

CATHOLICISM REVIEWED AND CORRECTED BY THE SYNAGOGUE

TOWARDS THE NOACHIDE RELIGION

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INTRODUCTION

At the approach of the 40th anniversary of the Conciliar declaration, *Nostrae aetate*², on the relations between the Church and non-Christian religions, the new doctrine on the Jewish Religion, present for over 40 years in numerous texts of the Catholic hierarchy, was undoubtedly made manifest. One of the most characteristic of these texts was the article by Mgr. Francis Deniau, Bishop of Nevers, President of the *Episcopal Committee for Relations with Judaism*, which appeared in issue 290 (September 2004) of the review *Sens*, under the title 'Open questions regarding series of programmes broadcast by Arte' here is a passage from same:

¹ *Action Familiale et Scolaire*, <http://afs.e-catho.com>

² Promulgated on 28th October 1965

Today the Church has repudiated all 'theology of substitution'³ and recognises the current election of the Jewish people, 'the people of God of the Old Covenant which has never been revoked' as Pope John Paul II stated to the Jewish community at Mayence on 17th November 1980.

This requires a complete re-reading of Tradition, a task of interpretation, a fresh look at the two Covenants. It is this direction in particular that John Paul II pointed us.

The 'theology of substitution' which has caused much harm is no longer the thinking of the Catholic Church today. The recognition of the current significance of Israel's fidelity is the path to which the Church is committed, discovering there a deeper understanding of itself, of the meaning of the Good News of Christ and of hope for the world.

To commit oneself to a 're-reading of Tradition', to reinterpret the two Covenants, to admit that yesterday's theology (regarding the Jewish people) will no longer apply today – is a vast operation. The Holy See seems to be committed to travel slowly in this new direction, under pressure from the Jewish authorities whose action in this regard has been unrelenting since 1945. We will tackle this important question⁴ when we consider the following:

- A reminder of the traditional Catholic position on the Jewish people and the Jewish religions: the teaching of Scripture, historical data, the attitude which has developed from same.
- Jewish conceptions of what Christians should believe and do.
- How does the transition from a Catholic conception to a Jewish conception take place?

1. **A reminder of the traditional Catholic position on the Jewish people and the Jewish Religions.**⁵

- The three phases of the true religion.

Since Noah, the true religion has passed through three phases:

- The religion of the Patriarchs with the primitive priesthood;
- The religion instituted by Moses with the priesthood of Aaron;
- The religion instituted by Our Lord with the Catholic priesthood.

These are symbolised in the parable of the Good Samaritan. The man fallen at the hands of robbers (which represent Satan and the fallen angels) is the image of fallen and powerless humanity:

A priest appeared and saw him. This is the primitive priesthood, that of the Patriarchs: a holy priesthood assuredly, but one not sufficient to raise our fallen race, because although it possesses the faith and transmits, with the substance of true religion, the principle of salvation, it has neither the mission nor the virtue to bring the work to its end.

(...)

Thus we arrive at the priesthood of Aaron, signified by the Levite who presents himself after the priest and like him meets the unfortunate victim. This Mosaic institution is divine; it contains the deposit of truth and life; but, as St Paul teaches so forcefully in his beautiful epistle to the Romans, it addresses the malady without the power to remedy it; it announces, it is true, the doctor who will afford a cure for all; it announces Him and prepares

³ We know that, according to traditional doctrine, the Old Covenant has been replaced by the New. This doctrinal point is often called 'the theology of substitution' by those who oppose it.

⁴ This subject has already been addressed in brochures and articles in *Action Familiale et Scolaire* (AFS) : *The Mystery of Israel and the attempt to judaize Catholicism* (1986), by Daniel Granville; *The Old and the New Covenants*, AFS No. 138, Oct 1997; *Reflections on an act of Repentance*, AFS No. 134, Dec. 1997; *Are there two true religions, Today?* AFS No. 166, April 2003.

⁵ We have used the first part of the article, *Are there two true religions, today?*

the way for Him; but it gives nothing itself, salutary though it is, it remains decidedly insufficient. The Levite thus passes by like the priest and the victim remains lying there.⁶

The third person of the parable: the Samaritan who represents Christ, the only One Who may effectively cure the man's wounds by bathing them in oil and wine and taking him to the Inn (a symbol for the Church).

The Religion of the Patriarchs, Mosaic Judaism and Catholicism thus constitute the three phases of the same religion as far as the faith is concerned:

(...) because the New Covenant in general tends to present Israel's faith⁷ as having always been an implicit faith in Jesus Christ. To refuse to believe in Christ Jesus when He has already come, implies by consequence an objective denial of the content of the faith of the Old Covenant.⁸

But what has passed has passed:

Mosaic Judaism is no more than a relic, admittedly rich, wise and bearing a great inheritance but a relic nevertheless. A relic of a religion which, but for an act of interior adoration of a sincere heart, has no longer any object. Its object was to await the Messiah. He has come. From henceforth the cult of the True God may only be found in that due to the Holy Trinity and to the envoy of God, His Son Jesus Christ, by the Church which He Himself has instituted and which He has vivified by the Holy Ghost, dispenser of Divine Graces.⁹

The Old Covenant and the Election of the Jewish People

Because of the Covenant – called the Old Covenant – concluded between God and the Jewish people, they have the quality of an elected people (an elect) to whom a mission has been confided: that of preparing for the coming of Christ.

As soon as the mission is accomplished, the Jewish people no longer benefit either from the prolongation of a particular mission, nor from an exclusive election, nor from a covenant reserved to it alone:

The Jewish people were the elect for two millennia by virtue of a mission which they had to accomplish. But this election was provisional in the sense that they were called not to keep it jealously, as an exclusive privilege, but to share it among all peoples. This is the essence itself of the hidden mystery which Paul announces to the Ephesians. The nations are henceforth called by the same title as the Jews. This is what certain Jews had understood and greeted with joy such as those who had followed Jesus. Others rejected it. The eldest did not wish to share with the prodigal.

The good news of the New Covenant is, as St Paul says, 'That there is no more neither Jew, nor Greek, but you are all one in Jesus Christ'. And it must be said that if the election of a particular people was something other than a provisional economy by virtue of a universal call through which all peoples are invited, if it were coextensive with all history, it would be intolerable. All humanity was originally called by God: these are the peoples that are today gathered in the Church. It is therefore wrong to continue to speak about a particular election of the Jewish people. To do so would be the best way of resurrecting anti-Semitism.¹⁰

The role of the elected people is henceforth attributed to the Church and her alone:

⁶ Mgr. Gay, *Élévations sur la vie et la doctrine de Notre Seigneur Jésus Christ (Reflections on the life and doctrine of Our Lord Jesus Christ)* (31st reflection).

⁷ Let us remember that Israel (in the physical sense used here) signifies the descendance from Jacob, otherwise called the Jewish people.

⁸ Ansgar Santogrossi, *L'Évangile prêché à l'Israël*, p. 8

⁹ J.D. Granville, op. cit., p.29.

¹⁰ Cardinal Daniélou, 'L'Église devant le judaïsme', (*The Church and Judaism*), *Le Figaro*, 28-29 April 1973. An article analysing a document produced by the *French Episcopal Committee for relations with Judaism*, published on 16th April 1973 and entitled, 'Pastoral guidance proposed for putting into effect the directives of the Declaration *Nostrae aetate* of the Second Vatican Council.'

The cult of the temple is abolished forever, a blatant sign of the change in the relationship between God and the people He had formerly chosen. Just as the election of Israel made by God on account of the coming of the Messiah has passed to the Church, so too has the priesthood.¹¹

And by this fact, the new Israel is the Church:

After the coming of the Messiah, the very nature of the people of God transformed itself. Jesus instituted the new people of God, drawn from the old, but with the addition of the pagans who will be grafted onto the old Israel. The new Israel, is the Church, and the unfaithful Israel is not part of it.¹²

God's promise to the first chosen people had been of the temporal order: a country where they could live with the assurance of prosperity and independence: but it was only the figure of the true promise which was of another order: the spiritual liberation of humanity. This promise was accomplished in Christ and the people of God became a spiritual and universal reality.¹³

The replacement of the Old Covenant by the New

This is clearly attested to by St Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews:

But now he (our high priest) hath obtained a better ministry, by how much also he is a mediator of a better testament which is established on better promises.

For, if that former had been faultless, there should not indeed a place have been sought for a second.

