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CENTER FOR CATHOLIC STUDIES

2018 Faculty Summer Seminar



INTERFAITH RELATIONS

Co-sponsored by the

CENTER FOR VOCATION & SERVANT LEADERSHIP

With support of the

THE TOTH/LONERGAN ENDOWED CHAIR

IN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

May 22-24, 2018

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CENTER FOR
CATHOLIC STUDIES

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

2018 FACULTY SUMMER SEMINAR

CO-SPONSORED BY THE INSTITUTE FOR JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN STUDIES &
THE CENTER FOR VOCATION AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP
WITH SUPPORT OF THE TOTH/LONERGAN ENDOWED CHAIR IN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

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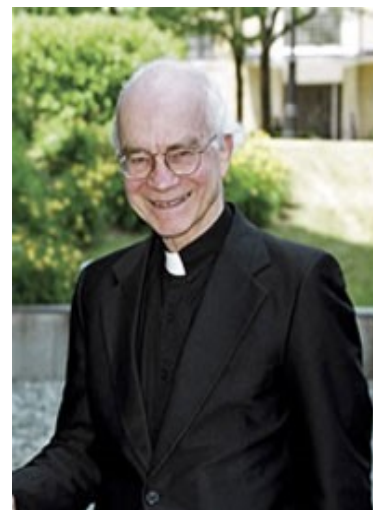
Fr. Lawrence Frizzell

The Reverend Lawrence E. Frizzell, D. Phil. (Oxon) has been involved in Jewish-Christian Studies for more than fifty years. In 1975, under Msgr. John M. Oesterreicher's guidance, he and Rabbi Asher Finkel were founding members of the MA program in Jewish-Christian Studies.

INTERFAITH RELATIONS

The first of our Core Curriculum courses, "The Journey of Transformation," engages students in their transition to maturity by sharing the ways in which larger communities, including the Catholic Church, encounter the world at large. Participants in this faculty seminar will review a key document from the Second Vatican Council, "The Declaration on the Church's Relationship to Non-Christian Religions" (*Nostra aetate*) and its implementation. Initially the focus will be on the Church's encounter with the Jewish people, and then with the adherents of other world religions, especially Islam.

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CENTER FOR CATHOLIC STUDIES

2018 Faculty Summer Seminar

INTERFAITH RELATIONS

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LAWRENCE FRIZZELL

Summer Seminar on Interfaith Relations

For twenty years, Monsignor Richard Liddy and the Center for Catholic Studies have sponsored a series of sessions for Seton Hall Faculty and Administrators. Often the speaker is a scholar from another institution of higher learning, bringing a focus on a particular topic with a wide range of implications for Seton Hall educators. This year I boldly suggested that the topic might be the Second Vatican Council Declaration of the Church's Relationship to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra aetate*).

The first course in Seton Hall's Core Curriculum has the title "Journey of Transformation." It includes a study of the Council Declaration that challenges Catholics to examine their attitude toward Judaism and the Jewish People as well as adherents of other religions. This short text of five sections presupposes the theological vision of the major constitutions of the Liturgy, Church, Divine Revelation and the Modern World, as well as the Declaration on Religious Liberty.

How many students know of the New Jersey connection to *Nostra aetate*? Abbot Leo Rudloff of Jerusalem had departed from Nazi Germany in 1938 to prepare for a Benedictine refuge in North America should the worst form of oppression come upon the Church in Germany. Rudloff and two companions first came to the Immaculate Conception Seminary, then at Darlington, near Mahwah, N.J. He became a citizen of the United States, allowing him to become the Abbot of the Dormition Abbey in Jerusalem after the War. As such he became a member of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity in 1961. There, in collaboration with John M. Oesterreicher and others, drafts were prepared for the discussion of the Bishops at the Council.

In 1953, Abbot Rudloff assisted Monsignor John McNulty, then President of Seton Hall, to find a place for Father John M. Oesterreicher at the University. Oesterreicher declined McNulty's invitation to become professor of German because the new Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies required his full attention. In his inaugural lecture, he expressed the hope that the Institute would have an impact in a hundred years. Because Pope St. John XXIII called for an ecumenical council, the maturing vision of the Institute bore fruit much earlier. In the words of Professor Bernhard Scholz, Dean of Arts and Sciences and later Provost of the University:

Rarely has a life over five decades been dedicated so singlemindedly to so necessary and noble a goal; and rare indeed must be the man in the Church whose concerns and hopes became, within his lifetime, the policies of Popes and a general council of the Church.

Over the decades, many have contributed to the work relating to the council's Declaration. The living voices of professors sharing the new encounter of Catholics with the Jewish people and others make a unique contribution to the development of the understanding that should lead to the justice and harmony that contribute to true and lasting peace. I am grateful to those who contributed essays on facets of *Nostra aetate* that relate to their disciplines! They show how the vision articulated at the Council continues to grow in the Church and in society at large.

BETH BLOOM

A Bond in the Making

I remember walking down Avenue A, a sparsely populated street and very wide, especially for a little girl of six. My friend Ann was taking me to the white clapboard Catholic Church that was situated at the apex of the Y, just across from where Avenue A split. Ann was Catholic and told me to be very quiet. Somehow we got into the balcony, where a Sister was sitting. She knew Ann, who told her that I was not Catholic. Sister then bent down and gave me a card with the picture of a handsome white man with long curling light brown hair. He was wearing a white robe, and in the middle of his chest was a glowing heart. I was intrigued, but my immediate family was irreligious, and my Jewish grandmother forbade any mention of Jesus Christ in her presence.

We later moved to a small town, populated mostly by Catholic families. Janet, now my best friend, often was allowed to spend the night, provided that she attended mass at St. Catherine's Catholic Church on Sunday mornings. So I would go with her, enthralled by the gorgeous stained glass windows and the gleaming objects at the front of the church but perplexed by the Latin that flowed from the priest's mouth. How humiliated I felt when all the attendees lined up to receive communion, and I had to remain in my pew.

Our home was situated between a friendly Catholic family to our left, and three houses occupied by very circumspect young Jewish refugee families to our right. We became very friendly with our Catholic neighbors, but our Jewish neighbors remained very insular and did not communicate with us very much.

In school, several of my classmates taunted me that I killed Christ, despite my response that I had never met the Him! At times I was not invited to parties and did not understand why. Such was the experience of a young ethnically Jewish girl in the 1950s suburbs. There are understandable reasons for this experience. Throughout the past couple of millennia, many in the Catholic Church have held the Jewish people responsible for the crucifixion of the "son of God," and have vilified Jews and Jewish philosophy. Even at the Vatican II Council's first session, in preparation of *Nostra Aetate*, an anonymous author published a "malicious anti-Semitic" tract to the Council bishops.¹ Indeed John Pawlikowski, in his book *Catechetics and Prejudice* in a Roman Catholic textbook self-study, commented that "accusations of collective guilt and assertions that Jews are a people accursed and rejected by God found frequent expressions in these texts, as did the charge that the Jews willfully and culpably blinded themselves to Jesus' significance."² Similar studies indicated that religious lessons focused on Jews' culpability in the "Crucifixion and Jewish rejection of Jesus as the awaited Messiah."³

In Germany in August 1945, bishops created the Fulda letter, which attempted to obfuscate the debate about the atrocities Germans committed against the Jews during World War II. With the backing of Pope Pius XII, their rejection of collective guilt illustrated blatant insensitivity to the plight of the Jews; however, in the final draft, several bishops admitted culpability.⁴ Despite the declaration by those such as Ida Friedricke Görres and Jesuit Max Pribilla, who decried the Church's insensitivity to the horrors of the war, there were those in Germany, such as Cardinal Joseph Frings of Cologne who "pictured the church [rather than the Jews] as the prey of Nazism."⁵ This was no accident, as textbooks containing anti-Semitic material dating back to the nineteenth century were still being published in Germany as late as 1960.⁶

Such anti-Semitism developed among those of the Jewish faith as well. Brothers Theodore and Alphonse Ratisbonne were both born into a highly assimilated nineteenth century German Jewish family. Knowing virtually nothing about Judaism and needing spiritual fulfillment, each in his own way converted to Catholicism. "Their entry into Christianity meant that they interpreted Judaism entirely through the lens of the theology of their day; i.e., that Christianity superseded Judaism."⁷ As the Catholic press of the mid-nineteenth century blamed Jews as "leaders of all revolutionary movements...and as the perverters of Christian values,"⁸ the Ratisbannes charged sisters working in a catechumenate for Jewish children (ultimately named "the Sisters of Zion), to convert the children to Catholicism.

The Shoah (Holocaust), the formation of Israel, and evolving Catholic theology in the late 1940s began to challenge Zion's initial objectives. Their mission progressed from conversion to an emerging curiosity about Jewish theology and faith, eventually to a dialogue between members of the two faiths. This transition resulted partly from Paul Demann's⁹ post-World War II diversion from assertions of Jewish unfaithfulness to admissions of guilt about "Christians who had persecuted Jews and thereby contributed to the Final Solution."¹⁰ But also, in 1957, the Ancelles, a subgroup of Zion, challenged its initial mission and resolved to fight anti-Semitism, conceding that only a few Jews participated in Jesus' trial and that present-day Jews should not be held accountable for the crucifixion. In the mid-50s as well, Luckner Thieme and the Frieburg circle in Germany pressed to remove anti-Semitic texts from the liturgy.¹¹ Other groups within the Church led eventually to the Second Vatican Council and its statement bearing on Jewish-Christian relations. The Council passed *Nostra Aetate* in 1965, and officially lifted the onus of decide from present Jewish shoulders:

True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ (13); still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today.¹²

Clearly, *Nostra Aetate* did not in itself eliminate all Christian anti-Semitism from the world. "The ongoing process of eradicating this tradition is part of a still unresolved problem as Catholic culture confronts modernity."¹³ Nevertheless, it lay an official foundation upon which we can discuss our differences in order to thrive as one loving people.

¹ Boys, M. C., "The Sisters of Zion: from a Conversationist Stance to a Dialogical Way of Life," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 31, Nos. 1-2, Winter-Spring 1994, p. 28.

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- ² Banki, J. H., "The Image of Jews in Christian Teaching," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3, Summer 1984, p. 443.
- ³ Banki, J. H., "The Image of Jews in Christian Teaching," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3, Summer 1984, p. 445.
- ⁴ Phayer, M., "The German Catholic Church after the Holocaust," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2, Fall 1996, p. 152.
- ⁵ Phayer, M., "The German Catholic Church after the Holocaust," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2, Fall 1996, p. 153.
- ⁶ Phayer, M., "The German Catholic Church after the Holocaust," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2, Fall 1996, p. 157.
- ⁷ Boys, M. C., "The Sisters of Sion: From a Conversationist Stance to a Dialogical Way of Life," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 31, Nos 1-2, Winter-Spring 1994, p. 30.
- ⁸ Klein, C., "From Conversion to Dialogue—the Sisters of Sion and the Jews: A Paradigm of Catholic-Jewish Relations?" *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3, Summer 1981, p. 390.
- ⁹ Paul Demann was a member of a group of Fathers of Sion.
- ¹⁰ Klein, C., "From Conversion to Dialogue—the Sisters of Sion and the Jews: A Paradigm of Catholic-Jewish Relations?" *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3, Summer 1981, p. 392.
- ¹¹ Phayer, M., "The German Catholic Church after the Holocaust," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2, Fall 1996, p. 162.
- ¹² *Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions Nostra Aetate Proclaimed by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on October 28, 1965.* http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html accessed June 19, 2018.
- ¹³ Rioli, M. C., "The 'New Nazis' or the 'People of Our God'? Jews and Zionism in the Latin Church of Jerusalem, 1948-1962," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 68, No. 1, January 2017, p. 107.

