

Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs is a publishing venture whose purpose is to provide those involved in pastoral ministry throughout the world with studies inspired by Louvain's long tradition of theological excellence within the Roman Catholic tradition. The volumes selected for publication in the series are expected to express some of today's finest reflection on current theology and pastoral practice.

Members of the Editorial Board

The Executive Committee:

Terrence Merrigan, Catholic University of Leuven, chairman
Mathijs Lamberigts, Catholic University of Leuven
Lambert Leijssen, Catholic University of Leuven
Reinmund Bieringer, Catholic University of Leuven, secretary

International Advisory Board:

Raymond F. Collins, The Catholic University of America, chairman
Juliana Casey, The Catholic Health Association of the United States
José M. de Mesa, East Asian Pastoral Institute, Manila, Philippines
Catherine Dooley, The Catholic University of America
Mary Grey, Sarum College, Salisbury, England
James J. Kelly, St. Catherine's College, Dublin, Ireland
Maria Goretti Lau, Holy Spirit Study Centre, Hong Kong
Donatus Mathenge, Nyeri Catholic Secretariat, Nyeri, Kenya
Ronald Rolheiser, Newman Theological College, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
Donald P. Senior, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago
James J. Walter, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles

LOUVAIN THEOLOGICAL & PASTORAL MONOGRAPHS
40

NEVER REVOKED

Nostra Aetate as Ongoing Challenge
for Jewish-Christian Dialogue

edited by

Marianne Moyaert & Didier Pollefeyt

PEETERS
LEUVEN - PARIS - WALPOLE, MA

WILLIAM B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING COMPANY
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN/CAMBRIDGE, U.K.

2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| Introduction: The Covenant Never Revoked: Remembering the Conciliar Courage to Dialogue | 1 |
| Marianne MOYAERT & Didier POLLHEFT | |
| Vatican II on the Jews: A Historical Survey | 13 |
| Mathijs LAMBERIGTS & Leo DECLERCK | |
| Reflections on Covenant and Mission: Forty Years after <i>Nostra Aetate</i> | 57 |
| John T. PAWLKOWSKI | |
| "The New People of God:" A Protestant View | 93 |
| Simon SCHOON | |
| <i>Nostra Aetate</i> : Past, Present, Future: A Jewish Perspective | 117 |
| David MEYER | |
| The <i>Nostra Aetate</i> Trajectory: Holding Our Theological Bow Differently | 133 |
| Mary C. BOYS | |
| Israel and the Church: Fulfillment Beyond Supersessionism? | 159 |
| Marianne MOYAERT & Didier POLLHEFT | |
| Personalia | 185 |

Copyright (c) 2010 by
Peeters Publishers, and
William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company
All rights reserved

Published jointly 2010
in Belgium by
Peeters Publishers
Bondgenotenlaan 153
3000 Leuven
and in the United States of America by
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company
2140 Oak Industrial Dr. N.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505 /
P.O. Box 163 Cambridge CB3 9PU U.K.
www.eerdmans.com

Manufactured in Belgium

12 11 10 09 08 5 4 3 2 1

A catalogue record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

Eerdmans ISBN 978-0-8028-6571-7
Peeters ISBN 978-90-429-2236-5
D/2010/0602/35

THE COVENANT NEVER REVOKED REMEMBERING THE CONCILIAR COURAGE TO DIALOGUE

Marianne MOYAERT & Didier POLLEFEYT

The Declaration *Nostra Aetate* issued by the Second Vatican Council on October 28, 1965, on 'the relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions' marks a revolutionary "milestone"¹ in the history of interreligious relations. Indeed, *Nostra Aetate* expresses a conversion of the Catholic Church towards other religions and Judaism in particular. With this document the Catholic Church sought to establish a new climate in which encounter and dialogue were understood as part of the Church's role in the world. As such, *Nostra Aetate* expresses the dialogical spirit of the Second Vatican Council, whose "intention it was to rally the highest possible majority on the council floor in favor of a change of attitude of Christians and the Church toward the members of other religions."²

In the opening chapter of this book, Mathijs Lamberigts and Leo Declercq remark quite rightly, that "the presentation and approval of a positive text on relations with the Jews was actually far from evident."³ Not only could the Church expect objections from the Arab world. It soon became clear that within the Catholic world there were

¹ Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration 'Nostra Aetate' (n.4)*.