*For, finding fault with them, he saith; **'Behold, the days shall come, saith the Lord; and I will perfect, unto the house of Israel and unto the house of Juda, a new testament; not according to the testament which I made to their fathers, on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my testament; and I regarded them not, saith the Lord'**.*

(...) Now in saying a new, he hath made the former old; and that which decayeth and groweth old is near its end.¹⁴

From the commentary by Dom Paul Delatte on this passage¹⁵ we have extracted the following conclusion:

A short conclusion will suffice: in calling the Christian covenant new, the prophet (Jeremiah) has only been able to do so on condition that the preceding Covenant is excluded as old and outdated, and that Christianity abrogates to the great advantage of humanity. Indeed, an institution, denounced more than six centuries ago as precarious and old, is in the condition of decrepit things which can only disappear and vanish; and if we do not speak badly of it, it is to accord with the expression of St Augustine, to bury the Synagogue with honour.¹⁶

¹¹ Denise Judant, *Judaïsme et Christianisme*, p.104. On attempts to reconstruct the temple at Jerusalem, see the article, 'L'avenir de Jerusalem' in AFS No. 153.

¹² Denise Judant, *Les deux Israël*, p.89

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.110. When one describes the Church by the expression 'New Israel' one uses the word Israel in a spiritual and not in a physical sense.

¹⁴ St Paul, *Hebrews* 8:6-13. Our emphasis. The text in italics is a quotation from the prophet Jeremiah 31: 31-34 (CTS Douay version).

¹⁵ In his book '*The Epistles of St Paul replaced in the historical milieu by the Acts of the Apostles*'.

¹⁶ Dom. Delatte op. cit., p.380-381. Let us add too this remark taken from the aforesaid article by Cardinal Daniélou (*Le Figaro* 28-29th April 1973): 'It is (...) completely confusing to write that the first covenant has not been rendered obsolete by the new. What do the terms old and new covenant, Old and New Testament signify then? The Jews are more logical when they refuse to employ these terms, because for them, there is only one Covenant. But to speak of a new covenant is to say that the old has passed away. To say that the old covenant is not obsolete, because it is the root, the source, the foundation, the promise, is to indulge in semantics. Because it is precisely because it is the promise that it implies the accomplishment.'

In her book, *Jalons pour une théologie chrétienne d'Israël* (Milestones for a Christian theology of Israel), Denise Judant explains how this substitution of New Israel (the Church composed of Jews, Christians and Pagans who have become Christians) for the Old Israel (the Jewish people) must be understood. She quotes St Peter's first epistle:

To you therefore that believe he is honour, but to them that believe not, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is made the head of the corner [cornerstone]; And a stone of stumbling and a rock of scandal, to them who stumble at the word, neither do believe, whereunto also they are set.

But you are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people; that you may declare his virtues, who both called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; who in time past were not a people; but are now the people of God. (1 Peter 2:7-10)

And here is her commentary:

The 'incredulous' Jews have therefore been stripped of their former prerogatives. (...) The 'incredulous' Jews (who had been called to build the Kingdom of God) have been rejected; With the pagans who have become Christians, the 'believing' Jews (Christians), now form 'a people of God'. Also, they have the rights to the very expressions which characterise the elected people of the Old Testament. (Exodus 19:5ss)

Perhaps we have not sufficiently taken account of the importance of the image of the cornerstone for the nascent Christian theology. We have found it used by Paul, Peter and John. Of course Christ is the cornerstone, the foundation of the building – the part which 'holds' it up. But why do we have this image of the cornerstone? Because it unites the two different walls, in this case the Jews and the Pagans. Such is the thinking of Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians, and it is fundamental. The building which has Christ as its foundation, the Church, comprises both Jews and Pagans by its very definition. The Church replaces the Jewish people as 'people of God', as partners in the Covenant, it is true, but this Church is formed of Jews and Pagans.¹⁷

The substitution of one Covenant for another corresponds to the replacement of the cult of the Temple by a new cult.

The destruction of the Temple was to occur and mark in a visible manner of some type the passage from one economy to the other. If the sacrifice of Christ alone is valid before God, it is the same with the priesthood. In addition 'He (Christ) taketh away the first that he may establish that which followeth (Hebrews 10:9)¹⁸

The Acceptance of the New Covenant by Israel

Israel (understood in the physical sense – the descendants of Jacob) has accepted the New Covenant through its most eminent representatives: the elderly Simeon (whom we will discuss below), the prophetess Anna, St John the Baptist, the Virgin Mary, St Joseph, the Apostles, the disciples – but the most eminent of these in both time and perfection is undoubtedly the Virgin Mary:

What we learn from the New Testament is that the coming of the Messiah divided Israel into two parts: one which recognised the Messiah and accepted to follow his teaching, and another – the majority of the Jewish people who rejected him. It is therefore false to state that all of Israel rejected the Messiah.

On the contrary, and on this point we do not seem to have been sufficiently enlightened, the fiat of the Blessed Virgin is the acceptance of Israel. In Mary, daughter of Israel, the people of God arrived by grace at the summit of human perfection, and said 'Yes'.¹⁹

Every Jew is called to this New Covenant

¹⁷ Denise Judant, *Jalons pour une théologie chrétienne d'Israël*, p.51

¹⁸ Denise Judant, *Jalons pour une théologie chrétienne d'Israël*, p.64

¹⁹ Denise Judant, *Les deux Israels*, p.76

Every Jew is therefore called to this covenant, to this salvation and in a very particular manner, different from the manner in which a Gentile is called, since he is called not only as an individual, but also by virtue of his national quality, because it was to his nation that the first part of the revelation was specifically addressed.²⁰

‘The gifts and calling of God are without repentance’

The replacement for the Jews of the Old Covenant by the infinitely superior New Covenant does not contradict the scriptural formula, ‘For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.’ And it is wrong that this formula is used by those who wish at all costs to keep the Old Covenant running in parallel with the New Covenant and who attribute a salvific character to it.

To a gift of God without repentance there must be a corresponding response. It has not been established that this must be on the part of Israel. It is always possible, always expected from God. Here is the commentary on this point by Denise Judant:

It is an out and out misrepresentation to compare, as some do, a so-called fidelity of the Jews to a so-called infidelity of Christians; for Paul it is the Jews who are unfaithful. But God remains faithful. If the Jews have been ‘elected’ through the Patriarchs, it was not to remain a separated people, since on the contrary the Covenant was from its very origin open to a universalist perspective; they have been elected in view of Christ and of the election of grace. Out of the Covenant, the Jews remain called to return there: such is the interpretation of ‘Romans II:28-29’²¹ There is a unanimous consensus on this point in the Patristic tradition.²² It is true that this interpretation prevents us thinking that the Jewish people as such remain called to a particular destiny. But it appears to us the only one conforming to St Paul’s view.²³

The supreme consecration of the Old Covenant – the elder Simeon

The fourth joyful mystery of the Rosary makes us meditate upon this point:

Simeon, who the Spirit of God guided to the Temple to meet the God-Child, is the living figure and personal representation of the Old Law, or rather of all that holy antiquity of which the life of the Patriarchs is an introduction. He is the last offshoot of this tree, 40 centuries old of which Adam is the root; he is its pinnacle and crowning glory; he contains its sap; he is the sign and the fruit of its maturity. It is necessary that all this great movement of natural and supernatural life, of social and religious life which, dating from the creation, had taken its course in the earthly paradise, had arrived at the term assigned it by Divine Wisdom. All must reach out to Christ, embrace Him, incorporate themselves in Him so as to be bound through Him to God. All things have been directed towards the promised Messiah, all that, on earth, had really progressed, was directed towards Him. From the time he appeared in the world, the ‘encounter’ must have taken place and the meeting occurred. But this was true above all of that head of humanity which constituted the elected people, the family of Abraham, the Jewish nation constituted ‘Finis legis Christus: ‘The end of the law is Christ’;²⁴ its end, in this sense that it was the aim, the success, the consummation, its end also in the sense that it went to abolish the passing form, to make flower and to fructify, in a new climate and under a much more perfect form, this substance of divine light and life which was the basis and which God Himself had laid down. It followed that Jesus, in the arms of Holy Simeon is the union of the two Covenants; and if not yet the passage of the Old to the New, at least the supreme consecration of the Old. All the promises were accomplished, all the guarantees complete; the law and the prophets gave witness to Christ, and the Christ, on his part, gives witness to the law and to the prophets. It is obvious from now on that there is only one religion. It has different phases and shows itself successively in different conditions; but it remains unique, always true, always holy, always glorious to God and salvific for men. It has only one end which is the adorable Trinity, and a single foundation which is the

²⁰ Abbe Michel Beaumont, ‘Dialogue judéo-chrétienne contre foi catholique’, *Fideleter* No. 151 January-February 2003, p.9.

²¹ [‘As concerning the Gospel, indeed, they are enemies for your sake; but as touching the election, they are most dear for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance.’]

