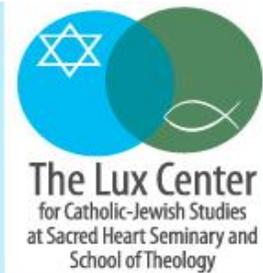


Lux Center News



October 26, 2015

Interfaith or Interreligious—Is There a Difference?

A Note From Dr. Sherry Blumberg

Dr. Gabriel Moran, a Catholic Religious Educator and Philosopher who taught for many years at New York University, liked to make a distinction between Inter-faith dialogue and Inter-Religious Dialogue. He maintained that we all have “faith” in the One God, but that our religious traditions were different. I believe in his important distinction.

Faith, trust and confidence in God, is common to all the Abrahamic traditions. Our paths towards that God are, however, shaped by the celebrations and the rituals of our religious traditions. As we dialogue together, to achieve an understanding and respect for the other, we can learn about the similarities and the differences of our religious traditions and celebrate our different ways of expressing the faith in God that we share.

Pope Francis has said, “Interreligious dialogue is a necessary condition for peace in the world, and so it is a duty for Christians as well as others.”

***Nostra Aetate*—Commemorating 50 Years**

Fifty years ago, on October 28, 1965, the Catholic Church redefined its relationship with other religions, notably Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, when the bishops assembled for the Second Vatican Council passed the “Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions,” commonly known as *Nostra Aetate* (after the opening words, “in our time. . .”). The document announced that the Church “reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against men or harassment of them because of their race, color, condition of life, or religion.” *Nostra Aetate*’s importance is that it opened the door to a new era of interfaith dialogue and understanding.

The document goes on to state unequivocally that Jews, both during the time of Jesus and subsequently, should not be held responsible for his death; that Jews should not be portrayed as cursed or abandoned by God; that God’s covenant with the Jews is eternal; and the Church condemns all violence and anti-Semitism directed against Jews. *Nostra Aetate* and

subsequent documents that expanded and deepened the Church's thinking and teaching about Jews and Judaism established the founding principles of the Jewish-Christian dialogue.

The last four popes are among the many heroes in the Catholic Church who deserve credit for implementing *Nostra Aetate*. Pope John XXIII convened Vatican II and initially insisted that it include a statement on Jews and Judaism. Pope Paul VI officially carried it through and endorsed *Nostra Aetate* after it was approved. Pope John Paul II made the words of the document live within the Church and was the first pope to visit a synagogue since the establishment of the Church. Pope Benedict also visited Israel and spoke in synagogues. And now Pope Francis consistently speaks about the theological significance of Jewish existence for Catholics,

What I can say, with the apostle Paul, is that God has never stopped believing in the alliance made with Israel and that, through the terrible trials of these past centuries, the Jews have kept their faith in God. And for this, we will never be grateful enough to them, as the Church, but also as humanity at large.

Much has been accomplished in fifty years, but challenges still remain. These challenges demand that we build on the foundation of dialogue to bring in a new era of interfaith collaboration. In so doing, we can celebrate the idea that we are all children of God and walk together on the path to peace on earth.

To view the *Nostra Aetate* document:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html

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Upcoming Programs You Do Not Want to Miss

Nostra Aetate Fifty Years Later: Divine Gift and Enduring Challenge to Catholics

Tuesday, November 3, 2015

Salzmann Library Lecture

St. Francis de Sales Seminary, Henni Hall, Inner Commons, j

Featuring: Bishop Richard Sklba

RSVP-- mschrauth@sfs.edu or call 414-747-6479

Free bus transportation provided for the following community program!

Sign up [at bshafrin@shsst.edu or call 414-529-6966] to take the free Lux Center bus that will leave from Sacred Heart Seminary at 6:15 p.m. to attend:

Pope Francis, *Nostra Aetate* and Jewish-Catholic Relations

Thursday, November 12, 2015 (begins at 7 pm)
Jewish Museum Milwaukee, 1360 N. Prospect Ave.

Featuring--Rabbi David Sandmel, Director of Interfaith Affairs, Anti Defamation League
Dr. Phillip Cunningham, Professor of Theology and Director of the Institute for
Jewish-Catholic Relations at St. Joseph University

Two renowned leaders in Catholic-Jewish relations will look at progress made in Catholic-Jewish Relations since Vatican II, with a focus on how Pope Francis's relations with the Jews of Argentina and other faith groups shapes his interreligious agenda.