² Jacques Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2002) 59.

³ Mathijs Lamberigts and Leo Declercq, "Vatican II on the Jews: A Historical Survey," in this volume, 13-56, 16.

also theologians and bishops not altogether that enthusiastic about the conciliar intention to prepare a document on Judaism. That the Second Vatican Council addressed the Church's relations with the Jews at all was due in large measure to two individuals: Pope John XXIII and Cardinal Augustine Bea. They demonstrated boldness and perseverance in setting Jewish-Christian relations on the conciliar agenda. Rabbi David Meyer is likewise struck by the courageous spirit that animated the writers of the document.⁴ They not only had the courage "to reflect on the [Church's] share of responsibility" in the *Shoah*, they also had the resolution to rethink, re-interpret and change some of the Church's teaching regarding Jews and Judaism. *Nostra Aetate* # 4 acknowledges that for nearly two thousand years the relations between the Church and the Jewish people were marked by ignorance and confrontation, and expresses the hope to change the future for the better. It confirms the strong bond between the Church and the Jewish people and provides an opportunity to further the dialogue between Jews and Christians. *Nostra Aetate* "encouraged Christians to renounce the old anti-Judaism completely and to grow from apologetics to encounter, from considering Jews as objects of contempt to respecting them as subjects of faith."⁵

After the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI (1963-1978), and especially John Paul II showed the same tenacity and dialogical spirit which inspired *Nostra Aetate*. John Paul II (1978-2005) often devoted his energy to improving relations between Jews and Catholics. During his pontificate the Church condemned anti-Semitism, reflected on the roots of Christian anti-Judaic attitudes

⁴ David Meyer, "Nostra Aetate: Past, Present, Future: A Jewish Perspective," in this volume, 117-132.

⁵ Didier Pollefeyt, "Jews and Christians after Auschwitz: From Substitution to Interreligious Dialogue," *Jews and Christians: Rivals or Partners for the Kingdom of God? In Search of an Alternative for the Theology of Substitution*, ed. Didier Pollefeyt (Louvain: Peeters, 1997) 10-37, 21.

and prayed for the forgiveness of sins committed by "some sons and daughters of the Church" during the Holocaust. In many evocative symbolic actions John Paul II expressed his personal commitment to Jewish-Christian dialogue. He affirmed both in words and deeds that the Jewish people is the "chosen and beloved people of God, the people of God's covenant which due to God's faithfulness is never broken and is still alive."⁶ In connection with this, we recall his address in Rome on October 31, 1997, where John Paul II discussed God's election of Israel: "This people [of Israel] is assembled and led by Yahweh, creator of heaven and of earth. Its existence is therefore not purely a fact of nature or of culture in the sense that the resourcefulness proper to one's nature is expressed in culture. It is a supernatural fact. This people perseveres despite everything because it is the people of the covenant, and despite human infidelities, Yahweh is faithful to his covenant. To ignore this most basic principle is to adopt a Marcionism against which the church immediately and vigorously reacted, conscious of a vital link with the Old Testament, without which the New Testament itself is emptied of meaning."⁷ Time and again, Pope John Paul II expressed that the relation between Church and Israel no longer stands under the sign of divorce, but rather reflects the strong bond between the people of the first and second covenant. Perhaps one of the strongest expressions of this belief are his words

⁶ Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, "We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah," www.vatican.va.

⁷ Walter Kasper, "Paths Taken and Enduring Questions in Jewish-Christian Relations Today: Thirty Years of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews," *The Catholic Church and the Jewish People: Recent Reflections from Rome*, ed. Philip A. Cunningham, Norbert J. Hofmann and Joseph Sievers (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007) 3-11, 6.

⁸ John Paul II, Address in Rome on October 31, 1977. Cited in Avery Dulles, "The Covenant with Israel," *First Things: Journal of Religion, Culture and Public Life*, November 2005; www.firstthings.com.

that the "covenant" is "never revoked (Rom 11:29)."⁹ Israel is and remains God's chosen and beloved people, even if it can not accept Jesus as the promised Messiah.

