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## To the Anti-Defamation League: the iniquity of the Shoah must never again be possible

The Holy Father received in audience this morning, in the Hall of Popes, the members of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), a Jewish organisation based in the United States, whose aim is that, by appeal to reason, conscience and if necessary the law, to stop the defamation of the Jewish people. Founded in 1913, throughout its history the League has also been active in the protection of civil rights, including those of immigrants and refugees, through information, education and the promotion of tolerance.

In his address, Francis noted that his predecessors St. John Paul II and Benedict XVI had also received delegations from the League, which has maintained relations with the Holy See since the Second Vatican Council, and expressed his gratitude that these contacts have intensified, “a further testimony, beyond that of our shared commitment, to the valuable power of reconciliation, which heals and transforms relationships. … Whereas the culture of encounter and reconciliation engenders life and gives rise to hope, the ‘non-culture’ of hate sows death and reaps despair”.

He went on to mention his visit last year to the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. “There are no adequate words or thoughts in the face of such horrors of cruelty and sin; there is prayer, that God may have mercy and that such tragedies may never happen again. To this end let us continue to help one another, as Pope John Paul II so desired, ‘to enable memory to play its necessary part in the process of shaping a future in which the unspeakable iniquity of the Shoah will never again be possible’ (Letter on the Occasion of the Publication of the Document “*We Remember: a Reflection on the Shoah*”, 12 March 1998): a future of genuine respect for the life and dignity of every people and every human being”.

“Sadly, anti-Semitism, which I again denounce in all its forms as completely contrary to Christian principles and every vision worthy of the human person, is still widespread today. I reaffirm that ‘the Catholic Church feels particularly obliged to do all that is possible with our Jewish friends to repel anti-Semitic tendencies’ (Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, *The Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable*, 47). Today more than ever, the fight against anti-Semitism can benefit from effective instruments, such as information and formation. In this regard, I thank you for your work and for combining efforts to counter defamation with education, promotion of respect for all, and protection of the weakest. Caring for the sacred gift of all human life and safeguarding its dignity, from conception to death, is the best way of preventing every type of violence. Faced with too much violence spreading throughout the world, we are called to a greater nonviolence, which

does not mean passivity, but active promotion of the good. Indeed, if it is necessary to pull out the weeds of evil, it is even more vital to sow the seeds of goodness: to cultivate justice, to foster accord, to sustain integration, without growing weary; only in this way may we gather the fruits of peace".

"I encourage you in this work, in the conviction that the best remedies against the rise of hatred consist in making available the means necessary for a dignified life, in promoting culture and favouring religious freedom everywhere, as well as in protecting believers and religions from every form of violence and exploitation", the Pope concluded. "I am grateful to you also for the dialogue which, at various levels, you maintain with the Catholic Church. Upon our shared commitment and our journey of friendship and fraternal trust, I invoke the Almighty's blessings: in his munificence may he accompany us and help us to bring forth the fruits of goodness. *Shalom Alechem*!"