**The Declaration on the Church's Relationship to Non-Christian Religions,
Nostra Aetate and its Implementation in the Field of Communication**

We are travelers. We find shade with each other, sometimes from each other. When we encounter the other, we venture to engage in dialogue and seek for wholeness. This is what happens when communication theory meets interfaith dialogue: we bless the other.¹

Introduction

The best place the above meeting takes place is in the document *Nostra Aetate*: The Declaration on the Church's Relationship to Non-Christian Religions, 1965. As a form of non-verbal communication, *Nostra Aetate* is a perfect piece of "religious rhetoric"² because it is a platform through which, the Church brings "clarity to the practices and problems of interfaith communication."³ What then makes this document a good religious rhetorical text? In exploring this answer, this article will use the communication theory of rhetoric, which Booth defined as "the study of misunderstandings and their remedies" and quoting St. Augustine said it "is the art of expressing clearly, ornately (where necessary), persuasively, and fully the truths which thought has discovered acutely"⁴ in order to produce an effect on the listener or reader. Thus, this paper will look at the structure of *Nostra Aetate* as a literary text. Again, I will explain why *Nostra Aetate* is a religious rhetorical piece, and how it can be a teaching and learning tool in the academia in order to promote peace and understanding especially among students and teachers of diverse faith traditions.

Nostra Aetate: A literary text

Nostra Aetate is one of the sixteen documents produced by the Second Vatican Council, 1962-1965 and the "most revolutionary document of our times."⁵ Volume wise, it is a short text—just four pages with 1,716 words but regarded as a "watershed document"⁶ since it marked a "paradigmatic about-face in the Catholic Church's relations with other religions."⁷ *Nostra Aetate* is an unprecedented text of acceptance and amendment on the part of the Church about past misunderstanding with other religions. The first paragraph begins with an appeal for "increasing communication between persons and nations in the contemporary era."⁸ Thus, *Nostra Aetate* is a masterpiece in the "recognition of diversity, pluralism, and inclusiveness in modern society."⁹ Some scholars argued that the writing of the document "would not have been possible were it not for interreligious friendships, ... spiritual kinship" and the "spirit of respectfulness"¹⁰ that existed among the council fathers. Reading *Nostra Aetate* one feels the sense of one humanity of all peoples of the world—a "global village"¹¹ where "justice, ... moral welfare, ... peace and freedom"¹² reign, made possible by the social media. Above

all, *NA* is a historical text about the troubled interfaith relations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries especially among Judaism and Christianity, which ended in terrifying events like the Holocaust. As a result, *Nostra Aetate* “can provoke anxiety”¹³ especially in young minds like students. Therefore, it is a rhetorical text that can be both “limiting and liberating.”¹⁴ The document might attract skepticism about the genuineness of the Catholic Church’s contrition of her past actions towards the Jews.

Nostra Aetate as a Religious Rhetorical Device

As already noted, the point of departure of *Nostra Aetate* is to change the Church’s “overall hateful rhetoric” that promoted “religious hatred, social antagonism, economic blame, psychological scapegoating and racism” to a friendly tone that seeks “to end eternal guilt with historical accuracy.”¹⁵ *Nostra Aetate* number five affirms this,

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. On the contrary, ... this sacred synod ardently implores the Christian faithful to "maintain good fellowship among the nations" ... and, if possible, to live for their part, in peace with all men, ... so that they may truly be sons of the Father who is in heaven.¹⁶

Here the Church is the rhetor in pursuit of common ground for people of all faith traditions to come to a mutual understanding of each other. This is an example of an interfaith communication, a form that encourages “understanding, empathy, and cooperation across religious faiths.”¹⁷ Again, in the *NA* passage quoted above, and in fact the entire document, the Church observed the ethical standards for religious communication: 1. Tell the truth, 2. Avoid slander, 3. Avoid blaspheming, dishonoring sacred persons, symbols, or rituals, 4. Avoid demeaning others, 5. Work towards embodying ethical virtues and 6. Use communication to edify others.¹⁸ By so doing, the Church engages in what Booth referred to as “listening-rhetoric” during which, “opponents in any controversy listen to each other not only to persuade better but also to find the common ground behind the conflict.”¹⁹ The academia especially Catholic educational settings are the ultimate venues to create this kind of disposition in people.

Nostra Aetate in the Academia

As an instructor of a class – Foundations in Oral Rhetoric, I see *Nostra Aetate* as a good text for the critical analysis assignment for my students (the last of the four presentations they are to do within the semester). For this project, students are expected to study and interpret a particular text from their perspective beginning with the background of the text, its structure, style, strengths, weaknesses, and relevance. First, the students will write a paper on the text and on each student’s assigned presentation day, he/she will do six minutes summary of his/her research. It will be interesting to see what each thinks about *Nostra Aetate*.

Another area where I see *Nostra Aetate* as a useful pedagogical tool will be in the Journey of Transformation class that I will be teaching next fall semester. According to its catalog description, the course:

Seeks to forge a community of conversation inspired to explore perennial questions central but not exclusive to the Catholic intellectual tradition, broadly understood. People throughout the different cultures and traditions of the world strive to understand the transcendent mysteries of the human journey that are addressed by the world's religions, philosophies, art, music, and literature. The ... course invites students into this conversation via some of the important texts that focus on transformative journeys as they are portrayed in Catholic, Greek, Hebrew, Hindu, and other traditions. Students are asked to reflect upon their own transformative experiences and envision their personal journeys.²⁰

In fact, I see this as the best class for the study and implementation of *Nostra Aetate* in any university especially Catholic Institutions like Seton Hall. It is no surprise then that *Nostra Aetate* is the first among the central texts required in the syllabus for the course. For every class, students are expected to read and write journals on the readings and participate in the discussions about what is read. Using *Nostra Aetate* for this course will help students “think more expansively about the interconnections between the rhetorics of many different religious traditions.”²¹ In addition, students will be helped to understand that their own religious belief systems are not under threat, rather, by using *Nostra Aetate* they will be engaged in religious “exploration and discovery so as to renovate and invigorate” their thinking about their own rhetorical religious practice, whatever that may be.²² Affirming this Cyndi Nienhaus observed

Within Catholic educational settings, the document poses the challenge of reaching out to others, whatever their cultural or religious foundations, in ways that draw all together in fellowship, based on genuine acceptance and dialogue.²³

Conclusion

As this paper has shown, communication scholarship has much to offer people of faith as well as nonreligious people as we continue our collective sojourn on this planet earth.²⁴ The Vatican document *Nostra Aetate*, which is both communication and religious text forms part of this scholarship. When and if used well as a teaching tool, *Nostra Aetate* will turn students into agents, and teach them how they may be “mirroring and enacting changes in what constitutes normative religious belief”²⁵ both themselves and others. Finally, rhetoric and religion are to be constantly in conversation in order to rewrite the brutal history of bad religious rhetoric of the past centuries as *Nostra Aetate* did.

¹ Brown, D, “Communication Theory meets Interfaith Dialogue” in Brown, D, ed. *A Communication Perspective on Interfaith Dialogue: Living within the Abrahamic Traditions* (pp. 3-22), (Lexington Books: New York, 2013), p. 18.

² Geiger II, T. J. and Melody Pugh. "Christian Rhetorics: Toward a Hopeful Future." *Composition Studies*, 43(2), 2015, pp. 216-224.

³ Brown, D, ed. *A communication Perspective on Interfaith Dialogue: Living within the Abrahamic Traditions*, p. ix.

⁴ Booth, W. C., *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric: The quest for effective communication*, (Blackwell Publishing: MA 2004), pp. 6 and 7.

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- ⁵ Barrens, J. M, *In Our Time: Nostra Aetate – How Catholics and Jews built a new relationship*, (St. Petersburg, FL: Mr. Media Books, 2015).
- ⁶ Boys, M. What *Nostra Aetate* inaugurated: A Conversion to the “Providential mystery of Otherness.” *Theological Studies*, 74(1), pp. 2013, 73-104.
- ⁷ Fredericks, J. L, *Interreligious Friendship after Nostra Aetate*, (New York: Martin’s Press, 2015), p. 5.
- ⁸ Locklin, R. B, Parsing *Nostra Aetate*: Vatican II and multiple foundations of Interreligious dialogue, *Global Perspectives*, Newman Center, Vatican II Special Edition No 1, 2013, p. 18.
- ⁹ Nwanaju, I. U, *Nostra Aetate* and the effect of segregation on the attitude of children: A call for a dynamic re-evaluation of pedagogical policy in a pluralist society, *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(10): 2016, pp. 163-169. www.iiste.org.
- ¹⁰ Fredericks, J. L, *Interreligious Friendship after Nostra Aetate*, (New York: Martin’s Press, 2015), p. 5.
- ¹¹ McLuhan, M, *The Gutenberg galaxy: The making of typographic man*, (Toronto, ON, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1962).
- ¹² Paul VI, The Declaration on the Church’s Relationship to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate*, no. 3.
- ¹³ Geiger II T, Pugh M. Christian Rhetorics: Toward a Hopeful Future, p. 220.
- ¹⁴ Ibid. p. 221.
- ¹⁵ Kiewe, A, Time in Rhetoric: An investigation into temporal probabilities in Vatican II’s *Nostra Aetate*, *Journal of Communication and Religion*, 34(2), 2011, pp. 144-157.
- ¹⁶ Paul VI, The Declaration on the Church’s Relationship to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate*, (Vatican Press: Rome, 1965), No. 5. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html
- ¹⁷ Soukup, C, and Keaten, J, “Humanizing and dehumanizing responses across four orientations to Religious Otherness” in Brown, D, ed. *A communication Perspective on Interfaith Dialogue: Living within the Abrahmic Traditions* (pp. 45-58), (Lexington Books: New York, 2013), p. 45.
- ¹⁸ Hacker Daniels, A. E, “Rhetorology and Interfaith Dialogue” Brown, D, ed. *A communication Perspective on Interfaith Dialogue: Living within the Abrahmic Traditions* (pp. 59-72), (Lexington Books: New York, 2013), p. 64.
- ¹⁹ Booth, W. C, *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric: The quest for effective communication*, p. 10.
- ²⁰ The syllabus for the class was provided to me by the director of the program.
- ²¹ Geiger II T, Pugh M. Christian Rhetorics: Toward a Hopeful Future. *Composition Studies*, 43(2), 2015, pp. 216-224.
- ²² Ibid. p. 220.
- ²³ Nienhaus C. *Nostra Aetate: Religious Literacy for Today's Catholic Students. Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry & Practice*, 17(1), 2013, pp. 67-80.
- ²⁴ Brown, D, “Communication Theory meets Interfaith Dialogue,” p. 3
- ²⁵ Geiger II T, Pugh M. Christian Rhetorics: Toward a Hopeful Future, p. 223.

Understanding the Jewish Faith in Maternal Newborn Nursing

In a Catholic University, we teach students of all faiths. The respect for the Seton Hall University mission is paramount in every aspect of our philosophy of nursing in baccalaureate education. In the undergraduate nursing program, maternal newborn nursing is a required course for all students. Along with supportive courses in sciences, ethics, and culture, students were challenged to understand the religion and cultural aspects of the Jewish faith as it related to the family going through childbirth. According to *Nostra Aetate*, “the Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in various religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men.”¹ Understanding this and educating undergraduate nursing students guided my approach for students to learn about the Orthodox Jewish family during childbirth.