Through his personal commitment to the improvement of Jewish-Christian relations and the way he 'embodied' the dialogical spirit of *Nostra Aetate*, John Paul II has made the necessary room for further theological reflection on interreligious dialogue in general, and the precise nature of the relation between Israel and the Church in particular. The release of the document, *Reflections on Covenant and Mission* (2002),¹⁰ issued by the Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the National Council of Synagogues USA, marks a significant step forward in Jewish-Christian dialogue. It was the result of more than two decades of interreligious discussions between leaders of both Jewish and Catholic communities in the United States and contains both Jewish and Catholic reflections on God's call to both peoples. The Catholic reflections describe "the growing respect for the Jewish tradition that has unfolded since the Second Vatican Council. A deepening Catholic appreciation of the eternal covenant between God and the Jewish people, together with a recognition of a divinely-given mission to Jews to witness to God's faithful love, lead to the conclusion that campaigns that target Jews for conversion to Christianity are no longer theologically acceptable in the Catholic Church."¹¹ This document deepens theological reflection on the relation between

⁹ Pope John Paul II affirmed the lasting meaning of Israel and the 'Never Revoked Covenant' in his speech for the Jewish community of Mainz, West-Germany, on November 17, 1980.

¹⁰ Cf. Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and the National Council of Synagogues, "Reflections on Covenant and Mission," *Origins* 32 (2002) 218-224.

¹¹ Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and the National Council of Synagogues, "Reflections on Covenant and Mission," 219.

the Church and Israel and takes the dialogue between Judaism and Christianity another step forward. However, other steps are still needed. Now that the pontificate of John Paul II has come to an end, the question is, how is his successor, Benedict XVI relating to the heritage of *Nostra Aetate*? Will he be prepared to further develop some of the burning theological issues?

The fact that Pope Benedict XVI began his papacy with already some track record in Jewish-Catholic dialogue is promising.¹² As Cardinal Ratzinger, he tried to develop a theology of Jewish-Christian relations. Consider, for instance, the document *The Jewish People and the Holy Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (2001) by the Pontifical Biblical Commission, which was authorized by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. This document stresses the continuing importance of the Torah for Christians. Ratzinger, who penned the document's introduction, expresses his hope "to advance the dialogue between Christians and Jews with clarity and in a spirit of mutual esteem and affection."¹³ We should also mention two of his articles, 'The Heritage of Abraham: The Gift of Christmas'¹⁴ and 'Interreligious Dialogue and Jewish-Christian Relations'.¹⁵ Both were later published in Ratzinger's book, *Many Religions – One Covenant: Israel, the Church and the World*, which comments positively on the reconciliation among Jews and Christians, and emphasizes the lasting role of the Jewish people.¹⁶

¹² Unpublished lecture by prof. J. T. Pawlikowski at St. Paul's University, Ottawa, Canada, on October 30, 2008.

¹³ Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Jewish People and the Holy Scriptures in the Christian Bible*, Rome, 2001; www.vatican.va.

¹⁴ Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, "The Heritage of Abraham, the Gift of Christmas," *L'Osservatore Romano*, 29 December 2000.

¹⁵ Ratzinger, "Interreligious Dialogue and Jewish-Christian Relations," *Communio* 25 (1998) 29-41.

¹⁶ Ratzinger, *Many Religions – One Covenant: Israel, the Church, and the World* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1999) 103.

Ratzinger has always considered Jewish-Catholic relations as *sui generis* and this remained obvious even when commencing his pontificate as Pope Benedict XVI. Indeed, shortly after his election, he affirmed the doctrinal legacy of *Nostra Aetate* and expressed his will to continue fostering good pastoral relations with the Jewish people. He aims to emulate the example of his predecessor with the same intention to reach out to the Jewish people. On June 9, 2005, less than two months into his pontificate, Pope Benedict XVI addressed a delegation of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, declaring that Vatican II "affirmed the Church's conviction that, in the mystery of the divine election, the beginnings of her faith are already to be found in Abraham, Moses and the Prophets ... At the very beginning of my Pontificate, I wish to assure you that the Church remains firmly committed, in her catechesis and in every aspect of her life, to implementing this decisive teaching." Pope Benedict XVI then continued with emphasis, "In the years following the Council, my predecessors Pope Paul VI and, in a particular way, Pope John Paul II, took significant steps towards improving relations with the Jewish people. *It is my intention to continue on this path.*"¹⁷

