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# **BOLLETTINO**

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## **Greeting of the Holy Father, handed to Cardinal Koch for the Delegation of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations**

The following is the text prepared for the Holy Father and handed by him to Cardinal Koch, to be conveyed to the delegation of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations, whom Pope Francis was unable to meet this morning due to a worsening of the pain in his knee.

### **Greeting of the Holy Father**

Dear friends,

I offer a warm welcome to you, the leadership of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations. Your organization, founded in 1970 with the aim of promoting and encouraging interreligious dialogue worldwide, brings together a number of large Jewish organizations, based especially in the United States of America. From the very beginning, you have been in contact with the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews and together have regularly organized joint conferences on topics of current interest. I recall greeting your group at the General Audience in Saint Peter's Square during your last meeting in Rome in May 2019.

In our turbulent times, it is critical that Jews and Christians encounter one another more frequently and work together in an effort to counter certain negative trends found in our western societies: idolatry of self and of money, extreme individualism and the culture of indifference and of waste. We are called to bear witness together to the God of mercy and justice, who loves and cares for all persons. We can do this by drawing upon the spiritual patrimony that we in part share, a patrimony that we are responsible for preserving and understanding ever more profoundly.

Our religious traditions bid us address disagreements, differences and conflicts not in a confrontational way, but without prejudice, with peaceful intentions and with the aim of finding areas of agreement acceptable to all. To be sure, hatred and violence are incompatible with our faith in the God who is "merciful and gracious, slow to

anger and abounding in mercy and faithfulness" (*Ex 34:6*). As Jews and Christians, we are called to act in such a way that we resemble our Creator and Father as best we can. This, as we know, becomes very difficult when we are made the object of injustice and persecution, as has frequently occurred in history and, tragically, continues to occur today. In this regard, I take this occasion to reiterate the Catholic Church's commitment to oppose every form of antisemitism, above all through preventive action, namely on the level of education, within families, parish communities and schools, and in lay associations.

Interreligious dialogue is a sign of our times and, I would say, a providential sign, in the sense that God himself, in his wise plan, has inspired, in religious leaders and in many others, the desire to encounter and come to know one another in a way respectful of religious differences. This is a privileged path to the growth of fraternity and peace in our world. By strengthening dialogue, we can resist the extremism that, sadly, is a pathology that can appear also in religions. Let us pray that the Lord will continue to guide us on this path of dialogue and fraternity.

Dear friends, I thank you for your visit. May the blessing of God accompany you and make your work fruitful in the service of greater mutual understanding and cooperation. In your prayers, please, remember me as well.  
Thank you!

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