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NOTA DELLA NUNZIATURA IN ISRAELE

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To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel

The Apostolic Nunciature in Israel presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign affairs of the State of Israel and wishes to convey the regrets of the Holy See at the news that a Gay Parade is scheduled to take place in Jerusalem this week.

The Holy See has reiterated on many occasions that the right to freedom of expression, sanctioned by the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, is subject to just limits, in particular when the exercise of this right would offend the religious sentiments of believers. It is clear that the Gay Parade scheduled to take place in Jerusalem will prove offensive to the great majority of Jews, Muslims and Christians, given the sacred character of the City of Jerusalem.

The Apostolic Nunciature, in this context, likes to recall the *Joint Declaration of the Meeting of the Bilateral Committee of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews and the Chief Rabbinate of Israel*, held in Grottaferrata (Rome) on October 17-19, 2004, which stated: "*Jerusalem has a sacred character for all the children of Abraham. We call on all relevant authorities to respect this character and to prevent immodest parades and any overt actions which offend the sensibilities of religious communities that reside in Jerusalem and hold her dear*".

The Apostolic Nunciature, therefore, is confident that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will exert all its influence to have the decision authorizing the Parade in Jerusalem to be reconsidered, as a mark of respect for the religious sentiments of all those who venerate the Holy City.

The Apostolic Nunciature in Israel expresses its gratitude to the ministry of Foreign Affairs for the attention it will give to this matter and avails itself of this opportunity to renew to it the assurance of its highest consideration.

Jaffa-Tel Aviv, November 8, 2006

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