Students were provided with readings on the Jewish faith, laws, and customs that assisted their understanding of the Jewish family during childbirth. The following are some of the traditions of Jewish laws that were reviewed with the students so that they could better understand and take care of the Jewish family during childbirth. According to the Talmud, there are two moments in human life over which one has no control, the moment in which one is born and the moment in which one dies.² Judaism places tremendous stress on the importance of the family and every significant rite of passage involves the family. God’s first commandment to humankind is “Be fruitful and multiply”³ and the Talmud encourages couples to bear children. Although the pain of childbirth was supposedly the punishment on Eve and her successors for her transgression in the Garden of Eden⁴, the Torah recognized and the rabbis who wrote the Talmud acknowledge the dangers inherent in childbirth in ancient times. Midwives were often present at births and their role in preserving the Jewish people was celebrated.⁵

One indication of the rabbinical recognition of the dangers to the mother in childbirth is the explicit statement that the principle of *pikuakh nefesh*/saving a soul (life)⁶ applies in most cases when the life of the mother is threatened. The life of the mother takes precedence over that of the unborn infant in most cases. Only when the child’s head has emerged from the birth canal is it considered alive, at that point the life of the child takes precedence. All necessary measures may be taken on Shabbat to save the life of the mother. For the first three days after birth, the mother’s life is still considered to be in danger, therefore, if necessary, the Sabbath may be violated to protect her.

According to Jewish teaching, God made a covenant with Abraham in which God promised to bless him if he would be loyal to God. This covenant was entered into and sealed by the act of the

Law of Circumcision. Jewish people honor this covenant by having a *bris* on the eighth day of the male newborn's life. This is done by a *mohel*, who is trained to do circumcisions.⁷ This is a celebration and the male infant receives his Hebrew name at the *bris*. A female infant receives her Hebrew name in the Synagogue on the day the Torah is read.⁸

It was very important for student nurses to understand the implications of the Orthodox Jewish Laws. Since students take care of Orthodox Jewish women and families during childbirth, what guides their faith and customs is important. The Law of Modesty involved how the Jewish women dresses and she is not allowed to expose her body. Married women cover their hair with a scarf, snood, or wig.⁹ The Law of Niddah refers to a state of impurity, which a woman enters when she is having uterine contractions and bloody show.¹⁰ The Law of Kosher indicates that only Kosher foods can be eaten. Meat and dairy are not eaten together, therefore separate dishes are used. Before any meal served with bread, a ritualistic hand washing is done, and blessings are recited before and after the meal.¹¹ The Laws of Sabbath and Holidays, indicate no traveling, use of electricity, or writing is allowed.¹² Nurses need to understand these laws of the Jewish faith to provide appropriate care.

It would be easy to misinterpret the behaviors of the Orthodox Jewish family during childbirth if there was not a clear understanding of these religious beliefs. When the Orthodox Jewish family enters the hospital, they are often fearful of how they will be approached and understood by health care professionals. The Orthodox Jewish couple has very guarded behavior and does not interact with each other during the birth process. Many times a female family member will support the mother during childbirth instead of the husband. Provisions are usually made available so that the husband can have time alone to pray or consult a Rabbi if medical situations occur where guidance is needed.

Respect of religious beliefs and cultural practices are essential to providing evidence-based professional nursing care. Nursing students were educated to understand that culturally competent care ensures a positive birth experience for all families. Only when health care providers understand and are willing to learn about different religions and cultures will this provide a meaningful childbirth experience for all families.

¹ John 14:6.

² Robinson, G. *Essential Judaism* (Atria: New York, 2016), p.140.

³ Genesis 1:28.

⁴ Genesis 17:16.

⁵ Exodus 1:17-21.

⁶ Robinson, G. *Essential Judaism* (Atria: New York, 2016), p. 141.

⁷ Giger, J. *Transcultural Nursing* (Mosby: Missouri, 2013), p. 521.

⁸ Lewis, J. *Jewish Perspectives on Pregnancy and Childbearing* (MCN: American Journal of Maternal Child Nursing, 2004), p. 306-312.

⁹ Zauderer, C. *Maternity Care for Orthodox Jewish Couples* (Nursing for Women's Health: New York, 2009), p.119.

¹⁰ Zauderer, C. *Maternity Care for Orthodox Jewish Couples* (Nursing for Women's Health: New York, 2009), p.119.

¹¹ Zauderer, C. *Maternity Care for Orthodox Jewish Couples* (Nursing for Women's Health: New York, 2009), p.119.

¹² Zauderer, C. *Maternity Care for Orthodox Jewish Couples* (Nursing for Women's Health: New York, 2009), p.119.

ROSEMARIE DARCY KRAMER

***Nostra Aetate* and the Sociology on Prejudice and Discrimination**

October 28, 2017 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the issuance of a document known as *Nostra Aetate*, “The Declaration on the Church’s Relationship to Non-Christian Religions.” It was first meant to address the Catholic Church’s interactions with members of the Jewish community especially in light of the Holocaust. It was then expanded to include other non-Christian faiths as well.

With regard to Judaism, *Nostra Aetate* stressed “mutual understanding and respect”¹ between the two religions. For the other religions, it stressed the recognition that all belief systems contain some aspect of a supreme being or have struggled with the “anguish of our human condition.”² In this respect, the “Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions.”³ *Nostra Aetate* was meant to improve relations among the religions of the world and it did so by emphasizing that discrimination and prejudice towards any of these religions was and is not part of the teachings of the Catholic Church. Furthermore, this declaration decried any type of discrimination against people regardless of their race, color, or condition of life regardless of their religion.

Though it was written more than fifty years ago, its philosophy is as current as today’s news. Unfortunately, prejudice and discrimination are rampant in the world causing immense suffering and, at times, death. Its message could be used today to counter the actions that have led to all that suffering. Simply put, *Nostra Aetate* is and was calling for tolerance and love which is part of “God’s saving design.” Its reference is one of morality. The declaration states a need for tolerance and acceptance of all people based on the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a call for unity and love among people. Although not always practiced throughout the ages, it is today, the basis of the Catholic Church’s Social Justice Doctrine.

Nostra Aetate is a religious document meant to be followed by its religious adherents, although all peoples could benefit from its message. Tolerance and love of neighbor have always been lacking in society. More and more, voices have been raised for change, for Social Justice. This call is not necessarily based on any specific religion but on ethical considerations. It, too, is a call for unity and love among disparate groups. This essay will attempt to show how social science, specifically sociology, explains the roots of intolerance and discrimination in society in an attempt to end these injustices. It is meant to mirror *Nostra Aetate* in a secular way.

A prominent social psychologist, Michael J. Lovaglia, claims that all people are prejudiced. After stating that he, himself is prejudiced, he continues:

It turns out that everybody is prejudiced, some less than others perhaps, but prejudice is part of normal human thoughts and feelings. *Prejudice*

means feeling positively toward one category of people and negatively toward another. We humans discriminate between *us* and *them* with surprising ease.⁴

The use of the pronouns *us* and *them* is common in sociology. This concept and three other core concepts: *stereotype*, *scapegoat*, and *collective conscience* form the basis of prejudice and discrimination in society.

With regard to the issue of *us* and *them*, early in the history of human society, to belong to a group meant survival. Belonging to the extended family or a tribe literally meant the difference between life and death. Because food and safety were in scarce supply, other groups were considered outsiders and hostile. Prejudice toward these outsiders served a purpose. “Preference for our own group helped ensure that our family would survive.”⁵

Today, we belong not to small groups, but large groups known as societies. Instead of the simple beliefs of a small group, these groups have more complex beliefs or values. According to Emile Durkheim, an early sociologist, these represent a *collective conscience* which pertains to each particular society or group. This collective conscience keeps the society together. Again, as in earlier times, this protects the society from extinction. However, it often fosters prejudice and discrimination. This concept is saying, in effect, these beliefs are the ultimate truth and any disagreement with them is a threat to their existence. This concept can be compared to the various religions throughout the world. The *collective conscience* explains the differences between the various groups in society.

Another sociological concept, stereotyping, which is an overgeneralization about a group of people based on an encounter with someone from that group,⁶ is another avenue for prejudice. If the encounter is a negative one, then that negativity is applied to the whole group. In *Nostra Aetate*, there is a paragraph which mentions the contentious past between the Moslem community and the Church—this could be seen as an example of stereotyping. The article is urging all to forget the past and strive toward peace and love.

Finally, the concept of scapegoating. Sociologically speaking, “scapegoating is a process of unjustly accusing or blaming an individual or group for actions of others, not of their own doing. It is derived from the tendency to displace aggression toward a minority group.”⁷ This last concept is easily applied to the false belief that the Jews should be punished (i.e. persecuted or discriminated against) because they were the cause of Jesus’s Crucifixion. Because of this, throughout the ages, the Jews were blamed not only for Jesus’s death but for every misfortune that happened in the world. However, the *Nostra Aetate* firmly puts this to rest:

True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ; still what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today.⁸

So, the issues addressed in the *Nostra Aetate* regarding Catholic Social Justice toward believers of all faiths are mirrored in the findings in sociological discourse. However, the recommendations for tolerance and peace toward other groups differ in their underlying theme. For the declaration, the solution is the living the Words of Christ; for the sociological concepts, it is identifying the roots of

prejudice and discrimination, realizing how they can cloud one's vision of humanity and in so doing help people actively work against them for the benefit of that humanity.

Nostra Aetate speaks to the heart; sociological concepts speak to the head. In this instance, they are speaking the same language.

¹ http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_196...

² http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_196...

³ http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_196...

⁴ Lovaglia, M., *Knowing People, The Personal Use of Social Psychology, 2nd Edition* (Rowan and Littlefield: Lanham, Md., 2007), p. 212

⁵ Lovaglia, M., *Knowing People, The Personal Use of Social Psychology, 2nd Edition* (Rowan and Littlefield: Lanham, Md., 2007), p. 212

⁶ Chambliss, W. and Daina Eglitis, *Discover Sociology, 3rd Edition*, (Sage Publications, Inc., Thousand Oaks, Ca., 2018), Glossary

⁷ Chambliss, W. and Daina Eglitis, *Discover Sociology, 3rd Edition*, (Sage Publications, Inc., Thousand Oaks, Ca. 2018), Glossary

⁸ http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican/documents/vat-ii_decl_196...

JOHN LARACY

**Eschatology as a Theological Basis for Interfaith Relations:
A Reflection on *Nostra Aetate***

Inspired by Seton Hall University's 2018 Faculty Summer Seminar on Interfaith Relations, this essay outlines the theological basis—specifically, the eschatological basis—for interfaith relations according to *Nostra Aetate*, the Second Vatican Council's declaration on the relation of the Catholic Church to non-Christian religions. To be sure, in today's multicultural societies, interfaith relations are not just a theoretical concern but a fact of daily life: peace requires mutual toleration. On the other hand, toleration requires understanding. For while *mere* tolerance of others can easily become indifference towards them, such indifference, in turn, can easily become disregard. Accordingly, the Church seeks to understand what unites Christians and those of other faiths. Section one of *Nostra Aetate* expresses its intention to promote “unity and love among men” by considering “above all in this declaration what men have in common and what draws them to fellowship.”¹ Among the shared realities, it then enumerates as humankind's one “final goal” in God (cf. the Greek “*éskhaton*”: “what is last”). As we hope to show, an authentically Christian eschatology, rooted in the Hebrew Bible, encourages a proper regard for all humans, as members of one interpersonal and cosmic community, oriented to God in eternity.