²² cf. Denise Judant, *Judaïsme et Christianisme*, p.263-271.

²³ Denise Judant, *Jalons pour une théologie chrétienne d’Israël*, p.83

²⁴ Romans 10:4, ‘For the end of the law is Christ; unto justice to everyone that believeth.’

Christ, the Word of God incarnate. All is made clear, all is in order, all is in place; the past is indissolubly bound to the future; antiquity has had its say and done its work; the modern epoch is going to begin; thus sings the Latin poet, it is here that 'the great era of the centuries has dawned'.²⁵ One understands from henceforth that this 'encounter' is of capital importance.²⁶

The rejection of the New Covenant by the Synagogue

The Synagogue²⁷ rejected the New Covenant and remained attached to the Old which had become obsolete. It set itself to fight the Church and will not cease to do so until the Antichrist. This was prefigured in Scripture in numerous passages (Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob)²⁸ and in particular in the celebrated judgement of Solomon, the significance of which is as follows:

*One of the two women who appealed to his justice, having smothered her child while sleeping envied her rival whose son is living. She figures the Synagogue which has smothered faith in Jesus in the people of Israel and wishes to prevent the Church from bringing souls to the resurrection of Christ through baptism and penance.*²⁹

The conversion of the Jews according to Scripture

After having indicated the true interpretation of the passage of Chapter II of the Epistle to the Romans, 'The gifts and the calling of God are without repentance' (Romans., II, 29.) Denise Judant adds:

Is this to say that Chapter II of the Epistle to the Romans does not open any perspective on the destiny of 'Israel according to the flesh'? This interpretation would be as inexact as that which determines that destiny with certainty. Paul fervently 'hopes', but without certainty, that Jews will convert and that they will be as numerous as possible.

In summary, he affirms neither that the Jews will be converted en masse, nor that this event will take place at the end of the world. All that St Paul said is that the salvation of the Jews and the Pagans is a mystery, a mystery bound to that of Christ Himself. If the Jews of the Old Testament believed themselves to be the sole beneficiaries of 'election' without admitting the Pagans, the latter allowed now in the Covenant, must be careful not to think that it is reserved for them: the Jews remained called to enter it and called in very particular manner, by virtue of their primitive election which remains in this sense, but in this sense only.

This conception of the future of the Jews appears to us to be more in keeping with the Pauline text and to the whole of the New Testament. According to Luke, disciple of Paul, there is a distinction at the very interior of the Jewish people, between the Christian Jews and others. For Luke, the incredulous Jewish people is now among the ranks of nations. Luke's opinion allows us to understand better that of his master, Paul.

The mystery of the concurrent call of the Jews and the Pagans appears to us moreover to come out from the reconciliation between the epistle of St Paul to the Romans (I:30-31) with the first epistle of St Peter (2, 10)(...)

Peter shows that the Pagans enter 'now' in the Covenant, thanks to the mercy of God towards them. He only speaks of the 'incredulity' of the Jews. As for Paul, he cannot give up seeing his 'brothers' outside this mercy, and he hopes, that they will attain it themselves too, not much later, but immediately. (...) The people of God is the collection of those who God in His mercy, gathers into His Covenant, and does so for the whole period of

²⁵ 'Magnus...saeclorum nascitur ordo'. Virgil, *Eglog.* IV.

²⁶ Mgr. Gay, *Élévations sur la vie et la doctrine de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ*, 20th reflection.

²⁷ *The Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Judaism* gives the following definition for the word 'synagogue': 'The central religious institution of Judaism; the place intended for public prayer and other religious and community activities'. We have taken the word in its first sense: 'The central religious institution of Judaism' otherwise known as organised Judaism (The expression 'organised Judaism' is used by G.M. Riegner in his book *Ne jamais désespérer [Never be driven to despair]* which we will discuss below [See footnote 33 and the quotation from G.M. Riegner p.28].

²⁸ On this subject see the book by Fr Julio Meinville, *Les juifs dans le mystère de l'histoire*, in particular p. 17-21 (Published by Editions Sainte Jeanne d'Arc, Les Guillots, 18260 Villegnon). [Note David Klinghoffer's inversion of the prefiguration of Esau and Jacob, stating as he does that the Church is prefigured by Esau rather than Jacob. Ed.

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²⁹ Commentary in the Missal of Dom. Lefebvre (1940) for the Monday of the 4th week of Lent.

history until the Parousia.³⁰ And it is by its fraction which became Christians that the Jewish people continue to belong to the people of God, from the time of St Paul until the end of the times.³¹

Summary

The Covenant proposed by God to men has had two successive forms called the Old and the New. Between the two forms, one notes, at the same time, a continuity on certain points and a rupture in others:

- The Old Covenant with the Jewish people was a temporary covenant having as its purpose the coming of the Messiah;
- As soon as the Messiah came, the Old Covenant disappeared, replaced by the New. The Old existed no more as it was no longer able to fulfil a salvific role;
- The Jewish people as such no longer have a particular salvific mission, or covenant with God which was reserved for them: *'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor freeman, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'*³²
- The Church is the new Israel;
- The Synagogue, rejecting the New Covenant, has remained attached to the Old which became obsolete. Since the time of Our Lord, it has never ceased to oppose itself to the Church;
- By the fact of their original election, the Jews are called in a very particular manner, to enter into the New Covenant.

II Jewish conceptions of what Christians should believe and do³³

We know that the Jewish authorities have had the idea of urging the Church to modify her traditional doctrine – which we outlined above.

The pressure to do so occurred for the greater part after the 1939-45 War and emanated from Jewish personalities or organisations. Originally, they sought as their aim to obtain, *'a new approach by Christian theology towards the Jews'*,³⁴ then to end up with what Rabbi Elie Benamozegh³⁵ called a reform of the Church in the Hebrew ideal.³⁶

Outline of Jewish conceptions

These conceptions are rarely presented in their entirety. We have summarised them as follows:

Two aspects seem essential:

³⁰ The second coming of Christ – the glorious coming.

³¹ Denise Judant, *Jalons pour une théologie chrétienne d'Israël*, p.83-84.

³² Gal. 3:28

³³ One can find very interesting insights on this subject in the following documents: Michel Laurigan's brochure, *L'Église et la Synagogue depuis Vatican II (The Church and the Synagogue since Vatican II)*, Published by Editions de Sel, Couvent de la Haye-aux-Bonhommes, 49240 Avrille, France which reproduces with compliments an article which appeared in No. 46 (Autumn 2003) of *Sel de la Terre*. Numerous references have been taken from this brochure in the pages which follow. Gerhart M. Riegner's book, *Ne jamais désespérer*, published by Cerf. 1999. Riegner was the Secretary General of the Jewish World Congress. In the years 1960-1990 he played a role of the first order in the discussions with the Holy See relating to relations between Jews and Christians; an account of which he gives in Chapter IV of his book (circa 100 pages)

³⁴ G M Riegner, op. cit., p.351

³⁵ Rabbi of Livorno (1825-1900) One of the leaders in contemporary Jewish thought. He was the author of the book, *Israël et l'humanité (Israel and Humanity)*, published in Paris in 1914 and republished in an abridged version in 1961 by Albin Michel. One may find the 1914 version on the site <http://www.benamozegh.info/benamozegh.html>

³⁶ Cf. this remark: *'If Christianity consents to reform itself according to the Hebrew ideal, it will always be the true religion of the Gentile peoples'*. E. Banamozegh, op. cit., p.10

Concerning the Jewish people:

The Covenant of God with the Jewish people (what the Christians call the Old Covenant) would not be revoked. The Jewish people would remain today as yesterday a priestly people charged with a particular mission for non-Jews. The religion which they practise (we are not concerned here whether it be through the Mosaic or Talmudic³⁷ religion) would be salvific for the Jews.

Concerning the Gentiles (Christians and Pagans)³⁸

It would be neither necessary nor opportune that these convert to Judaism. To be saved, it is enough for them to observe the seven laws called the Noachide³⁹ laws which were imposed upon Noah (a law requiring the establishment of courts of justice; and six laws prohibiting blasphemy, idolatry, incest, murder, theft and the consumption of the flesh of a living animal).

The Noachide religion is one limited to these seven laws (and which comprises belief in one unique God – as implied in the law condemning idolatry).

Let us examine these two areas in somewhat more detail:

- The Old Covenant has never been revoked

What Christians call the Old Covenant with the Jews has not been abolished and remains in force (...). If one takes this affirmation seriously, this signifies that all current theology which began with the Fathers of the Church is abolished and that contrary to its traditional teaching, the Church can no longer claim to replace the Jewish people. If the Old Covenant is still valid something in particular exists for us, Jews. The classical theory of the substitution of the Old Israel (the Jews) by the New Israel (the Christians) is corrected and modified by this affirmation which is therefore primordial. (...) This profoundly modifies Christian teaching.⁴⁰

As already indicated, the traditional doctrine on this point is called ‘the theology of substitution’ by those who oppose it.

