

**Seton Hall University**

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**From the Selected Works of Reverend Lawrence E. Frizzell, D.Phil.**

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## 2018 Faculty Summer Seminar on Interfaith Relations: Day 2

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# Vatican II, *Nostra Aetate* on the Jews

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.

# ROMANS, CHAPTER 11

## The Gentiles' Salvation

**11\*** Hence I ask, did they stumble so as to fall? Of course not! But through their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make them jealous.<sup>j</sup>

**12** Now if their transgression is enrichment for the world, and if their diminished number is enrichment for the Gentiles, how much more their full number.

**13** Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I glory in my ministry

**14** in order to make my race jealous and thus save some of them.

**15** For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

**16\*** If the firstfruits are holy, so is the whole batch of dough; and if the root is holy, so are the branches.<sup>l</sup>

**17** But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place and have come to share in the rich root of the olive tree,<sup>m</sup>

**18** do not boast against the branches. If you do boast, consider that you do not support the root; the root supports you.<sup>n</sup>

**19** Indeed you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.”

**20** That is so. They were broken off because of unbelief, but you are there because of faith. So do not become haughty, but stand in awe.<sup>o</sup>

**21** For if God did not spare the natural branches, [perhaps] he will not spare you either.

<sup>p</sup>**22** See, then, the kindness and severity of God: severity toward those who fell, but God’s kindness to you, provided you remain in his kindness; otherwise you too will be cut off.

<sup>q</sup>**23** And they also, if they do not remain in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.<sup>r</sup>

**24** For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated one, how much more will they who belong to it by nature be grafted back into their own olive tree.

## God's Irrevocable Call.

**25** I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers, so that you will not become wise [in] your own estimation: a hardening has come upon Israel in part, until the full number of the Gentiles comes in,

**26** and thus all Israel will be saved,<sup>t</sup> as it is written:<sup>u</sup> “The deliverer will come out of Zion,

he will turn away godlessness from Jacob;

**27** and this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”<sup>v</sup>

**28** In respect to the gospel, they are enemies on your account; but in respect to election, they are beloved because of the patriarchs.

**29** For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.<sup>x</sup>

## Triumph of God's Mercy.

**30\*** Just as you once disobeyed God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience,**31**so they have now disobeyed in order that, by virtue of the mercy shown to you, they too may [now] receive mercy.

**32**For God delivered all to disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all.<sup>y</sup>

**33\*** Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable are his judgments and how unsearchable his ways!<sup>z</sup>

**34**“For who has known the mind of the Lord\* or who has been his counselor?”<sup>a</sup>

**35\*** “Or who has given him anything that he may be repaid?”

**36** For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

# ROMANS, CHAPTER 9

## Paul's Love for Israel

\***1** I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie; my conscience joins with the holy Spirit in bearing me witness<sup>a</sup>

**2** that I have great sorrow and constant anguish in my heart.

**3** For I could wish that I myself were accursed and separated from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kin according to the flesh

.<sup>b</sup>**4** They are Israelites; theirs the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises;

<sup>c</sup>**5** theirs the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, is the Messiah. God who is over all<sup>\*</sup> be blessed forever. Amen.<sup>d</sup>



# EPHESIANS, CHAPTER 2

## One in Christ.\*

**11**Therefore, remember that at one time you, Gentiles in the flesh, called the uncircumcision by those called the circumcision, which is done in the flesh by human hands,

**12**were at that time without Christ, alienated from the community of Israel\* and strangers to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world.†

**13** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have become near by the blood of Christ.‡

**14\*** For he is our peace, he who made both one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through his flesh,

‡**15**abolishing the law with its commandments and legal claims, that he might create in himself one new person\* in place of the two, thus establishing peace,

‡**16**and might reconcile both with God, in one body, through the cross, putting that enmity to death by it

‡**17**He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near,

‡**18**for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

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 did most of the early disciples who proclaimed Christ's Gospel to the world.

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.

# Jesus and Jewish Prayer in Matthew

## ■ Jesus and the Great Commandment

The core of the prayer recited by observant Jews evening and morning is the text of Deut 6:4-9. “Listen, Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.” This, the yoke of faith, is completed by the yoke of the commandments: “Therefore, you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your strength.”

**Heart** - the core of one’s being, is the seat of intellect and will, faculties which must bring the evil inclination into submission so that the good inclination prevails.

**Soul** - the life principle which permeates one’s physical being in a unity that constitutes body-and-soul (the Greek concept). One must love God even to the point of martyrdom.

**Strength** - all that derives from exercise of talents and use of time, i.e. wealth in its many forms (Aramaic translation of *me’od* is *mammon*).



1. The great commandment (Mt 22:34-40; Mk 12:28-3, which begins the citation with Dt 6:4). By linking the verb “love” in Dt 6:5 and Lev 19:18, Jesus stressed the unity of the duty to love God and neighbor, a term which is given the widest definition to include those who do evil to the person (Mt 5:43-48).
2. The parable of the sower interpreted (Mt 13:18-23)
3. The temptations of Jesus (Mt 4:1-11)
4. The devil suggested that Jesus use miraculous power for selfish gratification, giving in to the evil inclination. **Response: Dt. 8:3**
5. The temptation to presumption for Jesus to place himself in grave danger unnecessarily contradicts the command of self-preservation. **Response: Dt 6:16**
6. From the high mountain, all kingdoms and their magnificence would belong to Jesus after the compromise of false worship. **Response: Dt 6:13.**
7. By both teaching and example Jesus showed the centrality of the *Shema* to his life of prayer.