Biblical Eschatology: Jewish and Christian

Interreligious discourse is foundational to Christian eschatology, as to Christianity as a whole, since it must look to its Jewish roots for its own self-understanding. Father Lawrence Frizzell fittingly began the Seminar on Interfaith Relations by focusing on Judeo-Christian relations. With regard to eschatology, in particular, Father Frizzell highlighted how Christianity, like Judaism, looks forward to the “the end of the days” (e.g., Daniel 12:13) or “the time of the end” (e.g., Daniel 12:4, 9), not as the dissolution of history, but as its “consummation.” The eschatology of the Hebrew Bible—developed explicitly during and after the Babylonian Exile—looks forward to a messianic age, in which the Lord will definitively free his beloved people and consummate his covenantal promise by gathering them together in a Holy City, that is, a New Jerusalem (see esp. Ezekiel 47-48). Today, of course, Jews and Christians differ on the nature of this fulfillment, insofar as the latter, unlike the former, believe the messianic age has begun with Jesus Christ.² Nonetheless, Christian scripture retains the Jewish expectation that *this world* here and now, including *the people in our midst*, will ultimately be gathered by God into one communal whole. Thus the “new Jerusalem,” descending from heaven in Revelation 3:12, represents the transfiguration of the whole world—of all that stands out as good against the forces of evil. Likewise, for St. Paul, “the whole creation” (Romans 8:22) groans for salvation in Christ.³

Significantly, biblical eschatology appears to frame the discussion of interfaith relations in *Nostra Aetate*. Section one highlights the expectation that God's "saving design extend[s] to all men, until that time when the elect will be united in the Holy City."⁴ Section five concludes the Declaration with an exhortation towards fellowship and peace "among the nations" (1 Peter 2:12), "so that they may truly be sons of the Father who is in heaven."⁵ In light of this structure, which parallels salvation history itself, section four on Jewish-Christian relations may be viewed as the heart of the document. Therein one finds a key eschatological statement: "In company with the Prophets and the same Apostle, the Church awaits the day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and 'serve him shoulder to shoulder' (Soph. 3:9)."⁶ This refers to the prophet Zephaniah's expectation, recapitulated by St. Paul in Romans 11, that all the nations will ultimately be gathered into Israel's service and worship of the Lord, in response to the gift of creation.⁷ Such an eschatology contrasts with those medieval and modern, putatively "Christian" eschatologies, focused on the salvation of *individual* souls, which in consequence tend to exclude the possibility of salvation for the unbaptized.⁸

The Heavenly Church

By contrast to such individualism, biblical eschatology illuminates the universal breadth of the heavenly Church, named the *communio sanctorum* (communion of saints) by the Christian tradition. *Nostra Aetate* understands "the mystery of the Church" in light of "the bond that spiritually ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham's stock."⁹ By electing Abraham and his progeny to enter into a sacred covenant (*Genesis* 15), the Lord God reveals his free, indeed personal, love for them. Although in principle the New Covenant in Christ extends this same elective love to all peoples, it is only in the end that God's communion with them will be perfectly fulfilled. Thus the Abrahamic covenant is the historical root of the heavenly Church, understood as the eschatological communion of all creatures in God. All that is good in history moves toward and is included in, this one final end. In this light, one can make sense of the long-standing, repeated teaching of the Catholic Church that "outside of the Church there is no salvation."¹⁰ As becomes clear in sections 15-16 of *Lumen Gentium*, the Second Vatican Council's dogmatic constitution on the Church, salvation is indeed possible for those who remain open to God, even if they lack explicit knowledge of his love. *All* persons are called to worship the Lord in heavenly communion. Indeed, according to *Nostra Aetate*, "[...] Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of men and out of infinite love, in order that *all* may reach salvation."¹¹ It does not follow, however, that salvation is automatic for each person. According to *Lumen Gentium*, "Whosoever, therefore, knowing that the Catholic Church was made necessary by Christ, would refuse to enter or to remain in it, could not be saved."¹² Yet the implication is that whoever does not definitively refuse Christ's saving love transmitted in and through the Church, *eo ipso*, remains open to it. In the eschaton, one may speculate, each person will receive direct knowledge of God, his plan for creation, centered in Christ and his Church, as well as his particular love for oneself. Invited in this way to join forever in God's all-encompassing communion, one will freely respond based on one's established disposition.¹³

Implications for Interfaith Relations

What might such an eschatology mean for interfaith relations on the concrete, day-to-day level? In short, it shows to Christians that all people are created for eschatological communion in heaven. Accordingly, generous love and patient hope characterize a proper Christian regard toward those of other faiths. To be sure, Christians announce and witness to Christ's infinite compassion and mercy in order to establish heavenly communion here and now. *Nostra Aetate* reaffirms "the burden of the Church's preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flow."¹⁴ However, the Declaration excludes any attempts to coerce freedom through aggressive proselytizing. Whenever the witness of Christian love fails to gain adherents, it should still look hopefully on those of other faiths as potential brothers and sisters in the *communio sanctorum*. This is especially true with regard to the Church's Jewish brethren, who remain bound to God in a covenant community that anticipates heaven. Biblical eschatology, we have argued, shows how Christianity is intrinsically related to Judaism in salvation history.¹⁵ Moreover, it thus provides a theological foundation for *Nostra Aetate's* discussion of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam in sections 2 and 3. For in light of the Jewish-Christian relationship, Christians can discern how other faiths likewise advance human communion and desire and reverence for the Transcendent. To the extent that they do, they participate in God's one salvific plan, culminating in heaven.

¹ *Nostra Aetate: Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions*. Proclaimed by his Holiness Pope Paul IV on October 28, 1965. Online: <http://www.vatican.va/archive>, 1.

² See Petuchowski, J, "Introduction," *The Rediscovery of Judaism* (The Institute for Judaeo-Christian Studies: Seton Hall University, 1971), p. 9: "While Jews continue to regard themselves as already living in the *ba'olam hazeh* ["this aeon"], Christians regard themselves as already living in the *yemoth hamashiach* ["the World-to-Come"]. Both of them, indeed, share the hope in an ultimate world-to-come, a world of spiritual fulfillment."

³ Wright, N.T., *Paul: A Biography* (HarperCollins Publishers: New York, 2018) emphasizes St. Paul's understanding of the messianic age in Christ as the restoration of Israel, now opening out to the entire world.

⁴ *Nostra Aetate*, 1.

⁵ *Nostra Aetate*, 5.

⁶ *Nostra Aetate*, 4. In the reference to Zephaniah 3:9, the Vatican uses "Soph" for "Sophinias," which is the transliteration from the Vulgate and Septuagint.

⁷ On the fundamental place of worship in Judaism, see Oesterreicher, J. *The Rediscovery of Judaism*, op. cit., p. 21. Cf. Ratzinger, J. *In the Beginning... A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1995), pp. 1-18.

⁸ On the communal eschatology of the early Church, see de Lubac, H., *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man* (Ignatius Press: San Francisco, 1988).

⁹ *Nostra Aetate*, 4.

¹⁰ See the positive reformulation in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Vatican, 1997), 846-848.

¹¹ *Nostra Aetate*, 4 (my emphasis).

¹² *Lumen Genitum: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*. Promulgated by his Holiness Pope Paul VI on November 21, 1964. Online: <http://www.vatican.va/archive>, 14.

¹³ My suggestion here is inspired by von Balthasar, H. u., *Theo-Drama V: The Last Act* (Ignatius Press: San Francisco, 1998).

¹⁴ *Nostra Aetate*, 4.

¹⁵ Oesterreicher, J., *The Rediscovery of Judaism*, p.17 describes the major achievement of *Nostra Aetate*, 4 as "the discovery, or re-discovery of Judaism and the Jews in their intrinsic worth, as well as in their import for the Church."

JOHN A. RADANO

Monsignor John M. Oesterreicher, *Nostra Aetate*, and Catholic Jewish Relations

There is a small monument on the grounds of Seton Hall University near its Walsh Library, the inscription on which honors Monsignor John M. Oesterreicher. It reads:

Monsignor John M. Oesterreicher (1904-1993)
Combatant Against the Nazis (1933-1940)
Founder of the Institute
of Judaeo-Christian Studies (1953)

Bridge Builder and Defender of Israel
“Lord...Receive the Work of his hand”
(Deuteronomy 33:11)

The brief inscription on the monument concisely reflects the extraordinary life experiences and some of the contributions of Monsignor John M. Oesterreicher in promoting Jewish and Christian understanding and reconciliation. The sixty-fifth anniversary, in 2018, of his founding of the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University in 1953, provides an opportunity to recall some of his contributions to the Church in that regard. For the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies is the main context, after his arrival in America, from which, both before and after the Second Vatican Council, Monsignor Oesterreicher undertook his pioneering work. The anniversary should especially be an occasion to recall another important fact about him which others have acknowledged, but to which the monument does not refer. Namely, he was one of the architects and drafters of the Second Vatican Council's *Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, Nostra Aetate* proclaimed by Pope Paul VI on October 28, 1965. He contributed especially to the development of its number four, concerning the Jews, the brief text which is the foundation of “The Revolution in Catholic Teaching on the Jews.”¹ The purpose of this essay is to illustrate Monsignor John M. Oesterreicher's contributions regarding *Nostra Aetate* working with Cardinal Bea during Vatican II, to promoting it after the Council, and then to show the way his contributions have been continually acknowledged over the last fifty years, especially by Cardinal Bea's successors as presidents of the Secretariat (since 1988 Pontifical Council) for Promoting Christian Unity.

Monsignor John Oesterreicher's Contributions to Nostra Aetate

In his description of *Nostra Aetate*'s genesis, Monsignor Oesterreicher shows that a number of people contributed significantly to *Nostra Aetate*.² But in a certain sense, *Nostra Aetate* became for him

a life's project in a number of specific ways which would be hard to find duplicated by others. He had been promoting Jewish-Christian understanding from 1933 onwards. From the mid-1950s, some years before Vatican II was even envisioned, he was promoting Jewish-Christian understanding through the activities of the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies, and its publication, the well-respected *The Bridge* to which Christian and Jewish authors contributed.³ Besides the essays in *The Bridge*, some of his colleagues wrote significant books exploring the history of Jewish and Christian relations. These included Edward A. Synan, *The Popes and the Jews in the Middle Ages* (1965), and Edward H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews. Twenty three Centuries of Antisemitism* (1964). He was also in contact with others in Europe and America who were also committed by study and activity to improving the relationships between Christians and Jews particularly in light of the tragic events during World War II.⁴

Pope John XXIII in 1959 called for an ecumenical council, which would become the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Envisioning that part of the Council's work of renewal in the church would also include the pastoral effort to promote Christian unity, the Pope established on June 5, 1960 a Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU), as one of the instruments serving the preparation for the Council, making the Jesuit Augustín Cardinal Bea its President. On June 28, 1960, it was announced that the Dutch ecumenist Monsignor Johannes Willebrands would be its Secretary.⁵ The original staff included also the American Father Thomas Stransky, C.S. P., and the Corsican Monsignor Jean François Arrighi. Influenced by French historian Jules Isaac during an audience on June 13, 1960, but already positively inclined to it by his own experience even as Pope,⁶ John XXIII, commissioned a statement on the Jews from the Council, giving the responsibility for this, during an audience on 18 September 1960,⁷ to Cardinal Bea and the new SPCU. Circumstances were such that Monsignor John Oesterreicher became involved at the very beginning of that project, and continued involvement up until its completion and promulgation by Paul VI on October 28, 1965. Afterward, he continued to serve the cause of *Nostra Aetate* in important ways up until his death in 1993.