It is necessary therefore for the Church to ratify a change of doctrine with the following consequences:

- The Jewish people today remain the elect⁴¹ today. Just as much now as in the past, it will be a people of priests, a priestly people;

³⁷ The Mosaic religion:

It is principally founded upon the Torah. ‘Torah’ is the name that the Jews give to the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) and more especially to the law of Moses. Mosaic Judaism is no more than a relic. (Cf. the quotations from Daniel Granville, p.6 below.)

The Talmudic religion:

It is principally founded on the Talmud, a work comprising the book of Mishnah, completed with commentaries (called Gemara) established by the Jewish schools of Palestine and Babylon. Here are the definitions given by Robert’s Dictionary of the Mishnah and Talmud:

Mishnah: *In Judaism, a compilation of teachings and decisions of a certain number of Rabbis tanniam – teachers) interpreting the Torah.*

Talmud: *In Hebrew ‘Teaching’. A vast Judaic work which presents itself as a commentary on the Mishnah and aiming to give a complete corpus of teaching and the rules to be followed on points of Jewish civil and religious life.*

³⁸ Please note that those called Gentiles are non-Jews (Christians and Pagans).

³⁹ In the ecclesiastical lexicon, in the past, the word ‘Noachide’ denoted a descendant of Noah and the word ‘Noachic’ whatever related to Noah. Today we use ‘Noachide’ to convey the latter sense.

⁴⁰ G.M. Riegner, op.cit., p.417

⁴¹ See this remark by G M Riegner, op. cit., p.452: ‘*The permanence of Israel (while so many ancient peoples have disappeared without trace) is an historic fact and a sign to be interpreted in God’s plan. In every case one must get rid of the traditional conception of a punished people, preserved as a living argument to sustain Christian apologetics. It remains the elect.*’

- By virtue of this fact it has a mission to other peoples – to bring Monotheism to them⁴²;
- It will remain faithful to its mission throughout the centuries, hence the necessity for the Church to recognise its faults (repentance) and to convert itself on this point and to atone;
- All proselytism (seeking conversion) regarding the Jewish people will be proscribed.

The obligatory character of the Noachide Laws for the Gentiles

In a Catholic milieu one is barely aware of the existence of the Noachide laws and their obligatory character for Gentiles which many Jewish authorities attribute to them. We will thus devote to this subject a series of passages which go to reinforce one or the other; these show that this is already a well-established idea.

Elie Benamozegh

This Rabbi from Livorna (1823-1900), whose work we have already cited, wished to resolve this question which the Rabbis and thinkers of Judaism were asking themselves after the emancipation of the Jews in Europe:⁴³

*When we have again found our role as the people which brings salvation to the nations, what will be the religion of the Christians who claim themselves to be the new Israel?*⁴⁴

His book, *Israel et Humanité*,⁴⁵ which he wrote in French is sub-titled ‘Study on the problem of the Universal religion and its solution’. The solution has been summarised thus by Michael Laurigan:

The Catholic Church must reform its teaching on three points:

- *It must change its view of the Jewish people which it must rehabilitate as being the elder people, the sacerdotal people ‘who knew to keep the primitive religion in its original purity’. This people is neither deicide nor rejected by God. No malediction lies upon it. On the contrary it is led to propose the happiness and unity of humanity.*
- *To renounce the Divinity of Jesus, this Son of Man, as he called himself. A simple Rabbi, Jesus was a Jew and remains so. To preach Jesus Christ, but a human Jesus Christ, will bring about a morality for the happiness of all men.*
- *To accept a reinterpretation – and not a suppression – of the mystery of the Trinity;*

On these three conditions ‘The Catholic Church is the Church of true Catholicism’, true Catholicism which Benamozegh calls Noachism, a religion for all people who belong ‘to the Christian space’⁴⁶. This Noachism possesses a morality which the Church has a mission to make known to the peoples of the earth.⁴⁷

Elie Benamozegh’s quotation which we have already cited summarises this position:

If Christianity consents to reform itself in accordance with the Hebrew ideal, it will always be the true religion of the Gentile peoples.⁴⁸

Here are some more recent explanations on the Noachide Laws.

⁴² We have exposed here some Jewish conceptions of what Christians should believe – which is not necessarily coherent with the Talmudic religion. Cf. this remark by Israel Shahak in his book ‘*Jewish History – The Jewish Religion*’ – *The weight of Three Millennia*, p. 32 : ‘*I shall only deal in detail with the most important of these popular delusions: that the Jewish Religion is, and always has been monotheistic (...). This ahistorical view is quite wrong*’. See also the article in AFS No. 135 (February 1998), *Israel’s politics by an Israeli.*’

⁴³ The civil and legal introduction of the Jews into the heart of Christian societies; it occurred in Europe at the end of the 18th and in the first half of the 19th century.

⁴⁴ Michel Laurigan, op. cit., p.35

⁴⁵ See note 35 below

⁴⁶ Cardinal Lustiger’s expression (Cf Michel Laurigan op. cit., p. 23.

⁴⁷ Michel Laurigan, op.cit., p.35-36

⁴⁸ Elie Benamozegh, op. cit., p.18.

Rabbi Jacob Kaplan, 1966

According to our doctrine, the Jewish religion is not the only one to assure Salvation. Saved are all those who, not being Jews, believe in a supreme God and whose conduct is moral obeying the laws called the Noachide laws – those which the Creator prescribed to Noah (...). In consequence, the Rabbis teach that the just of all nations have a right to eternal salvation. It is unique to the Jews that over and above the Noachide laws, there are the prescriptions of the Torah, the law of Moses which have as their raison d'être in the Divine plan to form a people destined for religious action in the world. The hope of Israel, is not therefore, the conversion of the human race to Judaism but to Monotheism. As for the biblical religions, they are declared by two of our greatest theologians, confessions which have as their task to prepare with Israel the coming of the Messianic era announced by the Prophets. Consequently we ardently wish to work in common for the realization of this essentially biblical ideal.⁴⁹

Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Judaism (1989-1993)

Noachide Laws

Seven key principles of morality which, according to Rabbinic opinion, are binding on all humanity since men are all descendants of a common ancestor. According to tradition these Noachide laws imposed by Noah, preceded the Torah and the Halakhah – the legal system imposed on the Hebrew people only. According to Maimonides the acceptance – on the basis of the Bible – of the seven universal precepts, signifies that all just Gentiles are counted among 'the pious of the nations of the world who have a part in the world to come'. Christians and Muslims are considered by the majority of the Halakhic authorities as non-idolaters and as having accepted the Noachide laws.

Following the above there is a table of the seven Noachide Laws:

1. *Civil Justice (the duty of establishing a legal system);*
2. *The proscription of blasphemy (which includes false witness);*
3. *The proscription of idolatry;*
4. *The proscription of incest (as well as adultery and other sexual offences);*
5. *The proscription of murder;*
6. *The proscription of stealing;*
7. *The proscription of eating the flesh ('a member') cut from a living animal (that is to say cruelty of all forms).*

The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia

The Laws of Noah

Seven laws which the Rabbis consider as obligatory upon all mankind; they derive from the first chapter of Genesis (9:4-7); six of these laws are negative and prohibit idolatry, blasphemy, murder, adultery, stealing and eating the flesh of a live animal. The only positive commandment is the one requiring the establishment of courts of justice. They were the object of numerous discussions by authors of the 17th century in connection with the rights of peoples (international law).

Chapter 'Jewish Reflections' in the 'Declaration on Covenant and Mission' 12th August 2002⁵⁰

Judaism considers that all peoples are obliged to observe a universal law. This law called the seven commandments of Noah apply to all human beings. They are: 1. the establishment of courts of justice so that society is governed by law' and the prohibition of 2. blasphemy, 3. idolatry, 4. incest, 5. spilling of blood, 6. stealing, 7. eating the flesh of a living animal.

⁴⁹ Jacob Kaplan (Chief Rabbi of France), *Dialogue with Fr Danielou, 10th February 1966 at the theatre des ambassadeurs, Paris 1966* (Michel Laurigan, op. cit., p.3)

⁵⁰ Declaration drawn up by the American Episcopal Committee for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Affairs and by the National Council of Synagogues and Delegates. It comprises a preface and two chapters: 'Roman Catholic Reflections' and 'Jewish Reflections'.