# The challenge of idolatry

POTENTIAL IDOLS	RESPONSE	STRENGTH PROVIDED BY
Possessions	Poverty	Faith
Pleasure – intellectual or sensual	Temperance	Hope
Power	Obedience	Charity

# The Lord's Prayer (Mt 6:9-13; Lk 11:2-4)

The 18 benedictions, part of the daily synagogue service (three times) before the time of Jesus, take up themes found in the thanksgiving recorded in the Hebrew text of the Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira at 51:12 (See New American Bible note at 51:12); note the petitions in 2 Maccabees 1:24-29.

The first 3 petitions celebrate the greatness, holiness and power of God (see my essay "The Magnificat: Sources and Themes, *Marian Studies* 50 [1999] p 38-59). The middle section presents the community's petitions for present and future needs.

The Lord's Prayer's petitions cover all relationships with God (first three), with nature and possessions (bread) by temperance regarding anxieties (Mt 6:25-35), with neighbor (forgiveness) to eliminate human tensions (Mt 5:21-48), with self in the struggle for the good inclination to overcome evil and trials (see Mt 7:11).

See Asher Finkel, "The Prayer of Jesus in Matthew," *Standing Before God* (ed. A. Finkel and L. Frizzell (New York: KTAV 1981) p. 131-167.

# Jesus' Invitation (Mt. 11:25-30)

The invitation “Come...learn” points to qualities of Jesus for imitation; it is followed by a promise for the disciples, those who take up his yoke.

“I myself will pasture my sheep; I myself will give them rest, says the Lord God” (Ez 34:15). The Son (Mt 11:27) is the eschatological Messiah-shepherd of Israel leading his followers to eternal rest, especially for those heavily burdened.

A yoke implies a double dimension: horizontal communion with fellow disciples (Mt 25:40; 28:10) and vertical submission to the Father in imitation of Jesus (Mt 3:15; 26:42).

The remnant, a people humble and lowly, takes refuge in the name of the Lord (Zeph 3:12). This community of those not exalting themselves (Mt 18:4; 23:12) is “poor in spirit” (Mt 5:3). As master of the humble, Jesus has a unique capacity for compassion (Mt 5:7); he is humble before the Father, to whom he gives thanks (Mt 11:25). Learning from Jesus means that disciples model their life according to his virtues; only then can they become teachers of the nations (Mt 28:19-20).

See Luis Sanchez Navarro, *Venid a me (Mt 11:28-30): El Discipulado, Fundamento de la Etica en Mateo* (Madrid: San Damaso, 2004).

# Exodus and Passover: **Jewish and Christian Celebrations:** Lawrence E. Frizzell Seton Hall University

## 1. Israel and Egypt (**Exodus 1-15**)

The Plagues respond to a genocidal attack

The contest between Moses and Aaron with Pharaoh's magicians

Conscience and freedom vs. enslavement

The drama of flight and pursuit after the Passover Meal.

## 2. Sinai and the Land (**Exodus 19-25**)

Covenant and commandments

“Honor your parents that you may live long in the Land...”

Liturgical commemoration/sacrifice: re-living past events

Each generation experiences the signs of divine power and mercy

### **3. Exodus as paradigm of liberation; typology as key for interpreting history**

Isaiah [51:9-10](#)

The Aramaic “Hymn of the Four Nights” ([Targum Neofiti on Exodus 12:42](#)).

### **4. Jesus of Nazareth and Exodus-Passover**

The Last Supper as Passover Meal ([Matthew 26:17-30 and parallels](#))

The death of Jesus in Gospels and Paul

Exodus as paradigm for understanding the conquest of sin and Satan

### **5. Christians and anti-Jewish bigotry**

Blaming all Jews for the death of Jesus- *deicide* charge

Supersessionism or replacement theology of early Christians

## ■ Rectification of the relationship between Christians and Jews

Seelisberg Conference (1947), World Council of Churches (1948, 1961), Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) **“The Church’s bond with the Jewish people”**

Gentiles are adopted into the people of God and family of Abraham by baptism (Galatians 3:26-28, drawing on **Genesis 12:1-3; 17:1-5**, etc.

“As Christians and Jews, following the example of the faith of Abraham, we are called to be a blessing for the world [**cf. Gen. 12:2ff**]. This is the common task awaiting us. It is therefore necessary for us, Christians and Jews, to be first a blessing to one another.”