In a letter to Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Holy See's Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews, on October 26, 2005, the day prior to the Vatican's official commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of Vatican II's *Nostra Aetate*, Benedict XVI affirmed "his determination to walk in the footsteps traced by my beloved predecessor Pope John Paul II."¹⁸ In his address in Cologne on the occasion of his visit to the Synagogue, he refers to

¹⁷ <http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/>.

¹⁸ Letter of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the President of the Commission of Religious Relations with the Jews on the Occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, www.vatican.va.

Nostra Aetate # 4, recalling the common roots and the immensely rich spiritual heritage that Jews and Christians share.

With Saint Paul, Christians are convinced that "the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable" (Rom 11:29, cf. 9:6,11; 11:11f.). In considering the Jewish roots of Christianity (cf. Rom 11:16-24), my venerable Predecessor, quoting a statement by the German Bishops, affirmed that: "whoever meets Jesus Christ meets Judaism" (*Insegnamenti*, vol. III/2, 1980, 1272).¹⁹

As former Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, Ratzinger focuses on the theological implications of Jewish-Christian dialogue. He is acutely aware of the theological tension between the recognition of the Jewish other and the truth and unity of the Christian faith. The question is how he would deal with some of the difficult theological questions that have emerged from Jewish-Christian dialogue — questions regarding the relation between the two covenants, the doctrinal understanding of the relationship between the Church as 'People of God' and 'God's People' Israel,²⁰ the incarnation and Jesus' messiahship, the relation between the Church and the Kingdom of God, etc. These questions require an authentic and coherent theological response, and it seems that in this regard there remains quite some work to be done. What is more, there are reasons to doubt whether the pontificate of Pope Benedict XVI will display the same resolution that will allow the theology of Jewish-Christian dialogue to take new steps forward. Though Benedict XVI time and again expresses his willingness to continue along the line of his predecessor, he does not seem to

¹⁹ Address of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI on the Occasion of His Visit to the Synagogue of Cologne, August 19, 2005 www.vatican.va.

²⁰ Eugene Fisher, "The Evolution of a Tradition: From *Nostra Aetate* to the Notes. International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee," *Fifteen Years of Catholic-Jewish Dialogue: 1970-1985* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana/Libreria Editrice Lateranense, 1988) 239.

embody the same dialogical spirit as John Paul II. He maintains what can only be described as a rather ambiguous theological position on the question of supersessionist theology. According to John Pawlikowski, President of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCI), this became clear in an address given by Benedict XVI at St. Peter's Square on March 15, 2006.²¹ "Launching a new cycle of catechesis on the theme of the relationship between Christ and the Church, the Pope spoke of the arrival of the definitive eschatological time in Jesus, 'the time for rebuilding God's people of the twelve tribes, which is now converted into a universal people, the Church'.²² The Pope's theological ambiguity on supersessionism is also brought out in the contribution of Marianne Moyaert and Didier Pollefeyt in this volume. Focusing on the Pope's decision to revise the Good Friday Prayer, they show that Benedict XVI reveals traces of a supersessionist interpretation of the relation between Israel and the Church, which leads to a lack of clarity on the question whether the Church has a mission towards the Jews. This ambiguity has "given way to overt advocacy in some circles: in the pronouncements of certain prominent cardinals ... and in the growth of certain organizations for the 'ingrafting' of Jews to the Church."²³ That the question of whether the Church has a mission to the Jews is even raised and then does not receive a clear negative answer, only shows that the ecclesial climate surrounding Jewish-Catholic dialogue no longer exhibits the same dialogical openness as that of *Nostra Aetate*. What this portends for the future of Catholic-Jewish dialogue is perhaps already illustrated by the decision of the Italian Rabbis to pull out

²¹ Unpublished lecture by prof. J. T. Pawlikowski at St. Paul's University, Ottawa, Canada, on October 30, 2008.