It was only a few years ago in 2002 that the Noachide laws were published in a declaration drawn up by American Catholic and Jewish authorities; yet they only appear in the chapter called 'Jewish Reflections' in that document. Matters progressed somewhat quicker in the USA as is confirmed by law 102-14 promulgated on the 20th March 1991 by the 102nd session of the US Congress. Here is the text:

Public Law 102-14

102nd Congress

Joint Resolution to designate 26th March 1991 as 'Education Day' in the United States

- *Whereas Congress recognizes the historical tradition of ethical values and principles which are the basis of civilized society and upon which our great Nation was founded;*
- *Whereas these ethical values and principles have been the bedrock of society from the dawn of civilization, when they were known as the Seven Noahide Laws;*
- *Whereas without these ethical values and principles the edifice of civilization stands in serious peril of returning to chaos;*
- *Whereas society is profoundly concerned with the recent weakening of these principles that has resulted in crises that beleaguer and threaten the fabric of civilized society;*
- *Whereas the justified preoccupation with these crises must not let the citizens of this Nation lose sight of their responsibility to transmit these ethical values from our distinguished past to the generations of the future;*
- *Whereas the Lubavitch movement has fostered and promoted these ethical values and principles throughout the world;*
- *Whereas Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, leader of the Lubavitch movement, is universally respected and revered and his eighty-ninth birthday falls on March 26, 1991;*
- *Whereas in tribute to this great spiritual leader, "the rebbe", this, his ninetieth year will be seen as one of "education and giving", the year in which we turn to education and charity to return the world to the moral and ethical values contained in the Seven Noahide Laws; and*
- *Whereas this will be reflected in an international scroll of honor signed by the President of the United States and other heads of state: Now, therefore be it*
- *Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That March 26, 1991, the start of the ninetieth year of Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, leader of the worldwide Lubavitch movement, is designated as "Education Day. U.S.A.". The President is requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.*

This was approved on the 20th March 1991 and signed by George Bush, President of the United States of America.⁵¹

(The following insert has been provided by the Editor of *Apropos*)

[David Klinghoffer⁵² 12th December 2003

You often hear it said that Jews (...) have never relished the opportunity to point out to adherents of other religions that their faith falls short of the truth. Not so.

Traditionally we Jews have indeed believed in using rather aggressive methods of weaning non-Jews from their false gods – see for example, Maimonides's alarmingly frank comments on this in his Mishneh Torah, which I hesitate to quote because they are so aggressive (Hilchot Melachim 8:10, 9:1). Another medieval sage, Sforno wrote that being a 'kingdom of priests' (Exodus 19:6) means 'to instruct all of mankind to call in unison on the Name of the Lord and to serve Him with one accord'.

⁵¹ The English original of this public law may be found at <http://noahides.tripod.com/torah4noahides/id18.html>

⁵² Columnist in *The Jewish Forward* and contributor to *The National Review*.

The intent of these great scholars was not that all humans convert to Judaism, but rather that they become believers in the God of Israel as Gentiles – as Noachides, guided in their lives by the seven fundamental moral imperatives associated with the descendants of Noah (namely, all humanity) and outlined in the Talmud's tractate Sanhedrin.⁵³ (Our emphasis – Editor Apropos)

Klinghoffer's faith in the ultimate success of Judaism is expressed in his statement, 'We are called "Israel" because we wrestle with and prevail over the spirit of Esau, of Christianity.'^{54]}

Consequences of accepting the Noachide Laws

The summary of Elie Benamozegh's thoughts quoted below provide us with an initial indication of the consequences.

As it is a matter of 'reforming Christianity in accordance with the Hebraic ideal', The Noachide laws must be interpreted from a Jewish perspective. It is therefore obvious that law No. 3, prohibiting idolatry, implies a threefold rejection: that of the mystery of the Holy Trinity (considered as a form of polytheism); that of the mystery of the Incarnation (Jesus being no longer considered as God), that of the mystery of the Redemption (not being considered as God, He (Jesus) is unable to save us). These three mysteries are effectively incompatible with the idea that the Jews have of Divine unity.

III How does the transition from a traditional Catholic to a Jewish conception occur?

We are dealing here with an undertaking having as its object a radical change in Catholic theology regarding the Jews and Judaism (which has as a consequence the rejection of the dogma, 'Outside the Church there is no Salvation'. It is a lengthy process which began in the 1950s and which is described in the two preceding documents: the book by Gerhart M. Riegner, *Ne jamais désespérer, (Never despair)*, and the brochure by Michel Laurigan, *L'Église et la Synagogue depuis Vatican II (The Church and the Synagogue since Vatican II)*,

We have outlined below the principal stages then we will indicate what seems to have been attained and what is in progress.

The principal stages of the process: dates, facts and documents

1946: The Seelisburg Conference in Switzerland brought together around sixty Protestant, Catholic and Jewish experts (Jules Isaac⁵⁵ being one of the last). It drafted a charter called 'The ten points of Seelisburg', the fifth point of which was : 'To avoid belittling biblical or post-biblical Judaism with the aim of exalting Christianity.'⁵⁶

One can see here the beginning of the effort to rehabilitate post-biblical Judaism (Mosaic or Talmudic).

1948: Jules Isaac founded *L'amitié judéo-chrétienne (Judeo-Christian Friendship)*

13th June 1960: Jules Isaac gave John XXIII a memo entitled *De la nécessité d'une réforme de l'enseignement chrétien à l'égard d'Israël.* ('Regarding the necessity for a reform of Christian teaching about Israel').

⁵³ The Disputation: Modern Day Disputations, *The Forward Forum*, December 12th 2003.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ 'A well known French historian, Jules Isaac was an assimilated Jew. For thirty years, and until the war, his history manual, known under the name of 'Mallet and Isaac' was the most popular school book in France. Isaac was not close to Judaism and didn't care too much about his Jewish roots. And then came the Shoah, the 'Catastrophe' fell upon him, his wife and his daughter were deported. His personal misfortune drove Jules Isaac to write a book, 'Jesus and Israel' in which he examined the sources of modern anti-Semitism. The book was written during the period when he was obliged to live clandestinely to escape deportation. Isaac arrived at the conclusion that it was Christian teaching which had furnished the bases of modern anti-Semitism.' G. M. Riegner, op, cit., p.353.

⁵⁶ The text of these ten points was reproduced by Michel Laurigan (op. cit., p.54.

1962-65: The Conciliar period: G. M. Riegner also voiced interest in the Second Vatican Council (op. cit., p.361.) *'I was fascinated (...) At a stroke the Church began to re-examine its structures, its foundations, its action in every field of life.'* Various Jewish associations made themselves heard at Rome, their action being coordinated by G M Riegner (according to his evidence).

February 1962: The delivery to Cardinal Bea⁵⁷ of a memorandum emanating from *The World Council of Jewish Organisations*, setting forth Jewish requests on the occasion of the Second Vatican Council. *'The fact that for the first time organized Judaism was to address itself to the Catholic Church was in itself very important.'* (G. M. Riegner op. cit., p.366)

3rd September 1964: A draft of the Conciliar text on ecumenism, making reference to the conversion of the Jews, is published in *the New York Herald Tribune* leading to a massive protest by the principal Jewish organisations. A new draft is presented to the Council Fathers on 18th September 1964. All reference to the conversion of Jews is eliminated.

Commentary by G M Riegner:

This whole story is astounding. It proves that not only persons but also great assemblies are judged in the manner by which one or the other behave towards the Jews' (op.cit., p.382).

20th November 1964: The adoption by the Council Fathers of a schema concerning the position and attitude of the Catholic Church towards the Jews and Judaism:

*Under the innocent appearance of ecumenical unity, of Christian charity, of a common spiritual filiation, and of reconciliation of Churches this vote had a very grave import because it amounted to saying that for two thousand years the Church was wrong, that it must make honourable amends and revise entirely its attitude to the Jews. This vote gave satisfaction to those supporting the tenacious campaigns undertaken in these previous years by the spokesmen of the large international Jewish organisations (the Bnai Brith, the World Jewish Congress, etc.) with the purpose of 'addressing and purification of Christian teaching towards Judaism.'*⁵⁸

21st November 1964: The promulgation of the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. It stated in paragraph 16:

*Finally, those who have not yet received the Gospel are related in various ways to the people of God. In the first place there is the people to whom the covenants and the promises were given and from whom Christ was born according to the flesh (cf. Rom. 9:4-5). On account of their fathers, this people remains most dear to God, for God does not repent of the gifts He makes nor of the calls He issues (cf. Rom. 11:28-29).*⁵⁹

At the beginning of 1965: Leon de Poncins arranged to have the aforesaid brochure, *'The Jewish problem in terms of the Council'*, distributed to all the Council Fathers. He recalled in it the characteristics of Judaism's struggle against Catholic tradition and the objectives of the campaign being undertaken by the Jewish organisations:

The condemnation and suppression of all discrimination, racial, religious or national concerning the Jews.