One can point to four significant ways in which Monsignor Oesterreicher contributed to the development of *Nostra Aetate*. First, he gave some assistance to the project at the very beginning, even, in a sense, before the project officially began. One aspect of this initial help came in the form of suggested issues in Jewish-Christian relations which needed attention. Even before that audience on September 18, it was becoming clear that a statement on the Jews would be entrusted to the new SPCU, though specifics were not known. His Institute was one of three groups which had already developed, and sent to Cardinal Bea, informal petitions or proposals concerning areas of Jewish-Christian relations which needed attention, and might be addressed by the coming Council.⁸ These came from the Biblical Institute in Rome, dated April 24, 1960, from Monsignor Oesterreicher's Institute for Judaeo-Christian Studies on June 8 (in English, with a Latin version sent to Cardinal Bea on June 24), and a Memorandum from the Apeldoorn Working Group, a meeting of scholars working to improve Jewish and Christian relations (Netherlands, August 20-September 1, 1960), in which Monsignor Oesterreicher had also participated. This was sent to the SPCU a few weeks after it was completed. The SPCU had not yet begun its work on this project, but already had significant materials available to work with if it chose to use them.

Another way in which Monsignor Oesterreicher contributed at this early stage concerned suggestions regarding capable participants in the discussions of this project. Monsignor Willebrands, as his diary shows, met twice with Monsignor Oesterreicher in early September 1960, on the 8th, and again on the 11th. Monsignor Oesterreicher had just taken part in the international gathering at Apeldoorn in the Netherlands. On September 8th Willebrands first visited and spoke with Cardinal Bea. On that same day, he had a visit with Monsignor Oesterreicher. As his diary says, “He is coming to talk about the question of Israel. Everything appears that this question will be entrusted to our Secretariat.” On September 11th, Willebrands met with Monsignor Oesterreicher again, this time they talked about some important business. Willebrands noted that “If our secretariat is entrusted the Israel question, then we will need competent consultants”. This observation is followed in parentheses with a series of names they spoke about (“Oesterreicher, Démann, somebody from Jerusalem: Père Bruno Hussar O.P., Père Stiassny, Abt Rudloff O.S.B.”). Some of them had been at the Apeldoorn meeting. Thus, one week later, on September 18th, 1960, when the pope specifically charged Cardinal Bea with that responsibility, the exploration had already begun to determine who might assist in this project.

Second, Monsignor Oesterreicher was one of the Architects/drafters of *Nostra Aetate*. At the first meeting of the SPCU in November 1960, Cardinal Bea asked Father Gregory Baum, already an appointed advisor to the SPCU for ecumenism, to produce a short exposition of the Church’s relationship to the Jews for the next SPCU meeting in February 1961. His brief presentation indicated that the teachings and actions of recent popes made it clear by word and deed that the Christian bond to the Jewish people was a theological one, but that certain patristic and medieval conceptions about Jews could no longer be held.⁹ By that time, two of those mentioned in the discussion on the previous September 11th were appointed to the SPCU, Monsignor John Oesterreicher as a new consultant, and Father Leo von Rudloff O.S.B as a new member, taking up their responsibilities at the beginning of February 1961.¹⁰ Cardinal Bea formed a Subcommittee for studying the problem of the Church’s relationship to the Jewish people, which included Monsignor Oesterreicher, Rudloff, and Baum. On occasion, the subcommittee co-opted other members.¹¹ Monsignor Oesterreicher was asked to prepare a study of the whole matter for the next meeting of the SPCU in April 1961.¹² Monsignor Oesterreicher’s study was “the first of numerous drafts ultimately leading to the statement on the Jews, at the heart of *Nostra Aetate*.¹³

The developing draft on the Jews changed locations, from being a fourth chapter of the Schema on Ecumenism to being expanded to become a document which included some consideration of other world religions and being a text on its own. Others who joined the subcommission’s work in sorting out the issues included George Tavard A.A.(USA) in 1961, and in October, 1964 Barnabas Ahearn, C.P.(USA), Pierre Benoit, O.P. (Jerusalem), Bruno Hussar, O.P. (Israel), Nicholas Persich, C.M. (USA), Thomas Stransky, C.S.P. (USA), Msgr Antonius Ramselaar (Utrecht, the Netherlands).¹⁴ Stransky, SPCU staff, recalls that beginning in October 1960, Cardinal Bea had already assigned him a staff portfolio, which included, “among others, for *De Indaeis* and, unknown then, for its enlargement to include all non-Christian religions.¹⁵ After resolving difficulties, which threatened even the

possibility of having the text, and putting it in final form, the Council approved the final text of *Nostra Aetate* on October 28, 1965.

Third, after the Council, Monsignor Oesterreicher made a lasting contribution as historian/commentator on *Nostra Aetate*, authoritatively tracing and interpreting, as a first-hand witness and participant, the text's evolution. He published a lengthy major commentary on *Nostra Aetate* in 1967.¹⁶ His commentary on *Nostra Aetate* is still important and used today.

Fourth, he contributed as an educator, to the theological study and implementation of *Nostra Aetate*, the issues related to it, and NA's implications for the Church. Through The Institute for Judaeo-Christian Studies, first during the late 1960s and early 1970s, Monsignor Oesterreicher and Sister Rose Thering organized a series of summer "Menorah Institutes" to explore Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations, sometimes holding them in Israel. Then in 1975, Monsignor Oesterreicher founded a Graduate Program in Jewish Christian Studies which, In 1979 became part of the University's College of Arts and Sciences. Rabbi Asher Finkel and Father Lawrence E. Frizzell were the founding full-time faculty members. This graduate program would enable students to explore Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations in depth.¹⁷ From 1979-1984, the Graduate Program in Jewish-Christian Studies also collaborated with the Departments of Religious Studies and of Asian Studies in developing summer Interreligious Institutes on themes in which Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu perspectives were explored, in keeping with the broader range of *Nostra Aetate's* teaching.

After his death in 1993, The Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies established an annual Monsignor John M. Oesterreicher Memorial lecture. This too helps to promote Jewish and Christian understanding in the spirit of *Nostra Aetate*. Twenty five lectures have been held thus far. The many fine scholars who have given this memorial lecture include Father Thomas Stransky C.S.P., SPCU staff person during Vatican II who worked on *Nostra Aetate* with him.

Acknowledgment of Monsignor Oesterreicher's contribution to Nostra Aetate over fifty years.

Monsignor Oesterreicher speaks of Paul VI's graciousness to him. On the eve of the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate* October 28, 1965, the Pope received him at St. Peter's. He had gone there, he indicated, with the intention of thanking Paul VI for his fidelity toward Pope John's legacy. But before he was able to say a word, "he thanked me for my contribution to the fulfillment of Pope John's wish." "Tomorrow is a great day for you", he said, "I will pray for you and your people, for its peace."¹⁸

After Vatican II, on different occasions, and in different ways, some successors of Cardinal Bea as President of the Secretariat (from 1988 Pontifical Council) for Promoting Christian Unity, have also acknowledged the important contribution of Monsignor John Oesterreicher as a co-worker of the SPCU in the development of *Nostra Aetate*. They did this especially on important anniversaries of NA, but at other times as well.

In 1981, on the centenary of Cardinal Bea's birth, the SPCU organized a theological symposium in from December 16-19, 1981.¹⁹ The symposium honored Cardinal Bea by focusing on three themes to which Cardinal Bea had made his personal and specific contribution during the work of the Second Vatican Council, themes closely connected to the renewal of the church. These themes were: the dialogue between the Catholic Church and Judaism, religious liberty, and, the one baptism and the unity of Christians. Some forty experts took part. Three basic presentations were prepared, one for each of these three themes. The person selected to write the major presentation in each of these areas was a specialist, a person who had been engaged in conciliar work on that particular area.²⁰ Some further reflections were given to each theme, after the main presentation, by other experts, before general discussion took place. Monsignor John Oesterreicher was invited to write the presentation on the first theme. The title of his lengthy address was "Cardinal Bea: Paving the way to a new relationship between Christians and Jews."²¹ Five persons gave further reflections on this theme, including Cardinal Willebrands, Professor Henri Cazelles, Joseph L. Lichten, Professor Shemaryahu Talmon, and Prälat Franz Mussner.²²

At this event, Monsignor Oesterreicher's skills as historian and interpreter of *Nostra Aetate's* work concerning the Jews were especially in view. In his opening address, Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, President (1969-1989) of the SPCU,²³ put Cardinal Bea's work on the three issues in an opening perspective. In his comments on Cardinal Bea and the Jews, he refers five times to Monsignor Oesterreicher's 1967 Commentary on *Nostra Aetate*.²⁴ These references concerned especially some of the difficulties which were encountered, especially what was described as the "holy war" in the Middle East against the Council's statement on the Jews. Despite all the serious difficulties which threatened the project, it was overwhelmingly approved by the Council On October 28, 1965. Willebrands' last comment, relating to Monsignor Oesterreicher, was that, as writer of the story of *Nostra Aetate*, Monsignor Oesterreicher said, of Cardinal Bea, that he should be considered the most important advocate and the true father of this document.²⁵

In his own paper, one way that Monsignor Oesterreicher illustrates Cardinal Bea's contributions was by recalling some history, namely two important projects for which Pope Pius XII had asked Cardinal Bea's assistance. Pius XII ordered, in 1941, a new translation of the Cardinal Bea completed that work in 1945. According to Monsignor Oesterreicher, though that translation was short-lived, it was of historic importance. It was the first time, following the direction of Pius XII's encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943) that "the original text was shown to have the fullest authority and to be preferred to any translation, old or new." It "propelled the Church to drink from the very fountainhead of Christian life and faith". Now the "church was reminded that her cradle had stood, not in Hellas, China or India...but rather in the midst of the Jews, the people despised by Men, but loved and inspired by God."²⁶

The second project Monsignor Oesterreicher mentions was Cardinal Bea's involvement in the writing of *Divino Afflante Spiritu*. Cardinal Bea "had a major, indeed decisive part" in the writing of the encyclical.²⁷ According to Monsignor Oesterreicher, In the Encyclical, as already suggested by the

translation of the Psalter into Latin from the original Hebrew, “Pius XII warmly acknowledges that the inquiry of modern exegetes ‘has also clearly shown the special preeminence of the people of Israel among all the other ancient nations of the East...’”²⁸ In those days (1943), “with the Nazis in power, to praise the genius of the Jewish people was considered treason.” But “to men and women of our generation, that was a courageous affirmation. He thus helped us become more and more aware of the authentic bond between the Church and the People of Israel.”²⁹ Monsignor Oesterreicher goes on to develop further implications of these insights concerning the Bible. One can see that this background would later support Cardinal Bea’s firm convictions about a statement on the Jews during Vatican II.