²² Pawlikowski, *ibid.*

²³ Mary C. Boys, "Does the Catholic Church Have a Mission 'with' Jews or 'to' Jews?", *Studies in Christian Jewish Relations* 3 (2008) 1-19, 1.

of the Italian Catholic Church's annual celebration of Judaism, held on January 17, 2009.²⁴

Given this perspective, it seems important not only to recall the firm belief of Pope John Paul II in the importance of Jewish-Christian dialogue. In the same spirit we therefore ask: *Can we keep the memory of Nostra Aetate alive? Can we keep faith with one another? Can we find the courage to face one another, to challenge one another? Can our relation be an 'in-between' where God may reveal Himself?* This book is inspired by *Nostra Aetate*, addressing some of the difficult theological challenges that lie ahead of us. It aims to recall John Paul II's conviction that God's covenant with Israel was "never revoked" and asks the burning question what this means for the relation of the Church to the Jewish people. It takes *Nostra Aetate* as an ongoing challenge to develop new theological reflections in the dialogical spirit of Vatican II. The contributors in this volume therefore do not only look to the past, but also critically articulate the challenges and obstacles confronting Jewish-Christian relations today, all the while looking forward to strengthening the dialogue. They not only show the resolution of naming the resistances against dialogue, the remnants of substitution theology, the asymmetry in Jewish-Christian dialogue; they set out to develop new perspectives for the theology of Jewish-Christian dialogue.

In the introductory chapter, Mathijs Lambregts and Leo Declerck (Faculty of Theology, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium) sketch the historical development of the declaration on 'the relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions', with special attention to the way *Nostra Aetate* deals with Judaism. They first draw attention to three individuals, without whom the Second Vatican Council would probably not have addressed the matter of the

²⁴ *Italy's Jews: Pope Benedict Negating 50 Years of Interfaith Progress*, January 13, 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/>.

Church's relations to the Jews: Pope John XXIII, Cardinal Augustine Bea and Jules Isaac. Lamberts and Declerck then sketch the preparatory phase in which the *Secretarius ad christianorum unitatem fovendam* formulated the schema, which would ultimately become *Nostra Aetate* 4, namely "the establishment of a position on anti-Semitism and a reflection on the part of the Church on its own Jewish roots."²⁵ Following this, they reconstruct in detail the many conciliar (inter)sessions during the council that led up to promulgation of the document. In doing so, they not only highlight the delicacy of the issue in light of the political situation in the Middle East at that moment, they also show how the declaration on the Jews (*Nostra Aetate* 4) "made it clear that the Roman Catholic church was ultimately capable of setting aside ancient tradition where sound biblical, historical and cultural arguments insisted upon it."²⁶

Moving beyond the historical perspective John Pawlikowski (Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, USA) examines developments in the Church's thinking on the key issues of covenant and mission. He surveys recent trends in biblical scholarship, the ideas of theologians connected to Christian-Jewish dialogue such as Johann Baptist Metz, and Church leaders like Cardinal Walter Kasper and Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI). Pawlikowski tries to develop a theological model for the Christian-Jewish relationship that both safeguards Christological newness while at the same time creating authentic theological space for Judaism.

David Meyer (Rabbi of the Brighton and Hove New Synagogue, United Kingdom) praises the courage it took forty years ago for the Church to completely rethink its relationship with

²⁵ Lamberts and Declerck, "Vatican II on the Jews: A Historical Survey," in this volume, 55.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

other religions and with Judaism in particular. With equal courage he goes on to address some of the real (theological) difficulties for Jewish-Christian dialogue. Reading *Nostra Aetate* as a Jew, he admits to be shocked at times by the way this dialogical document speaks about the Jewish people in its relation to the Church. If we want to move ahead in the dialogue, he argues, Christians need to learn to listen in earnest to the Jewish other.