The modification or the suppression of the liturgical prayers concerning the Jews, those of Good Friday in particular.

The affirmation that the Jews are not in any way responsible for the death of Christ, the fault of which rests upon the whole of humanity.

⁵⁷ Cardinal Bea was at that time President of *The Secretariat for Christian Unity*. The negotiations he engaged in with the Jewish authorities were secret and were first brought to light in the article, *'How the Jews changed Catholic thinking'* in the American review, *Look*, (25th January 1966) mentioned below.

⁵⁸ Leon de Poncins, *'The Jewish Problem vis a vis the Council'*, p.5

⁵⁹ [Abbott version.]

Putting into abeyance or quashing of the gospel passages relating to that crucial episode of the Passion, principally that of St Matthew whom Jules Isaac coldly treats as a liar and forger.

The confession that the Church bears full responsibility for this latent war which has persisted for 2000 years between Jews, Christians and the rest of the world.

The promise that the Church will definitively modify its attitude concerning the Jews in a spirit of humility, contrition and pardon, and finally that it will make every effort to make good the wrong that she has caused by rectifying and purifying its traditional teaching according to the directives of M. Jules Isaac.⁶⁰

28th October 1965: The promulgation of the *Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions, Nostrae aetate*. The passage on the Jewish religion (paragraph 4) is far from satisfying all of the preceding requests but constitutes an advance in their spirit.⁶¹

One cannot find any reference to the traditional teachings of the Church. For the first time in a text of this importance the unfaithful Jews are presented in a positive fashion: it speaks of ‘*mutual friendship and esteem*’ of ‘*fraternal dialogue*’ and there is no mention of conversion. Here is the phrase which denotes this: ‘*The Jews still remain most dear to God because of their fathers, for He does not repent of the gifts He makes nor of the calls He issues. (Cf. Rom. II:28-29)*’. This phrase will subsequently be that which is used most often to justify the continued existence of the Old Covenant.

Moreover, G. M. Riegner posits:

The affirmation of the Declaration that God does not take back the gifts and the promises that he makes to men is extremely important in theological terms. When one knows Christian and Pauline theology, that is to say what the Christians call the Old Covenant with the Jews is not abolished and remains in force. This is based upon St Paul and his epistle to the Romans in which we note that the Old Covenant remains valid and that the Jews ‘remain very dear to God’ (op. cit., p.417)⁶²

25th January 1966: In an article, ‘*How the Jews have changed Catholic thinking*’, in the American review, *Look*, (with a circulation of 7 million) Joseph Roddy gave a synthesis of the results which appeared to him to have accrued from the Jewish campaign. The article was reproduced in *Sel de la Terre* No. 34 (Autumn 2000).

20-22 December 1970 There was a meeting at Rome of a Catholic delegation (composed of representatives of several dicasteries) and a Jewish delegation (representing the *International Jewish Committee for Inter-Religious consultations* – the IJIC) under the presidency of Cardinal Willebrands.

The memorandum adopted at the conclusion of this meeting addressed among other things, the elimination of anti-Semitism in religious and historical teaching manuals and an examination of Catholic liturgical texts to avoid all offensive references or representations concerning Judaism.

16th April 1973 The *French Episcopal Committee for relations with Judaism* distributed a document entitled, ‘*Pastoral guidelines designed to bring into operation in France the guidelines of the declaration, “Nostrae aetate” of the Second Vatican Council*’.

It states:

The Old Covenant has not indeed been made obsolete by the New (...)

⁶⁰ Léon de Poncins, op. cit., p.20

⁶¹ The documents given to the Council Fathers by Léon de Poncins and other authors (in particular Maurice Pinay, author of the book, *The plot against the Church*, had a certain influence in the good sense.

⁶² Regarding this see the quotations from Denise Judant which appear below.

*The Jewish people are aware of having received, through its particular vocation, a universal mission to the nations.*⁶³

22nd October 1974 The Creation of *The Commission for religious relations between the Catholic Church and Judaism* attached to *The Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity*.

3rd January 1975: The publication by the latter Commission of guidelines and suggestions for the application of the Conciliar Declaration, *Nostrae aetate* (para.4). In the chapter concerning dialogue with the Jews it states:

*Dialogue demands respect for the other as he is, above all, respect for his faith and his religious convictions.*⁶⁴

And in the chapter, 'Teaching and Education':

The history of Judaism did not end with the destruction of Jerusalem, but rather went on to develop a religious tradition. And although we believe that the importance and meaning of that tradition were deeply affected by the coming of Christ, it is still nonetheless rich in religious values.'

Commentary by G.M. Riegner:

The guidelines and suggestions for implementing the conciliar declaration, 'Nostrae aetate', No IV constitutes the most significant document, in a sense being the culmination of this period. (...)

The guidelines reaffirm and extend the teachings of Nostrae aetate. At the same time they set out a programme of action concerning dialogue, the liturgy, teaching and education as well as common social activities (...).

Personally, I consider that these guidelines contain four fundamental points which go beyond 'Nostrae aetate'.

Here are the second and fourth of these fundamental points (they are linked to the directives quoted above):

The second principle is that dialogue demands respect for the other and above all respect for his faith and religious convictions (...)

The fourth new concept contained in the directives proclaims that the history of Judaism did not end with the destruction of Jerusalem but has continued and has even developed a religious tradition rich in values. In reference to traditional Christian theology this principle is truly revolutionary (...)

In traditional Christian teaching, the Jews, were represented as the 'accursed people' and their dispersion as punishment for the rejection of Christ, and here all of a sudden, it is said, 'The Jews are spiritually rich. The history has continued and you will continue to develop your tradition'. This is the recognition of the continued tradition of the Jewish people as a living community throughout the centuries, with its own mission. It is a very important forward step in the Christian concept of Judaism (op. cit., p.420-421)

17th November 1980: The meeting took place between John Paul II and the Jewish community of Mainz. The pope declared:

The depth and the richness of our common heredity finds itself in particular in friendly dialogue and confident collaboration...

The first dimension of this dialogue, that is to say the meeting between the people of God of the Old Covenant which God has never revoked (Cf. Rom.II:29)⁶⁵ and that of the New Covenant is at the same time a dialogue within our church, and in this way may be said to be between the first and the second part of the Bible.

⁶³ The complete text of the Pastoral Directives appears in the aforementioned brochure by Michel Laurigan, p.85. The references for these quotes may be found on p.89 & 91 of that work.

⁶⁴ One finds in this definition the liberal principle of respect for error.

24th June 1985: The publication by the *Commission for religious relations with Judaism* of Notes on the correct way to present the Jews and Judaism in preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church (Cf. *Documentation Catholique* No. 1900, 21st July 1985)

Here are two extracts:

Chapter I. *Religious Teaching and Judaism, paragraph 3.*

(...) As the Holy Father said in his speech [of 6th March 1982], after he had again mentioned the 'common patrimony' of the Church and Judaism, which is 'considerable': 'To assess it carefully in itself, but also taking into account the faith and religious life of the Jewish people, as they are professed and practiced still today, can greatly help us to understand better certain aspects of the life of the Church.' It is a question then of pastoral concern for a still living reality closely related to the Church. The Holy Father has stated this permanent reality of the Jewish people in a remarkable theological formula, in his allocution to the Jewish community of West Germany at Mainz, on November 17th, 1980: 'the people of God of the Old Covenant, which has never been revoked.'

Chapter IV - *The Jews in the New Testament*

A. *The gospels are the outcome of long and complicated editorial work (...)*

Hence it cannot be ruled out that some references which are hostile or less favourable to the Jews have their historical context in conflicts between the nascent Church and the Jewish community. Certain controversies reflect Christian-Jewish-relations long after the time of Jesus. To note this is of capital importance if we wish to bring out the meaning of certain Gospel texts for the Christians of today.

Commentary on the last passage by G. M. Riegner :

Another point invested with extreme importance which explains how the text of the Gospels must be understood. As we know there are numerous passages in the Gospel which are very negative, sometimes even hostile to the Jews. These passages are the origin of numerous anti-Semitic works. Several current books address this problem. On this subject the 1985 Vatican Document is firm and courageous. It declares that these texts were not written at the time of Jesus but much later. In addition they must be read in the context of the conflict then taking place between the adepts of the new religion and the Jewish communities. Thus these controversies reflect the conflicting relations between Jews and Christians long after the time of Jesus. This observation is of paramount importance if one wishes to bring out for the Christians of today the sense of certain Gospel passages. (op. cit., p.428)

One must recognize that the Roman text to which G M Riegner refers, and which he makes say more than it actually does, again calls into question the historicity of the Gospels.