In 1985, Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, in his address at a colloquium held at the University of St. Thomas Aquinas (The *Angelicum*) in Rome commemorating *Nostra Aetate*’s twentieth anniversary, singled out Monsignor Oesterreicher and his work. He refers to the fact that in the twenty years since the publication of *Nostra Aetate*, and as a consequence of it, various faculties in Rome and elsewhere have a chair of Judaism, or some courses on the subject because they want some presentation about theological aspects of Jewish-Christian relations and the questions posed by them. While he mentioned some institutions, he mentioned only Monsignor Oesterreicher by name:

This is an occasion too for mentioning and praising the remarkable work being done for many years now, in the Institute for Judaeo-Christian studies in Seton Hall University, in South Orange, New Jersey. The Institute is associated with Monsignor John M. Oesterreicher, one of the Pioneers in the field of Jewish-Christian relations and the theological investigation of both Jewish and Christian sources in matters that link one to the other.³⁰

It was also in relation to the *Nostra Aetate*’s twentieth anniversary that Monsignor Oesterreicher published his book *The New Encounter between Christians and Jews*. Writing the Forward to it, Willebrands commented further on Monsignor Oesterreicher’s work. Saying that while official texts have a life of their own, they “cannot cover all the ground” or meet with every particular situation that could arise in local churches. This is where “the work of theologians comes in, especially of those who may have contributed to the preparation of the official documents.”³¹ In this regard, he said,

Monsignor Oesterreicher is perhaps the first one who ought to be mentioned in both of these categories. It is well known that he had an important role to play in the actual drafting of *Nostra Aetate*, and I dare say he remains the foremost witness of this exciting episode of modern history....But he is also known to us all as that untiring commentator, that authoritative interpreter, that precise exegete of the council documents and those which have followed....He was a forerunner of the developments which followed, a pioneer, or, if you will, a prophet....³²

In 1988 Willebrands again pointed to the significance of Monsignor Oesterreicher’s Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies. In Rome that year, the Vatican Polyglot Press and the Lateran University published the book *Fifteen Years of Catholic-Jewish Dialogue* (Rome, 1988) which presented some of the best papers from the dialogue since 1970, between the Holy See’s Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews and the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations. In his address

in a symposium on March 22, 1988, at Rome's Lateran University, Willebrands reaffirmed the Catholic commitment to cooperation in various fields regarding education, ethics, defense of human rights, religious liberty, promotion of justice and peace, Regarding education, he expressed the hope that cooperation "will take place through the various Centers of Judeo-Christian Studies" already founded in different countries: "in the United States at Seton Hall University, in Switzerland at Lucerne's Faculty of Theology, in Israel at the ancient Monastery of Ratisbonne", and also developing in courses and cultural exchanges organized by the Pontifical universities in Rome.³³

In 2005, at a fortieth anniversary celebration of *Nostra Aetate* held in Rome, Walter Cardinal Kasper, President (2000-2010) of the PCPCU, mentioned Monsignor Oesterreicher in tracing some of the history of the last forty years. As part of this he said that it would be impossible, or rather a sign of ingratitude not to mention those who have had the "inspiration, the courage and the enthusiasm--and the spiritual force--to undertake our journey, to make it possible despite the many very strong and unimaginable forms of resistance, *ad extra* and *ad intra*."

We call to mind Angelo Roncalli, the blessed Pope John XXIII, together with Cardinal Augustin Bea and his successor Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, as well as Jules Isaak, the French Jewish historian who in a memorable audience in June 1960 convinced Pope Roncalli to take a great leap, and Johannes Oesterreicher, one of the main drafters of the Declaration, and many others. And how can we not recall Pope John Paul II? No other Pope in church history has ever made his own the meaning of *Nostra Aetate*, no other has ever fostered and deepened it with all the force of his extraordinary personality...We follow in the footsteps traced by the giants who have preceded us.³⁴

It is noteworthy that in this select group of "giants", Kasper mentions only Monsignor Oesterreicher among the drafters of NA.

In 2015, participants at a fiftieth anniversary celebration of *Nostra Aetate* in Washington, D.C., included a number of persons who had been working in the field of interreligious dialogue, including Christian Jewish dialogue.³⁵ Among the latter was Kurt Cardinal Koch, president (2010-present) of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. While Monsignor Oesterreicher was not singled out in exactly the same way as seen above, two of the presentations referred to his historical work in describing the genesis of *Nostra Aetate*.

Cardinal Koch refers to him twice, First, when recalling that Pope John XXIII entrusted Cardinal Bea and the SPCU with preparing a declaration on the Jewish people, Koch documents that by referring to a study illustrating Monsignor John Oesterreicher's involvement in that responsibility.³⁶ Continuing, he refers to "the extremely complex textual history of this declaration", documenting this by referring to Monsignor Oesterreicher's lengthy commentary on *Nostra Aetate* from 1967.³⁷

Professor Pim Valkenberg, co-editor of that event's proceedings cites Monsignor Oesterreicher as an authority regarding John XXIII and the beginnings of the Vatican Council's

project on the Jews: “As Monsignor John Oesterreicher makes clear, the Pope had already ordered a change in the infamous prayer *pro perfidis Iudaeis* in the liturgy for Good Friday in 1959, and so the visit from Jules Isaac should be seen as a catalyst rather than as an absolute beginning for the Pope’s involvement.”³⁸ Valkenberg mentions some of the reasons why the Pope entrusted Cardinal Bea with this responsibility of developing this document, citing again Monsignor Oesterreicher’s 1967 commentary as his source.³⁹ He says further that Monsignor Oesterreicher “mentions a number of other sources for this document as well: for instance, the request by the Pontifical Biblical Institute to explicitly refute anti-Semitism.”⁴⁰ He includes then a paragraph, based on Monsignor Oesterreicher’s 1967 commentary, describing some of those involved in drafting a concept for a first decree on the Jews:

The first version of *De Iudaeis* was the result of the work of the Secretariat For Promoting Christian Unity between fall 1960 and fall 1961, more specifically of the Canadian theologian Gregory Baum...and the American Abbot Leo Rudloff, O.S.B. who, together with Monsignor John Oesterreicher, came up with the concept for a first decree on the Jews. While this obviously was meant as a pastoral document that would underscore the lasting significance of the Jewish people according to chapter 11 of Paul’s Letter to the Romans, some governments in the Middle East began to formulate objections because they saw its potential proclamation as a political move toward the recognition of the State of Israel by the Vatican.⁴¹

A final word

Recalling these expressions of gratitude given over the years to Monsignor John M. Oesterreicher for his work on *Nostra Aetate* is a way of celebrating the sixty-fifth anniversary of the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies which he founded. It would, of course, be more important to continue to celebrate *Nostra Aetate* itself, and to continue to implement the revolution in the relationships between Christians and Jews which it helped to set in motion. This would be Monsignor Oesterreicher’s first and deepest wish.

¹ John Connelly has described Oesterreicher’s role from his anti-Nazi activities in the 1930s through his participation in the creation of *Nostra Aetate* in his book: *From Enemy to Brother: The Revolution in Catholic Teaching on the Jews 1933-1965*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2012).

² John M. Oesterreicher, *The New Encounter between Christians and Jews*. (New York: Philosophical Library, 1986).

³ Four substantial volumes of *The Bridge* were published between 1955 and 1959, and a fifth in 1970.

⁴ See Connelly.

⁵ Theo Salemink, “Willebrands the Ecumenist”, in “*You will be Called Repairer of the Breach*” *The Diary of J.G.M. Willebrands 1958-1961*, Edited by Theo Salemink, Leuven: Maurits Sabbebibliotheek Faculteit Godgeleerdheid Uitgeverij Peeters, 2009, p. 16

⁶ As Oesterreicher and others pointed out, that in 1959 John XXIII had given a new face to the Good Friday Prayer for the Jews. He had delated from the text the adjective *perfidus* in the exhortation *Oremus et pro perfidis Iudaeis* because it had led to a serious, negative misunderstanding in the way the Church portrayed the Jews. John M. Oesterreicher, *The New Encounter Between Christians and Jews*. (New York: Philosophical Library, 1986), pp. 108-109.

⁷ Salemink, “Willebrands as Ecumenist,” p.21.

⁸ *The New Encounter*, pp. 114-126.

⁹ “The History of the Text”, *The New Encounter*, pp. 128-129.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

¹¹ *The New Encounter*, p. 129, Connelly, p. 241.

¹² *The New Encounter*, p. 130, cf. Connelly, p. 243.

¹³ Connelly, p. 243.

¹⁴ Connelly, p. 241 n.6.

¹⁵ He describes his responsibilities this way: "This responsibility required channeling correspondence and gathering texts and minutes of drafting subcommittees for their own and the SPCU plenary use. I supervised the proper order of all the oral and written interventions of the Council fathers." Thomas F. Stransky C.S.P., "Why Fifty years after the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate* one more English Translation, My Own," *Nostra Aetate Celebrating 50 years of the Catholic Church's Dialogue with Jews and Muslims*, Edited by Pim Valkenberg and Anthony Cirelli. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016), p. 4.

¹⁶ "Kommentierende Einleitung zur 'Erklärung über das Verhältnis der Kirche zu den nichtchristlichen Religionen.'" In *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, Band 13, pp. 406-78. (Freiburg: Herder, 1967). An English translation was published in 1969 In *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, General Editor Herbert Vorgrimler, Volume III. New York: Herder and Herder, 1969, pp. 1-136. In *The New Encounter*, 1986, Oesterreicher uses a revised translation.

¹⁷ Since then approximately one hundred and thirty persons from twenty-two countries have received their graduate degrees in Jewish-Christian studies.

¹⁸ *The New Encounter*, p.23.

¹⁹ The proceedings were published in *Simposio Card. Agostino Bea [16-19 dicembre 1981]. A cura Del Segretariato Per L'Unione Dei Cristiani, Pontificia Università Lateranense- Istituto "Ut Unum Sint Libreria Editrice, Roma 1983. Communio N.S. 14.*

²⁰ Mons. John M. Oesterreicher was the writer for Bea and Judaism, Mons. Pietro Pavan for Bea and Religious Liberty, and Dom Emmanuel Lanne, O.S.B for Bea and Baptism.

²¹ *Simposio*, pp. 29-78.

²² *Simposio*, pp.79-115.

²³ "Il Cardinale Agostino Bea: Il Suo Contributo al Movimento Ecumenico, alla Libertà religiosa e All'Instaurazione di Nuove Relazioni con il Popolo Ebraico," *Simposio*, pp.1-23.

²⁴ *Simposio*, pp.17-20.

²⁵ *Simposio*, p. 20.

²⁶ *Simposio*, Oesterreicher, p. 35.

²⁷ Oesterreicher quoting Bea's long-standing colleague at the Biblical Institute Fr.Max Zerwick, S.J. *Ibid.*, p. 35

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

³⁰ "Nostra Aetate: a Catholic Retrospective", in Johannes Cardinal Willebrands, *Church and Jewish People New Considerations*. New York/Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, pp. 23-24.

³¹ Johannes Cardinal Willebrands, Foreword, *The New Encounter*, p. 12-13.

³² Foreword, *Ibid.* p. 13.

³³ Willebrands, "Relations Between the Church and Judaism: History, Themes, Perspectives," Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity Vatican City *Information Service (=IS)*, 68 (1988):168. Also in *Church and Jewish People: New Considerations*, p. 121. Today Ratisbonne is a pastoral center run by the Salesians.

³⁴ "Welcome Address Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews," *IS* 119 (2005/III): 127.

³⁵ The proceedings of that event are published in *Nostra Aetate Celebrating 50 years of the Catholic Church's Dialogue with Jews and Muslims*, Edited by Pim Valkenberg and Anthony Cirelli. (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016).(hereafter *Celebrating 50 Years*)

³⁶ Kurt Cardinal Koch, "The International Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Jews since *Nostra Aetate*" refers on p. 162, note 5, to this source: *Dorothee Recker, Die Wegbereiter der Judenerklärung des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils. Johannes XXIII, Kardinal Bea und Prälat Oesterreicher—eine Darstellung ihrer theologischen Entwicklung* (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2007).