Simon Schoon (Theologische Universiteit Kampen, The Netherlands) reflects on the concept, 'People of God'. During Vatican II, the Roman Catholic Church re-discovered the Church as 'the People of God on the way'. The question then is: does a renewal of the relationship between Christians and Jews in the 21st century demand the radical theological step to give up the title 'People of God' for the Church? Schoon chooses to speak of Israel as the 'first-chosen People of God' and of the Church as the 'also-chosen ecumenical People of God from all the nations'.²⁷ He proposes to view the 'rootedness of the Church in (the People of) Israel' as one of the *notae ecclesiae*. In the Protestant view, the Church is the 'People of God' and holy when it is a Church of *metanoia*, of repentance, because the Church must be *semper reformanda*, 'always reforming'. Thus, he states: "After a long and dreadful history, the church and the Jewish people could perhaps, on their different ways to the kingdom of God join forces in a competition for holiness to work for the restoration of the world, separately and together."²⁸

In her contribution, Mary C. Boys (Union Theological Seminary, New York, USA) confirms that *Nostra Aetate* intended to overcome

²⁷ Simon Schoon, "'The New People of God': A Protestant View," in this volume, 93-116, 112.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 114.

supersessionist theology, thereby bringing about a transformation in the relation between Israel and the Church. However, the question remains: what happens *after supersessionism*? It is one thing to affirm that Israel remains God's beloved people, it is quite another thing to formulate a consistent theology of Jewish-Christian relations. If Jews are still covenanted with God and not, as was taught for centuries, unfaithful and blind, then what, if anything, can or should we say about their salvation? Does their covenanted life with God in any way involve Jesus Christ? Boys rightly points out that these and other questions, mainly concerning soteriology, demand serious theological reflection. Indeed, the dialogue which commenced after *Nostra Aetate* raises many questions, even unsettling ones. However, Boys remains convinced that it is in and through dialogue with Israel, that theology is enlivened.

Marianne Moyaert and Didier Pollefeyt (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium) focus on the post-conciliar developments within the Catholic theology of Jewish-Christian relations. For them one of the most urgent questions is whether Catholic theology has actually succeeded in overcoming supersessionism. In this perspective they turn to the work of Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, who can be regarded as representative of Catholic teaching on Jewish-Christian relations. Their analysis of Ratzinger's thinking shows that Catholic theology still wrestles with supersessionist ideas and has still not succeeded in developing a coherent and authentic theology of Jewish-Christian relations. Moreover, Moyaert and Pollefeyt highlight the negative consequences of this theological lacuna on the dialogue between Israel and the Church. Forty years after *Nostra Aetate* there still remains much work to be done.

Marianne MOYAERT & Didier POLLEFEYT

VATICAN II ON THE JEWS A HISTORICAL SURVEY

Mathijs LAMBERGTS & Leo DECLERCK

By way of introduction, it is important to note that the very fact that the Second Vatican Council addressed the matter of the Church's relations with the Jews in one of its documents, *Nostra Aetate*, is due in large measure to two individuals: Pope John XXIII and Cardinal Augustine Bea.¹ It would seem appropriate at this juncture to take a brief look at the beginning of the pontificate of John XXIII, a moment characterized by a series of symbolic deeds. John XXIII insisted from the outset that he planned to exercise his responsibility as bishop of Rome. As a result, he took possession of the cathedral of Saint John Lateran with great solemnity and set out to visit hospitals and prisons in the city. Familiar as he was with the tragedy of the Jews — John XXIII was actively involved in endeavors to save Jews from deportation and inevitable death in the concentration camps² — he was to ensure that the term *perfidii* be scrapped for the first time from the prayer for the Jews during the

¹ The literature on Vatican II and the Jews is abundant; see, for example, Arthur Gilbert, *The Vatican Council and the Jews* (Cleveland, OH/New York: World Publishing Co., 1968). With respect to the Catholic teaching on non-Christian religions during the Council see, for example, Miikka Ruokanen, *The Catholic Doctrine of Non-Christian Religions according to the Second Vatican Council*, Studies in Christian Mission, 7 (Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1992).

² Cf. in this regard Alberto Melloni, *Fra Istanbul, Atene e la guerra: La missione di A. G. Roncalli (1935-1944)*, Testi e ricerche di scienze religiose, Nuova Serie, 10 (Genova: Marietti, 1992) 258-279.