

1. Angels do everything we mentioned above.
2. Only two Angels are mentioned by name: Michael and Gabriel.
3. Satan for the Hebrews was a member of God's court and was a prosecuting attorney rather than an enemy of God. There is no mention of fallen angels or battles in heaven. The role of Satan as a bad angel becomes clear in the New Testament.
4. Appearances - sometimes they appear in human form as we read in the books of Genesis and Deuteronomy. Other times, they appear as super human as in the book of Judges.
5. Function - their primary role is to do the will of God. They praise God, they exercise power over nature, and they communicate messages from God. They destroy, punish and save.

## THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE (OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT)

Christians share the same idea of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). However, Christians believe Jesus, the Son of God, reveals more information about Angels.

1. The rebellion of some Angels such as Satan (Lucifer) is clear. He became the bad angel.
2. Angels have the same function as we read in the Old Testament. They appear in human and super natural forms.
3. Angels are messengers of God.
4. Angels are not to be worshiped. Worship is for God alone.
5. Angels are sent because of prayer with people, The Acts of the Apostles tells us. (Acts 12:5-8, I Cor. 11:13-15)
6. Angels have names: Gabriel, Raphael or are simply called the Angel of the Lord.
7. Like the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible), there is a hierarchy of Angels, namely, Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, powers, and principalities. Then there are the Archangels and just plain Angels.

## SUMMARY

Today in Reform and Orthodox Judaism, the existence of Angels is generally discounted. They believe the Angels are symbolic, not real. Only the Hasidim Orthodox Jews literally believe in Angels. Today for Catholics, it is a matter of Faith-Dogma. They must accept this teaching; otherwise, they are in bad standing with the Church.

4. Q. Can you explain the symbols, B.C. and C.E.?

A. Both Christians and Jews were deeply affected by the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E. (C.E. stands for “Common Era”). It has the same meaning as A.D. (in the year of our Lord). The C.E. term is more ecumenically accepted today. Likewise, the term B.C. (before the time of Christ) is generally replaced ecumenically with the term (B.C.E.) (before the Common Era).

5. Q. Who is a Jew?

A. A Jew is any person whose mother was a Jew or any person who has gone through the formal process of conversion to Judaism. It is important to know that being a Jew has nothing to do with what you believe or what you do. A person born to non-Jewish parents who has not undergone the formal process of conversion but who believes everything that Orthodox Jews believe and observes every law and custom of Judaism is still, even in the eyes of the most liberal movements of Judaism, not a Jew. Also a person born to a Jewish mother who is an atheist and never practices the Jewish religion is still a Jew, even in the eyes of the Ultra-Orthodox Jews.

6. Q. There are Jewish women Rabbis. Why aren't there Catholic women priests?

A. Women played important roles in the early Church. They were prominent female leaders in the early Church. Women like Lydia and Priscilla were well known.

Since 1960, women have begun to take more prominent roles in the Church. They are lectors, Eucharistic ministers, altar servers, and parish administrators. Some have become Chancellors of a diocese.

At the present time, the Pope has forbidden any discussion on women priesthood. The future role of women priesthood is only known

to God. Who knows?

7. Q. Why is Rome sacred to Catholics?

A. Basically the answer is that the two most important Christian leaders Peter and Paul were martyred and buried in Rome around 65 A.D. They were buried in a local cemetery. Eventually, a small chapel was built over their tombs, then a larger Church. Now, St. Peter's Basilica is built over their tombs. Under the main altar, very far down, there is the cemetery. It is historically believed that Peter and Paul were buried there.

## CATHOLIC NEWS

### The Iraqi Catholic Church

Iraqi leading churchmen including Cardinal Dely of Baghdad said Catholic life in Iraq is like a Way of the Cross. Peace and security are lacking as well as shortages of electricity, water, gasoline. Kidnapping and intimidation including church workers is a daily occurrence. Dozens of priests and two bishops have been abducted and released after payment of ransom. Some church personnel including the Archbishop Rahho of Mosul, a dozen priests and nuns have been murdered. Catholic Christians in Mosul and other cities are being driven out. Therefore, Iraq is disastrous and tragic for Catholic Christians.

### China and The Holy Land

The first China tour group to Israel started in September 2008. Nearly all of the Chinese tourists say that the major attraction to Israel is Christianity's roots.

For the average Chinese person the cost is expensive. It is approximately \$3000 for 10 days. It is hoped that 15,000 Chinese tourists will visit Israel in 2008. Observers, however, say that figure was unlikely. It is a major beginning.