Pope John Paul II, ***Reflections on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Uprising of the Warsaw Ghetto*** (April 6, 1993) in

Eugene J. Fisher and Leon Klenicki, (ed.) ***Spiritual Pilgrimage: Texts on Jews and Judaism 1979-1995*** (New York: Crossroads, 1995) p 169

# Passion of Jesus: Catholic Worship and the Jewish People

## I. The Gospels and the Trial, Death of Jesus

a) Role of Jewish and Roman authorities (Mark 15:6-15; Luke 23:1-25; I Corinthians 1:7-8; Acts 3:14-21; Matthew 27:25).

b) Accusation against “the whole people” (Matthew 27:25).

c) “The Jews” in the Gospel according to John.

Church teaching: “True, authorities of the Jews and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ (cf. Jn 19:6); still, what happened in his passion cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living, without distinction, nor upon the Jews of today... Besides, as the Church has always held and continues to hold, Christ in his boundless love freely underwent his passion and death because of the sins of all men, so that all might attain salvation. It is, therefore, the duty of the church’s preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God’s all-embracing love and the fountain from which every grace flows.” (Vatican Council II, *Nostra Aetate*, Church’s Bond with the Jewish People #4).

“The formula “the Jews,” in St. John, sometimes according to the context means “the leaders of the Jews,” or “the adversaries of Jesus,” terms which express better the thought of the evangelist and avoid appearing to arraign the Jewish people as such.” (Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, December 1, 1974 #III. See Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis, June 24, 1985).



## II. The Rome Rite Liturgy on Good Friday

a) Reading of the Passion Narrative according to St. John.

b) Solemn Orations: Prayer for the Jewish People has been changed after Vatican II.

c) Improperia (Reproaches) during veneration of the Cross.

Text of Micah 6:3-4 is expanded in 2 Esdra (4 Ezra) 1:4-37.

Response in Greek and Latin: “Holy God, Holy and Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us.” This is not a required text; another hymn may be used.

### III. Popular Devotions

a) Catholic piety includes meditation on the Mysteries of God's plan in the life of Jesus, using the Scriptures and reconstructing scenes from the Gospel message. The Rosary, Stations of the Cross, individual prayers. These must be interpreted in the light of the Second Vatican Council and later teachings.

b) Passion plays, among many dramatizations of the Bible in the Middle Ages, have continued to be popular in many cultures. In 1985 the US National Conference of Catholic Bishops issued guidelines for such plays and devotions. The Roman Catechism (1566, after the Council of Trent) taught that Christians are guilty of Jesus' death in a way not shared by his persecutors. "We, however, profess to know him, and when we deny him by our deeds we in some way seem to lay violent hands on him. Nor did demons crucify him, it is you who have crucified him and crucify him still, when you delight in your vices and sins." This text drew upon Hebrews 6:6.

The fundamental principle for all Catholics is given in *Nostra Aetate* #4. "All should take pains, then, lest in catechetical instruction and in the preaching of God's word they teach anything out of harmony with the truth of the gospel and the spirit of Christ."

# The Catholic Church and Its Jewish Roots

## 1. Titles: People of God and Mystical Body of Christ

To avoid supersession (replacement) theories, “the people of God of the New Covenant” must be understood in relation to the people of God, descendants of Abraham ([Galatians 3:26-29](#)). “Body of the Messiah” is a title deriving from the image of Head and members ([1 Corinthians 12:12-26](#)).

## 2. The Hierarchy: Servants of the Community of faith

The leadership roles in ancient Israel, King, priest and prophet, are applied to the mission of the Messiah and his members. Just as David’s successor gave the keys to Jerusalem as symbol of authority ([Isaiah 22:15-25](#)), so Jesus promised the “keys of the Kingdom to Simon ([Peter-Matthew 16:16-19, see 18:18-20](#)).

## 3. Theology in Competitive Context

Christian theologians from the second century developed a supersessionist approach to relations with Judaism and the Jewish people. *Ecclesia-synagoga* imagery, allegorical interpretations of passages in TeNaKh...

## 4. The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) and a new vision.

In the context of theological reflections in the Constitutions, decrees and other declarations, the declaration on the Church and Non-Christian religions (*Nostra Aetate*, 1965) described the Church’s bond with the Jewish people.

## **5. Worship and Prayer in the Contemporary Church.**

Doctrinal foundations of worship remain, but change to vernacular languages and more extensive use of the Jewish Scriptures in the lectionary for Mass bring great benefits to the faithful. Anti-Jewish elements in liturgy (especially in Holy Week) were removed.

## **6. Love of Law and Law of Love.**

The New Testament emphasis on the Decalogue was incorporated into Christian moral teaching and is fundamental to the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1993). The two-fold commandment of love (Deut 6:4-5; Lev 19:18) became the Gospel challenge for Christians, completed by the new commandment of mutual love in imitation of Jesus (John 13:34-35; 15:12).

## **7. Dignity of the Human Person and Challenges for the Social Order**

The creation of every human being in the divine image (Gen 1:26-28) is the foundation for Jewish and Christian understanding of the unique dignity of each person. The individual's rights and duties are situated within the community (from family to nation and all humanity) and search for the common good.

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

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 honor 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.

# “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” (John 14:6)

The role of **The Messiah** (Anointed One) is described in terms of leadership functions

Jewish Scriptures	King	Prophet	Priest
Gospel	Way	Truth	Life
Church	Law	Doctrine	Sacraments