13th April 1986: Visit of John Paul II to the Roman Synagogue.

On this occasion the Pope had indicated his esteem for the unfaithful Jews who had neither recognized Our Lord nor His Church:

The Jewish religion is not extrinsic to us, but in a certain sense it is 'intrinsic' to our religion. We have therefore relationships with it which we do not have with any other religion. You are our favourite brothers and in a certain sense, we could say our elder brothers'.⁶⁶

14th June 1987: An extract from the speech of John Paul II to the representatives of the Jewish community of Poland:

⁶⁵ 'Die erste Dimension dieses Dialogs, nämlich die Begegnung zwischen dem Gottesvolk des von Gott nie gekündigten Alten Bundes (...)'

⁶⁶ John Paul II at the Roman Synagogue, 13th April 1986

*I think that the nation of Israel today, perhaps more than ever before, finds itself at the centre of attention of the nations of the world. Through it you have become a great voice warning all of humanity, all the nations, all the powers of this world, all systems and every man. More than anyone you have become this saving warning. And I think that in this manner you have progressed your particular vocation, you revealed yourselves as still the heirs to that election to which God is faithful. This is your mission in the contemporary world before the peoples, the nations and all humanity.*⁶⁷

11th October 1992: Publication of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. It states:

Paragraph 121: The Old Testament is an indispensable part of Sacred Scripture. Its books are divinely inspired and retain a permanent value, for the Old Covenant has never been revoked.

Paragraph 840: And when one considers the future, God's people of the Old Covenant and the new people of God tend towards similar goals: expectation of the coming (or the return) of the Messiah. But one awaits the return of the Messiah who died and rose from the dead and is recognized as Lord and Son of God; the other awaits the coming of a Messiah, whose features remain hidden till the end of time, and the latter waiting is accompanied by the drama of not knowing or of misunderstanding Christ Jesus.

12th March 2000: John Paul II makes an act of repentance at St Peters Rome.

26th March 2000: On pilgrimage to the Holy Land the Pope himself slid the text of this act of repentance into a crack in the Wailing Wall at Jerusalem.

17th January 2002 The Chief Rabbi of Rome

On the 17th January 2002 a meeting took place in Rome. It was organised by the Diocese of Rome within the framework of a day for Judeo-Christian dialogue. Cardinal Jorge Maria Mejia and Mgr. Rino Fisichella were present on the Catholic side and Riccardo Di Segni, Chief Rabbi of Rome on the Jewish side. The Chief Rabbi's speech during this meeting was published in issue No. 2 (2002) of the Italian monthly *Shalom*. Before an audience, for the greater part Catholic, the Rabbi explained the theory on the Noachide laws and the Noachide religion.⁶⁸ He recalled the doctrine of the double law (Mosaic and Noachide) and of double salvation about which he made the following declaration:

*Christians must come to admit that the Jews by virtue of their original and irrevocable election, as well as their possession and observance of the Torah, possess a path towards salvation which is their own, a full and special way which has no need of Jesus.*⁶⁹

2nd August 2002: Under the title 'Reflections on Covenant and Mission' The American Episcopal Committee for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs and The National Council of Synagogues and Delegates published a common declaration of which the principal editors were William Keeler and Rabbi Gilbert Rosenthal. This text (from which we already took a passage below) comprises a preface and two chapters entitled 'Roman Catholic Reflections' and 'Jewish Reflections'⁷⁰

Here is an extract from the preface:

The Roman Catholic reflections describe the growing respect for 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 God's faithful love, lead to the

⁶⁷ This quotation is given with every reservation as it is only to be found in G. M. Riegner's book and we have no idea of its context.

⁶⁸ Regarding this subject see the article by Fr. Ricossa, 'Straight talking for better comprehension' in No. 53 (July 2002) of *Sodalitum* which gives numerous quotations from Rabbi de Segni.

⁶⁹ Quoted in No. 53 of *Sodalitum*

⁷⁰ The complete text can be found in the aforesaid brochure by Michel Laurigan, p.58

conclusion that campaigns that target Jews for conversion to Christianity are no longer theologically acceptable in the Catholic Church.⁷¹

Extract from the Chapter, *Roman Catholic Reflections*

‘Therefore Church believes that Judaism, i.e. the faithful response of the Jewish people to God’s irrevocable covenant is salvific for them, because God is faithful to his promises’.⁷² (...) Thus, while the Catholic Church regards the saving act of Christ as central to the process of human salvation for all, it also acknowledges that Jews already dwell in a saving covenant with God.⁷³ (...) However it now recognizes that the Jews are also called by God to prepare the world for God’s kingdom. Their witness to the kingdom, which did not originate with the Church’s experience of Christ crucified and raised, must not be curtailed by seeking the conversion of the Jewish people to Christianity.⁷⁴

56 years have passed between the Seelisburg Conference (1946) and the Judeo-Catholic ‘*Reflections on Covenant and Mission*’ (2002). One can only be struck by the continuity and efficacy of Jewish action during this period ‘to change Catholic thinking’ as Joseph Roddy said in *Look* (23rd January 1966).

What seems to have been attained

The following points seem to have been accepted in papal and Episcopal teaching:

- a) **The Old Covenant** has never been revoked (Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, para. 121); it is therefore still in force.
- b) The Jewish people (the people of God of the Old Covenant) is charged by God today as they were before with a particular **mission** to all peoples of the world. (Cf. the speech by John Paul II, July 1987).
- c) It is not necessary to seek the **conversion** of the Jewish people which possesses its own path to salvation (not through Jesus Christ). This point logically follows from point a.

As was remarked above the Conciliar declaration *Nostrae aetate* in its sub-chapter on the Jewish religion while regretting that the majority of Jews had not accepted the Gospel does not speak of conversion. And the document of 2nd August 2002 ‘*Reflections on Covenant and Mission*’ clearly affirms that one must not seek the conversion of the Jewish people: this will no longer be ‘theologically acceptable’.

What remains to be attained

Principally all that relates to the Noachide laws. This is something which has not been attained but concerning which still remains an issue. As is demonstrated in the extract from ‘*The Jewish Reflections*’ from the American Judeo-Catholic Declaration of 13th August 2002 which is reproduced above.

For a Catholic to adhere the Noachide laws would entail renouncing the mysteries of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation and the Redemption. All weakening in the explanation and affirmation of these mysteries brings Catholics closer to this religion. Examples of such weakening are frequent today particularly regarding the Holy Trinity.⁷⁵

Conclusion

⁷¹ <http://www.jcrelations.net/en/index.php?item=966>

⁷² This initial sentence is a quotation from Cardinal Kasper’s speech to the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee in May 2001.

⁷³ Note the phrase ‘*The Jews already dwell in a saving covenant with God.*’ As the Old Covenant is considered as remaining in force and salvific today as yesterday, the Jewish people have no need of Jesus Christ to be saved.

⁷⁴ <http://www.jcrelations.net/en/index.php?item=966>

⁷⁵ As an example take the suppression in the *Novus Ordo* of many of the reminders of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity which appear in the Traditional Mass (Cf. AFS No. 177, February 2005, ‘*How can a Parish keep the Traditional Mass*’. (p.50-51)

After having recalled the traditional Catholic doctrine on the Jewish people and Jewish religions, and having shown on which points several Jewish authorities wish this doctrine to be modified, we have described the stages of the process which will ensure transition from a Catholic to a Jewish conception. The Jews would like to make Catholics admit two essential points:

1. that the Old Covenant has not been revoked – this seems to have been attained;
2. the obligation to practice the Noachide laws – which is beginning to be presented here and there.

The operation thus far aims to bring about these changes in Catholic theology through the agency of Churchmen themselves. It is a matter of an aspect of that ‘*revolution in tiara and cope*’ announced in 1819, by Italian High Masonry known as the *Alta Vendita*, in its ‘*Secret Instructions*’⁷⁶

- One must see where this point (the continued existence of the Old Covenant) which appears to be accepted, leads to.⁷⁷

On the logical plane:

For Catholics, to admit that the Old Covenant has not been revoked leads to admitting the existence, in parallel, of two religions, both salvific, one rejecting the Divinity of Christ, the other founded upon it.⁷⁸ For Jews to admit that the Old Covenant has not been revoked, leads to admitting the existence in parallel of two religions, the Jewish religion for the Jewish people, a priestly people, the Catholic religion reformed on the Hebraic ideal (thus abandoning the three mysteries: the Trinity, the Incarnation and the Redemption) for non-Jews.

On the practical plane:

Believing that the old Covenant endures leads to the belief that one may be saved by by-passing the Mysteries of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation and the Redemption. Such an error risks pushing many Catholics to accept the Noachide solution which will soon be proposed to them in a variety of ways.