### The Vatican Secret Archive

It is the Pope's private archive which contains a thousand years of documents in eighty kilometers of shelving. Since September 18, thirty thousand new volumes of papers are available for consultation, for the period from 1922 to 1939, corresponding to the reign of Pope Pius XI.

It also includes unpublished diaries of the then - cardinal Eugenio Pacelli (Pope Pius XII). There are rumors Pope Benedict will allow Jewish scholars to view these diaries.

## Syria and Pope Benedict XVI

The grand mufti of Syria, Ahmad Bader Hassoun, said he invited the Pope to Damascus to celebrate the year of St. Paul, the apostle converted on the road to Damascus. The grand mufti is leader of Syria's 18 million Muslims.

Nations with most Catholics and seminarians:

### NATIONS WITH THE MOST CATHOLICS

1	..... Brazil .....	155,628,000
2	..... Mexico .....	95,525,000
3	..... Phillippines .....	69,308,000
4	..... United States.....	66,893,000
5	..... Italy .....	56,383,000
6	..... France .....	46,520,000
7	..... Spain .....	40,950,000
8	..... Colombia .....	40,379,000
9	..... Poland .....	36,696,000
10	..... Argentina .....	35,408,000

### NATIONS WITH THE MOST SEMINARIANS

1	..... India .....	13,754
2	..... Brazil .....	9,450
3	..... Phillippines .....	6,873
4	..... Mexico .....	6,644
5	..... Poland .....	6,304
6	..... Italy .....	5,884
7	..... Nigeria .....	5,631
8	..... Colombia .....	4,779
9	..... United States.....	4,736
10	..... D.R. Congo.....	2,878

## JEWISH NEWS

### Berlin's Holocaust Museum

Vandals painted swastikas on Berlin's Holocaust Museum. Eleven red and black swastikas were painted on seven of the 2,700 gray columns

that make up the memorial. The memorial, located near the Brandenburg Gate, has been vandalized several times since it opened in 2005.

## Treating Jewish Inter marriages

Abraham Unger of The Jewish Week newspaper says lets treat Inter marriages in a reasoned way. He says, “there was a time when a Jewish boy wouldn’t date a non-Jewish girl and she wouldn’t necessarily date him either. Now, all bets are off.”

He further said, “the time has come to recognize that an open society is here. All we have to figure out is a way to retain the integrity of Torah within a social context unknown in previous periods of Jewish history in the degree of its openness. The Jewish people have accomplished much harder tasks. This should be one of the easy ones.”

## Anti-Semitism in New York

New York continues to be the Anti-Semitism capital of the United States, with a 23 percent jump in incidents of Jewish harassment and vandalism in 2007. New Jersey, California and Florida saw a decrease. The 2008 figures will be disclosed at the end of the year.

## The Biblical Tomb of Rachel

Until recently visiting Rachel’s tomb was very dangerous for the Jewish faithful. According to the Book of Genesis(35: 16-21), she died during childbirth as she and her husband, the Patriarch Jacob were traveling.

Rachel’s Tomb is considered by many Jews to be the third holiest place in Judaism after the Temple Mount/Western Wall and the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron.

Today it is relatively safe to visit her Tomb and have a powerful religious experience for Jews and Christians alike.

## The Late Pope Pius XII

Books, conferences are the latest signs of effort to rehabilitate Pius XII. The left and right wings split over Pius’ legacy.

Pope Benedict’s symposium in the Vatican with several Jewish Rabbis or their representatives from Europe and Israel and Catholic scholars has opened up the relationship of Pius XII and the Jews during the Second World War. Some positive progress was made. However, there is still negative thoughts among some Jewish leaders. They say,

“Maybe he (Pius XII) was afraid or for some reasons known to him he did not raise his voice. And that we cannot forget.” A critic of Pius XII, John Cornwell author of Hitler’s Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII, told The Jewish Week newspaper that, although he remains critical, he may have overstated his original negative claims about the Pope.

## PEOPLE

### **Father James Bernauer, S.J.**

The New York Jesuit priest who is Professor of Philosophy at Boston College has been appointed the new director of the Center for Christian Jewish Learning at Boston College.

He is internationally known for his Interfaith work and is an original member of the Jesuits in Jewish-Christian Dialogue.

### **Rabbi Jacob Neusner**

Pope Benedict XVI and Rabbi Neusner are very good friends and both agree what divides them is the Divine Jesus. However they agree they must work to respect their claims to truth.

### **Charlotte Fleck**

The estate of Charlotte Fleck who escaped from Nazi Germany and founded a successful importing business, named New York University School of Medicine as beneficiary of her entire \$15 million fortune. She died in 2005 at the age 84 and her husband, Henry, died in 1984.