³⁷ P.162, note 6, Cf. J. Oesterreicher, "Kommentierende Einleitung zur 'Erklärung über das Verhältnis der kirche zu den nichtchristlichen Religionen,'" in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, Band 13, 406-78 (Freiburg: Herder, 1967).

³⁸ Pim Valkenberg, "Nostra Aetate: Historical Contingency and Theological Significance," p. 9, referring in note 8 to Oesterreicher's 1967 commentary in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, XIII.

³⁹ Valkenberg, p. 9, notes 10 and 12.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9, note13 referring to the 1967 Commentary, p. 409.

⁴¹ Valkenberg, p. 10, note 17. The latter refers to the 1967 Commentary, p. 415,

JUDITH CHELIUS STARK

Nostra Aetate: Brief, Revolutionary, Problematic

As a young student in a parochial school in 1965, I recall very well the excitement generated by the Second Vatican Council both within the Catholic Church and beyond. I also remember how we awaited the publication of the documents from the Council. In fact, I still have my well-annotated, hardcover copy of *The Documents of Vatican II*.¹ Since I was mostly attuned to the pastoral constitutions such as *The Church in the Modern World*, the document on interreligious dialogue, *Nostra Aetate*, largely escaped my notice at that time. However, that changed when I studied for my Master's degree in philosophy at Marquette University. For my thesis, I was exploring the Christian just war tradition that began with Augustine of Hippo (354-430 C.E.). In the course of my studies, I discovered the landscape of Christian pacifism that had held sway in the west until the late fourth Century. Early Christian pacifism led me to think about pacifism—theologically and philosophically—in our own times, especially as the United States government escalated the war in Vietnam.

One of the books that came to my attention in the course of that intellectual search was Gordon Zahn's book on the various roles played by Catholics and the Catholic Church in Hitler's Germany.² This book was the subject of much controversy, but this controversy paled in comparison with what exploded over the Broadway play *The Deputy*. In that work the playwright Rolf Hochhuth charged Pope Pius XII with failing to take decisive action to save the Jews of Europe.³ Without taking a position on either of these works, I simply mention them to bring to light the context of the time. Debates, scholarly monographs, books, and articles about the Holocaust, including analyses of the position of the Catholic Church in Europe during those years, began to appear starting about ten years after the war ended.⁴

The next chapter of my discovery came at the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research in New York City where I studied with the eminent philosopher and political theorist Hannah Arendt. In 1961, she covered the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann for *The New Yorker* magazine. Arendt then published these articles in her controversial book, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963).⁵ Again, without entering into the depths and substance of the controversies that ensued, her publication joined the ranks of the many books attempting to come to terms with the Holocaust with studies that were published both in Europe and North America.

By the time of Arendt's publication, the Second Vatican Council was well underway (1962-65) and with the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate* in 1965, a new chapter on the relationship between the Catholic Church and Judaism, along with other world religions, began to be written. This document may be one of the shortest of the conciliar statements and, in light of the four foundational constitutions, may appear to have less weight. However, given the fraught history of Judaism and

Christianity, it is, in my view, one of the most significant of the documents that emerged from the Council. The tone of the document as both normative and aspirational gives rise to framing the relationship between the Catholic Church and other world religions in a very positive light. The authors begin by invoking the deep and perennial questions that all religions wrestle with, for example, about the meaning and purpose of human life, morality, human happiness, and human destiny. Therefore, instead of emphasizing what divides these diverse religious traditions, their commonalities are given great prominence as something to be celebrated and to form the basis for on-going dialogue. The fact that the Catholic Church adopted dialogue as the way forward gave a tremendous boost to worldwide inter-religious efforts. The door was opening to serious, substantive, and most importantly, respectful dialogue with other religions.

However, it is the statement on the Jews, in particular, that deserves special notice here. In a few short, illuminating sentences, the terrible toll that the Catholic Church's position enacted on the Jews in the past was fully and firmly rejected. Instead of praying for the condemnation of the Jews for the role they played in the crucifixion of Jesus, Catholics were enjoined to reject all forms of anti-Semitism. Here is the statement from the document:

Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons, but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecution, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.⁶

In an aspirational tone, the authors look forward to that day "known to God alone on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and 'serve him shoulder to shoulder'."⁷ The Biblical citation from Zephaniah 3:9 holds forth an image of solidarity and equality that challenges the conflicts and wars that have often plagued religions throughout history.

In 2018, it may be difficult to appreciate how revolutionary these statements were at the time. They were revolutionary, but nonetheless, they did not provide sufficient context for the tasks of radical overcoming that the statement itself represents. Moreover, the document fails to acknowledge the role that Christianity had played in fomenting, or at least not challenging, anti-Semitism in all its forms for almost two thousand years in the West. The authors of the document may not have gone far enough in their reach to address the evils of anti-Semitism. However, the fact that they started at all is remarkable. The promulgation of *Nostra Aetate* was the opening of a new effort to end religious discrimination and persecution of all sorts, especially directed against the Jewish people. The document may have been short and lacking in a fuller acknowledgment of the Catholic Church's responsibility with regard to the Jews and their persecution, but for what the authors wrote and for what the document did accomplish, we are deeply grateful.

¹ Walter M. Abbott, S.J., editor. *The Documents of Vatican II*. New York, Herder and Herder, 1966.

² Gordon Zahn, *German Catholics and Hitler's Wars: A Study in Social Control*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962.

³ Rolf Hochhuth, *The Deputy*. New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1964. See also Eric Bentley, ed., *The Storm over "The Deputy"*, New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1964, for an analysis of the controversy about the play.

⁴ See especially, Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 3 volumes. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961.

⁵ Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. New York: The Viking Press, 1963.

⁶ *The Documents of Vatican II*, *Nostra Aetate*, section 4, 1966.

⁷ *The Documents of Vatican II*, *Nostra Aetate*, section 4, 1966.

TODD J. STOCKDALE, PH.D.

***Nostra Aetate* and the Transformative Journey of Jewish-Christian Relations**

The Journey of Transformation—the first signature course in Seton Hall’s core curriculum—focuses on transformative journeys as portrayed in texts from the Christian, Greek, Hebrew, Hindu, and other traditions. In conversation with these texts, and in conversation with one another, students are invited to consider their own transformative experiences and imagine their own personal journeys. As the title of the class suggests, the vast majority of the course readings are narratives—with the motif of journey featured prominently.

In Plato’s *Allegory of the Cave*, students read of the prisoner’s release from the world of shadows and illusion and her/his challenging ascent into the world of the real and the true. In the Hebrew Scriptures, students read of the sojourning of Abraham and Sarah as they leave their home and journey by faith to the land that God has called them. Students read of God’s liberation of the Hebrew people from their bondage in Egypt and their exodus from slavery. They also encounter the migration of Naomi and Ruth—following the journey of these two women that begins with famine and death and concludes with restoration and fullness. In Christian texts like *The Confessions*, students follow the restless pursuits of St. Augustine, as he struggles against his own ambition and is ultimately led by his heart’s desire into a relationship with God. Students follow Dante, in his *Divine Comedy*, on a splendid journey through hell, purgatory, and paradise. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, students are introduced to Arjuna and his journey, through the guidance of Krishna, into the depths of his own being. The course closes with a menu of modern texts that seem to carry forward this narrative of journey. Whether autobiographical works by figures such as Dorothy Day and Malcolm X, or novels such as Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* and Yann Martel’s *Life of Pi*, the modern texts are built around a journey motif and draw the reader’s attention to the transformative nature of the character’s pilgrimage from what they were to what they become.

In this context, I find it interesting that *Nostra Aetate* stands as the opening text for the course. The general rationale for its inclusion in the curriculum (and its place as the opening text) is clear and convincing. Put forward as a framing text intended to set the tone for the rest of the course, *Nostra Aetate* introduces students to the perennial questions to which the world’s religions seek to respond. In this sense, the text is more than appropriate as an introductory reading. As the editors of the course reader suggest, *Nostra Aetate* recognizes that “the quest for meaning is common to all people,” and “is a fitting text with which to begin a volume that takes this quest to be its central focus.”¹ However, the fact that *Nostra Aetate* is a Declaration of the Second Vatican Council (On the Relation of the Church to non-Christian Religions), and not a narrative based text, seemingly places it at odds with the remainder of readings in the course, which are narrative in structure, and this could raise questions

about the appropriateness of this text's inclusion in the course. During the course of our three-day seminar on *Nostra Aetate*, insights offered by the Father Lawrence Frizzell on the history of Jewish-Christian relations offered a path to addressing these concerns.

Like all texts, *Nostra Aetate* does not materialize in a vacuum, but rather emerges out of (and from within) a particular context. Throughout our seminar, we explored this context, and I will use it here to create a narrative backdrop to *Nostra Aetate* that highlights its transformative nature in the midst of a journey.

When the journey of what we now call Jewish-Christian relations began in the early centuries of the common era, the relationship these two communities had to one another was notably different than the relationship they possess presently. Indeed, during the period when much of the New Testament scriptures were written, "Christianity" did not stand as the separate tradition we imagine it being today. Instead, the earliest followers of Jesus of Nazareth were a small Jewish sect within the wider tradition of Judaism. Only after the destruction of the Jewish Temple in 70 C.E. do we begin to see a focused emergence of a distinct community. Even so, this process (or journey) of distinction was protracted and nebulous. In this context, a reader needs to be cautious about attributing anti-Jewish sentiment to the authors of the New Testament, who themselves were, with a single exception, undoubtedly Jewish. For instance, the conflict with "the Jews" we read about in John's gospel was strictly intramural—with a Jewish Jesus and his Jewish followers debating the Jewish leaders in a Jewish region being narrated for us by a Jewish author. This is not to say that there was not a level of anti-Jewish thought emerging in a Christian context during the first few centuries. Marcion of Sinope, who rejected the God of the Hebrew Scriptures and argued that Jesus represented a break from this deity, stands out as one such figure. Of course, he was repudiated by Church Fathers at the time, and his ideas today are considered heretical. Still, as a figure of thought, Marcion signals the presence of discord early in the journey of Jewish-Christian relations.

That there were ongoing hostilities between Jewish communities and emerging Christian communities in the first few centuries seems evident, and due to Christianity's minority status, it often endured stiff resistance from those within the larger, more established Jewish tradition. Furthermore, Christianity faced a number of challenges in the Roman pagan world that their Jewish counterparts did not. For instance, unlike members of the Jewish community, Christians were not exempt from their civic responsibility to make sacrifices to the gods of Rome. In this context, the Christian community's ill-feelings towards the Jewish community, while not justified, perhaps might be fathomed. Yet these dynamics change drastically following the Constantinian shift in the fourth century, and Christianity's place within the empire (and its place in relation to the pagan and Jewish communities) changes as well. No longer is Christianity a minority sect, persecuted by members of both the pagan and the Jewish world, but instead, those who identify as Christian now find themselves present at the very seat of power. Sadly, as Father Frizzell posited during our seminar, Christians were not quick to recognize their new privileged status and the change in the dynamics of power between themselves and members of the Jewish community—paving the way for a monstrous chapter in the

journey of Jewish-Christian relations. For the centuries that follow, Anti-Jewish sentiment will be given the full backing of the elite and powerful—subjecting the Jewish people to a profound persecution of their own.

