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SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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UDIENZA ALLA DELEGAZIONE DELLA "B'NAI B'RITH INTERNATIONAL"

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Questa mattina il Santo Padre riceve in Udienza i membri della Delegazione della "B'nai B'rith International" e rivolge loro il saluto che riportiamo di seguito:

• SALUTO DEL SANTO PADRE

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to greet this delegation from B'nai B'rith International on the occasion of your visit to the Vatican. Following the promulgation of the Second Vatican Council's Declaration *Nostra Aetate* in 1965, leaders of B'nai B'rith have visited the Holy See on numerous occasions. Today, in the spirit of understanding, respect and mutual appreciation which is developing between our communities, I welcome you, and through you, all those whom you represent.

Much has been achieved in the past four decades of Jewish-Catholic relations, and we must be grateful to God for the remarkable transformation that has taken place on the basis of our common spiritual patrimony. It is this rich heritage of faith which enables our communities not only to enter into dialogue, but also to be partners in working together for the good of the human family. Our troubled world needs the witness of people of good will inspired by the truth, revealed on the first page of the Scriptures, that all men and women are created in the image of God (cf. *Gen* 1:26-27), and thus possess an inalienable dignity and worth.

Jews and Christians are called to work together for the healing of the world by promoting the spiritual and moral values grounded in our faith convictions. If we give a clear example of fruitful cooperation, our voice in responding to the needs of the human family will be all the more convincing.

On the occasion of your visit, I reiterate my unfailing hope and prayer for peace in the Holy Land. Peace can only come about if it is the concern of Jews, Christians and Muslims alike, expressed in genuine interreligious dialogue and concrete gestures of reconciliation. All believers are challenged to show that it is not hatred and violence, but understanding and peaceful cooperation which open the door to that future of justice and peace which is God's promise and gift.

During this holy season, I cordially invoke upon you and your families an abundance of divine blessings. *Shalom alechem!*

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