The couple lived in Rego Park, Queens, New York, and had no children. Fleck’s parents and sister died in Nazi concentration camps.

### **Dr. John Strugnell**

The noted former editor in chief of the Dead Sea Scroll project died at the age 77.

The Dead Sea Scroll texts Strugnell personally pieced together and translated are important for understanding the people who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls. In addition he hired the best Jewish and Christian scholars for the Dead Sea Scrolls Project.

## **Dr. Eugene J. Fisher**

Seton Hall University honored Dr. Fisher with the university's NOSTRA AETATE award for his scholarly work done in Jewish-Christian Relations. It was said, "Dr. Fisher brought together the documentation and resources that made such implementation a reality. He remains a valued voice regarding continuing issues in the ongoing discussions between Catholics and Jews."

## **Vincenta Bukowski**

She was in a Nazi concentration camp because she defied the Germans when they entered Poland. She wasn't Jewish but spoke out against the Holocaust atrocities.

Because of her actions she and her family were sent to a slave camp. She survived.

Recently at Naples, Florida she was honored during a boxcar dedication ceremony. She remembered the boxcar measured 10 feet in width and 30 feet in length holding between 90 and 130 men, women and children. Many Rabbis, Priests, Imams and civil authorities were present at the ceremony.

# **ISLAM INFORMATION FOR CATHOLICS AND JEWS**

NOTE: Saudia Arabia's King Abdullah in Madrid, Spain sponsored an Interfaith Conference for 200 religious leaders of many faiths including Catholicism and Judaism.

The 35 Jewish leaders and 15 Catholic leaders seemed willing to test the waters regarding progress in Muslim - Jewish - Christian Relations. We live in hope.

## **GENERAL IDEAS ABOUT ISLAM**

1. Muslims believe the Qur'an which contains 114 chapters contains the complete and final revelations from God to Muhammad, His prophet.

2. The five main duties (five pillars) must be observed by all Muslims. They are: ritual prayer five times a day; the giving of alms to the poor; fasting during the month of Ramadan (changes each year according to the Moon calendar) and a pilgrimage to the sacred city, Mecca at least once in a life time.

3. Recitation of the profession of Faith: There is no God but God (Allah) and Muhammad is His prophet.

4. There is no central figure like the Pope for Catholics.

5. Jesus Christ is a great prophet, born of the Virgin Mary and did not die.

6. There is no personal relationship with God but one can know His will through the observance of the Qur'an.

7. Muslims worship in a building called a MOSQUE.

8. The Jihad literally means: "struggle". If practiced it means a "Holy War." Fundamentalists believe it means a literal military and/or political force to achieve the goals of Islam. Others believe the "Holy War" means a moral non-violent way.

9. Modernist Muslims see great potential for improving Islamic societies through embracing science and industrialization. They focus on promoting liberal values inherent in European notions of modernism.

10. Traditionalists are those Muslims who see a continuity in Islamic thought and culture from the Prophet's day forward; they would like to see a return to the "authentic" Islamic society represented by traditional Islamic educational and social institutions, systems of government, and religious hierarchies.

11. Most Islamist Muslims believe that by implementing Islamic law they can convince the citizens of the state to adopt "authentic" Islamic values and practices. They believe that virtuous leadership creates a virtuous society.

# SPIRITUAL INSIGHTS

## 1. Angry With God

Some people consider it wrong to get angry with God. I believe that if we do not get angry with God, then we have a constrained, artificial relationship with God.

When the world disappoints you, go ahead and blame God. Vent your anger, and bemoan the inequity. Voicing unhappiness with life's disappointments brings you closer to moving beyond them. God does not mind. He will continue to stand by you no matter how angry you become. God understands that you really are getting mad at your misfortune, not at Him.

## 2. A Religious Person

A religious man is a person who holds God and man in one thought at one time, at all times, who suffers harm done to others, whose greatest passion is compassion, whose greatest strength is love and defiance of despair.

By Rabbi Abraham J. Heschel.

## 3. A Prayer For Forgiveness and Mercy

Like dominoes ...

“Have you ever felt as though the problems in your life were like a series of dominoes? One domino falls down, and it sets off a chain reaction that knocks down the rest of the dominoes. David felt that his problems were going from bad to worse — his enemies had surrounded him, waiting for his ultimate demise. David could see no way out. But even in his despair, he knew there was one whom he could always trust to help him. He turned to God, confessed his sins, asked for forgiveness, and pleaded for mercy.

When we are separated from God because of our sins, we need to repent and ask for forgiveness. Then, with a clean heart, we can come before him and ask for help. He will hear and answer us “for the honor of his name.”

By Bruce Barton

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