Another more immediate consequence is that Catholic truth not being intended for the Jews will not be presented to them. But, as Judith Cabaud remarks: ‘*True anti-Semitism consists in not speaking the truth to them.*’⁷⁹

To avoid being culpable of such anti-Semitism, to avoid being tempted by the apostasy of the Noachide variety and very simply so as to avoid being obliged to accept a position which is logically untenable, it is absolutely necessary to reject this false idea which proposes that the Old Covenant has not been revoked.

This false idea is easy to explain and those who recognise its falsity have a responsibility to make those around them aware of it.

In conclusion let us end with this beautiful prayer which received an indulgence from both Leo XIII and St Pius X:

O Bountiful God, Father of Mercy, we pray to Thee through the Immaculate Heart of Mary and through the Intercession of the Patriarchs and the Holy Apostles to look with compassion on the remnant of Israel so that they may know Our only Saviour, Jesus Christ and that they may share in the precious Graces of His Redemption. Lord forgive them for they know not what they do.

⁷⁶ Here is the text from which this expression is taken: ‘*You will have stirred up a revolution in Tiara and Cope, marching with Cross and banner – a revolution which will only need to be spurred on a little to put the four corners of the world on fire.*’ (Taken from the *Permanent Instruction of the Alta Vendita*, see *Apropos 22 Elementary Guide to Freemasonry*, p. 200.)

⁷⁷ Cf. Para. 121 of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*

⁷⁸ Cf. AFS, No. 166 (April 2003) ‘*Are there two true religions today?*’.

⁷⁹ *L’Homme Nouveau*, 2nd February 2003.

Appendix I

The Current Organisation of the Noachide Movement and Religion

The re-establishment of the Sanhedrin⁸⁰

An attempt to re-establish the Sanhedrin, which had been done away with at the beginning of the 5th century, was effected on the 13th October 2004 at Tiberias.

The new Sanhedrin comprises 71 members, as of old. It was presided over by Rabbi Adin Evan-Israel Steinsalz. Since its creation, it has engaged in a certain number of activities details of which may be found on the web site: <http://www.israelnationalnews.com>⁸¹

During the summer of 2005, the new Sanhedrin sent Rabbi Michael Bar-Ron to the United States to select, from among Noachide communities⁸², members of a management committee for the Noachide religion. Ten prominent persons were named to that end. It was expected that they would bring themselves to Jerusalem to be ordained by the Sanhedrin.

In an article which appeared in www.Israelnationalnews.com on 29th September 2005, Ezra Halevi explained that the aim of the management committee was to organize the different Noachide communities throughout the world and to make it a single body under the direct authority of the Sanhedrin.

Another aim was defined thus by Rabbi Bar-Ron and quoted by Ezra Halevi:

To transform the Noachide movement (...) into a powerful international movement which can vie with all religious movements which do not have the pure authentic faith given to humanity by Noah, our father of all, and which, with the help of God, can contribute to their disappearance.

The Enthronement of the Management Committee of the Noachide Religion

Ezra Halevi in another article on www.israelnationalnews.com dated 9th January 2006 describes the ceremony of recognition by the Sanhedrin of the Management Committee of the Noachide religion; a ceremony presided over by Rabbi Steinsalz, President of the Sanhedrin and which was held in Jerusalem at the beginning of January 2006.

Rabbi Steinsalz spoke of the role of the Jewish people in bringing the Noachide laws to the world. He explained that this aspect of Judaism had remained moribund during the years, as the Jewish people were preoccupied with remaining alive and keeping the Torah while in exile.

He dealt with the difficulties which the Noachide movement (*B'nai Noah*) would meet as it developed, 'When we are speaking in general, almost every human being can more or less accept the laws of Noah, but when we get to particulars we will come to serious points, at which we disagree with Christianity and Islam.'

We can see immediately the difficulties he refers to. The Noachide law on monotheism and the rejection of idolatry (understood in the Jewish sense); that of the Holy Trinity (considered by the Jews as a form of

⁸⁰ [President Moshe Katsav of Israel at a ceremony marking the dedication of a synagogue in his home in October 16th 2001 had called for the establishment of a 'Sanhedrin type body'. [Israelnationalnews.com](http://www.israelnationalnews.com)]

⁸¹ See in particular the following articles: *Sanhedrin launched in Tiberias* of 13th October 2004 (<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/news.php3?id=70349>), *Members of the Re-established Sanhedrin ascend the Temple Mount*, 8th December 2004 (<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/news.php3?id=73311>), *Sanhedrin project unveiled with Humility*, 3rd November 2005 <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/news.php3?id=92348>

⁸² [i.e. non-Jews who wish to live in conformity with the Noachide laws. Many Noachide communities in the USA have drawn their members from former evangelical Protestants.]

polytheism); that of the Mystery of Redemption (As the Jews do not consider Christ to be God, He cannot save us). These three mysteries are incompatible with the idea that the Jews have of Divine Unity.

Appendix 2

Cardinals Study with Orthodox Students

Such was the headline of an article by Jennifer Siegel in the American, Jewish newspaper *Forward* on 31st March 2006 from which the following quotation is taken:

When second-year rabbinical student Will Friedman sat down to review a passage of Talmud on Monday, he was greeted by a study partner who wore a scholar's intent expression and V-neck sweater — along with a clerical collar.

Francis Deniau, archbishop of Montpellier, France, was one of nearly three-dozen Catholic clerics who spent the morning with students of New York's fledgling, liberal Modern Orthodox rabbinical school, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah. There, for the first time, he found himself poring over one the Talmud's most commonly studied passages, in the tractate Berakhot, or blessings.

Ms Siegel proceeded to advise us that this visit was one stop 'on a three day visit to New York spearheaded by Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger of Paris and by officials of the World Jewish Congress'. Accompanying Cardinal Lustiger were Cardinal Peter Erdö of Hungary and Cardinal Jean-Pierre Ricard of France. In addition to their visit to Chovevei, Ms Siegel informed us that these Catholic clerics:

'Used the three-day New York trip to tour Jewish sites in Manhattan, pay a visit to the Chabad-Lubavitch headquarters in Brooklyn and drop in on an advanced Talmud class at the beit midrash at Y.U.'s (Yeshiva University) Stern College for Women.'

Jennifer Siegel also makes reference to a remark made by Rabbi Israël Singer, President of the World Jewish Congress. Alluding to the 20 years of Judeo-Catholic religious dialogue which he said, 'was like one hand clapping- you couldn't hear it', he compared it with the New York meeting stating: 'This is the most substantive of all these kinds of efforts.'

This was not lost on the journalist who observed: 'At Chovevei, the room was a sea of head-coverings: the yarmulkes worn by the Jews interspersed with a few flame-red skullcaps worn by Catholic cardinals.'

In her article, Jennifer Siegel gives an account of the third international Judeo-Catholic meeting at New York (27-28th March 2006); a meeting created on the initiative of Cardinal Lustiger [of Paris] and Rabbi Israël Singer, President of The World Jewish Congress, the first two meetings having been held in 2004 and 2005.

No less than 15 French Bishops and Archbishops have gone this year to New York (for the third of these meetings): Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger and Jean-Pierre Ricard, Archbishop of Bordeaux; Mgr Bernard-Nicolas Aubertin, Bishop of Tours, Mgr Olivier de Berranger, Bishop of Saint-Denis, Mgr Francis Deniau, Bishop of Nevers, Mgr Maurice Gardès, Bishop of Auch, Mgr Guy de Kérimel, Coadjutor Bishop of Grenoble, Mgr Robert le Gall, Bishop of Mende, Mgr Jean-Christophe Laglaize, Bishop of Valence, Mgr Jean Legrez, Bishop of Saint-Claude, Mgr Gaston Poulain, Emeritus Bishop of Perigueux, Mgr Michel Santier, Bishop of Luçon, Mgr Louis Sankalé, Bishop of Nice, Mgr Guy Thomazeau, Bishop of Montpellier, Mgr André Vingt-Trois, Archbishop of Paris, Mgr Stanislas Lalanne, Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference. In addition Cardinal Peter Erdö, Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest, and prelates from Spain, Germany, Uruguay and Argentina.⁸³

⁸³ The article 'United States – Judeo-Catholic meeting at New York' DICI No. 133 (8th April 2006). Address: DICI-Press, Etoile du Matin, 57230 Eguelshardt and www.dici.org

What are we to make of such Judeo-Catholic meetings – which appear to be pilgrimages to the Jewish capital of the USA, New York – are they part of the process of judaisation of Catholicism? One cannot see how they can be seen otherwise.

Arnaud de Lassus