Against this wider narrative backdrop, we can begin to see the transformative nature of *Nostra Aetate*. Seeking to repudiate centuries of deep seated negative attitudes towards the Jewish people—attitudes preserved and promulgated over time by status and privilege—*Nostra Aetate* reaches back into the story in search of common ground. By telling of the Jewish roots of Christianity and highlighting the deep bonds shared between the two traditions, the text reminds us of our earliest kinship with one another. By condemning the collective charge against the Jewish community for the death of Christ, *Nostra Aetate* renounces those darker chapters in the Journey of the Jewish-Christian relations. By orientating us towards a shared eschatological vision—where all people will call upon the Lord with one voice—*Nostra Aetate* reminds members of both the Christian and Jewish community that our journey with one another is not yet complete, and so we sojourn on, seeking to ever deepen our common bonds with one another.

¹ Ranieri, J. and P. Savastano, “Editor’s Introduction,” in *Journey of Transformation*, ed. J. Ranieri et. al. (Plymouth, MI: Hayden-McNeil, 2017), p. 2.

GLORIA J. THURMOND

***Nostra Aetate* as a Reflection of the Angelic Song of Peace**

The Second Vatican Council Document *Nostra Aetate*, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, calls the Church to a moral reckoning in its relationship to non-Christian religious communities through a radical re-evaluation of its critique and a re-positioning of its actions toward the adherents of other global religious communities. At the heart of the task confronting the Church is the teaching-learning discipline which must include a consistent practice of engagement with non-Christian religious communities. *Nostra Aetate*, states that:

The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men.¹

Musical expression provides access to the universality of all human experience, and the devotional music of global religions provides a doorway into the sacred reality of the “ultimate mystery” referenced in *Nostra Aetate*. The Declaration proclaims that “the ultimate mystery, beyond human explanation, embraces our entire existence, from which we take our origin and towards which we tend.”²

There are similarities and differences between religions due to historical reasons; but whatever the religion, the voice of the worshiper and the music of devotion speak with universal appeal. The music of the great religions of the world reveals the importance of melody and rhythm that unite worshipers on a fundamental level more ancient than philosophy and theology.

Reflecting the background of each global religious community and its possible historic excursions into other traditions, the ritual, liturgical, and devotional music is richly varied. Yet, despite the diversity of forms, the emotional content of these musical styles point to unity of the Spirit.”³

The transcendent nature of the devotional music that resides at the heart of all global religious traditions potentially makes it possible for humankind to transcend all societal division, disconnection, and separation.

The heavenly song of the angels to the shepherds at the birth of Jesus provides a model of the ultimate song of devotion with the power to transform life among human communities on Earth: “Glory to God in the highest, and, on Earth, peace to people of goodwill.”⁴

One is more likely to become aware of the “oneness of the community of all people whose origin and destiny is God”⁵ when praising God through song. Common to all global religious communities is Chant or an ancient sung prayer tradition. Chanting connects the worshiper to feelings of peace, serenity, and community.

The transformative power of devotional song can help individuals and societies discover that the ability to grow and change, atone, forgive, and extend compassion exists within the nature of our common humanity.

In his April 4, 1999 *Letter to Artists*, Pope John Paul II stated that:

Music, as a path to the inmost reality of our common humanity and of the world of creation...connects human experience to its ultimate meaning. Humanity in every age, including today, looks to works of art to enlighten and inspire our journey towards our ultimate destiny.⁶

Philosophers and poets of the past and neuroscientists of today agree that song itself is a gift bestowed upon the singer. While the Lebanese poet Kahlil Gibran wrote that "...the song that you sing was not composed within your heart...," the recently deceased New York City neuroscientist and author, Dr. Oliver Sacks, asserted that "[D]ivine intervention via the nervous system synchronizes everything in the nervous system ... [and] that science is finding that song lies at the core of our being."⁷

Late twentieth century neuroscience research has discovered that communal singing activates the release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter in the brain that is associated with feelings of pleasure and alertness; and that music, in general, lowers cortisol, a chemical that signals levels of stress. Further, music releases serotonin, a neurotransmitter associated with feelings of euphoria and contentment—synonymous with peace.

The ancient practice of Chant is a central feature in all of the major religions of the world. With at least five millennia of experience, global religious communities have long known that the practice of chanting nurtures a holistic spirituality through the deeply devotional ritual of prayer and song, and that it fosters human connection and community toward an experience of transcendence. This knowledge of the global religious communities continues to be revelatory today through the fascinating research and findings in neuroscience.

A new course of study, created by the writer of this paper for the College of Communication and the Arts' newly formed Institute for Communication and Religion, has been designed to contribute to the interreligious dialogue by responding to the call of *Nostra Aetate* for understanding and respect by the Church toward other religions.

Entitled "Music as a Global Doorway to the Sacred," the new course will provide Seton Hall University students with the opportunity to discover and explore the similarities and differences in the traditional devotional music of global religions mentioned in *Nostra Aetate*, namely: Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam.

Through lectures, musical recordings, videos, and attendance at live and virtual global religious services, the students will encounter the universality of the search for Truth as experienced through the traditional devotional music of all global religions.

The course of study for “Music as a Global Doorway to the Sacred” will enable the University students to engage in qualitative interreligious dialogue as a result of being able to:

- Identify and differentiate the diverse devotional music traditions of the global religions;
- Describe the basic musical elements that connect and distinguish the religious musical tradition from the others;
- Connect the religious devotional music to the historical and cultural background from which it emerged.
- Identify the ritual action, time, or space filled by the music of a particular global religion;
- Recognize the universal feature of the search for Truth and the experience of that which is transcendent that resides at the heart of all religious devotional music.

While the full potency of the message of respectful interreligious dialogue delivered by *Nostra Aetate* is still yet to be realized after a half-century, the Church, more recently, also has been called to recognize its ecological responsibility toward all communities of Creation.

In his writings *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis calls the Church to remembrance and reflection on its role of stewardship, and to conscientious, compassionate action towards the natural, non-human communities of Earth as well as toward the human community.

The Gospel of Luke records that “When the angels had left them ... the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us now go to Bethlehem to see ... [that] which the Lord has made known to us. The shepherds returned, glorying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told to them.’”⁸

Responding to the heavenly song of the angels, the shepherds were able to glorify and praise God through an earthly song of devotion and joy. The song of the shepherds, which celebrates the birth of Earth’s Redeemer, Jesus, calls together all communities of Creation in one voice of praise, peace, and goodwill. Would that the song and action of the shepherds become the model for interreligious dialogue for all global religious communities.

¹Second Vatican Council, *Nostra Aetate*, www.vatican.va/archive, 1965, n. 2.

²Second Vatican Council, *Nostra Aetate*, www.vatican.va/archive, 1965, n. 1.

³Bhattacharya, D., *Music & Chant from Great Religions* CD liner notes, CT: Audio Forum Recordings, 1957.

⁴*The Gospel According to Luke 2:13-14*, RSV, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

⁵Second Vatican Council, *Nostra Aetate*, www.vatican.va/archive, 1965, n. 1.

⁶John Paul II, *Letter to Artists*, www.vatican.va/archive, April 4, 1999.

⁷Mannes, E., *The Music Instinct – Science and Song* DVD, PBS Documentary, 2009.

⁸*The Gospel According to Luke 2:20*, RSV, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Reflections on the 2018 Faculty Summer Seminar: “Interfaith Relations”

The 2018 Faculty Summer Seminar on Interfaith Relations lucidly conducted by Father Lawrence E. Frizzell, Director of the Institute for Judaeo-Christian Studies, intensified my belief that we, humans, must find ways to disarm greed and violence in order to sustain civilization. I also felt encouraged by Father Frizzell’s affirmative response to my “moral imagination” that Catholic Church’s continuing dialogues and collaborations with other religions will be able to lead to an emergence of a “global ethics” (in the form of an ethics of harmony of the diverse) and, eventually, to an ethical convergence globally.

It seems vital for humans to find a sustainable and universal approach to inner values and ethics, an approach that can transcend religious, cultural, and racial differences and appeal to people at a fundamental human level. As Father Frizzell pointed out, the Golden Rule (in either positive or negative version) is acknowledged in many major religions and philosophies. For example:

Buddhism: Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful (Udana-Varga 5:18).

Christianity: In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you (Matthew 7:12).

Confucianism: Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself (Confucius Analects 15:23).

Hinduism: Do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you (Mahabhrata 5:1517).

Islam: Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself (Prophet Muhammad, Hadith).

Judaism: What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor (Hillel, Talmud Shabbat 31a) ¹

The Golden Rule, especially in its negative version, “Do not do others what you would not have them do to you” seems to be the best candidate for being the fundamental principle of reconciliation among the people in conflict with one another. It resembles Immanuel Kant’s Categorical Imperative --“So act that you can will your maxim to be a universal law” – in being a formal imperative in that it prescribes reciprocity of action or forbearance without specific prescriptions, thus differing from the maxim of reciprocity captured in *do ut des* (“I give so that you will give in return”). It is rather a unilateral moral commitment to the well-being of the other without the expectation of anything in return. It can also be understood as a hypothetical imperative prescribing a means of reconciliation leading further to peace with others, living and letting live. While Kant’s Categorical Imperative may have an *a priori* origin, the Golden Rule has an experiential one.

Friedrich Hegel espoused a dialectical resolution of the opposition between two conflicting subjects through a synthesis of their opposed positions. His view of the phenomenon of human reconciliation can be appreciated as a great insight that it is people’s experience of conflicts and resolution through compromise that gives birth to an ethics of reconciliation.

Some may argue that forgiveness is an enabling condition for reconciliation. Forgiveness is the forgiver's voluntary supererogatory act, out of benevolence, to cleanse the forgiven of the latter's transgressions. There is no denying that forgiveness does occur between individuals and helps reconciliation. But history amply shows that forgiveness between groups of people or nations is very rare and its efficacy to induce reconciliation is qualified by overriding requirements of justice. A natural morality or an eternal divine morality may be invoked but such morality would be an element of one of the conflicting frameworks needing reconciliation.

There is no consensus about the essential orientation of human nature across diverse cultures, philosophies, and individual perspectives. There are some who believe, at one end of the spectrum, that humans are by nature fundamentally violent, aggressive, competitive and/or even greedy. Others, at the other end, take the view that we are predominantly disposed toward compassion and love. Most perspectives lie between these extremes, accommodating all of our qualities and propensities in varying degree.²

I personally understand ethics as a means both for tamping the baser elements of human nature in the name of keeping civilization civilized and as a rational means for pursuing the innate potential of humans. I believe that ethics consists both of rules to be obeyed and principles for inner self-regulation to promote those aspects of human nature which are recognized as conducive to our (or my) well-being and that of others.

Some may argue that a correct general description of the human condition is that humans are diverse and diversely moral. But humans still are open to changes in their subjective identities and ethics through a process of adjusting to emerging conditions of worldly existence. The emergence of a uniform global ethics may not be likely but the building of an ethics of the maximum harmony among diverse cultures seems feasible. Although there may be no causal necessity or historical inevitability of such a "global ethics", let alone a global ethical convergence, I remain hopeful based on the Golden Rule which is almost unanimously advocated by diverse religions and philosophies as well as Church's continuing diligent dialogues and collaborations with other religions.

¹ For a complete list of the Golden Rule, see <http://scarboromissions.ca>

² See Dalai Lama, *Beyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: New York, 2011), p. 18

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This is a publication of the Center for Catholic Studies at Seton Hall University

2018

CENTER FOR CATHOLIC STUDIES

Co-sponsored by the

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With support from the

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