



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II  
TO A DELGATION  
OF THE "AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE"**

*Thursday, 5 February 2004*

*Distinguished Friends,*

With affection I greet you, the members of the American Jewish Committee as you come to the Vatican. It is with gratitude that I recall your 1985 visit to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Conciliar Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, which has so significantly contributed to the strengthening of Jewish-Catholic relations.

As we now approach the fortieth anniversary of this historic document, there is regrettably a great need to repeat our utter condemnation of racism and anti-semitism. Violence in the name of religion is always a desecration to religion. Countering this alarming trend requires that together we stress the importance of religious education which promotes respect and love towards others.

In these days our attention remains drawn to the Holy Land which continues to be afflicted by violence and suffering. It is my fervent prayer that a just solution will be found which respects the rights and security of both Israelis and Palestinians.

Upon all of you, I invoke the gift of peace. *Shalom aleichem.*