

Inauguration of the New Holocaust History Museum at Yad Vashem

Jerusalem, March 15-16, 2005

I have the privilege of assuring you of the spiritual closeness of Pope John Paul II, as well as of the solidarity of the Catholic Church, some of whose distinguished representatives are also present with us today.

The building that we have inaugurated is, for the whole world, a warning, a witness and an appeal. In acknowledging the immensity of Jewish suffering, we come face to face with the obligation to be vigilant, with the need to reject indifference and with the terrifying void of a world without God.

Pope John Paul II repeats once again this morning to all those who are willing to listen that when we remember the "*horrible crime committed against the Jewish nation*"¹ that was the Holocaust, we do so because "*these terrible events are for contemporary men and women a summons to responsibility, in order to build our history*".²

The Catholic Church, respecting the uniqueness of Judaism and remaining linked in faith to its heritage, teaches that there is no place or reason for the hatred of Jews. This would be a sin against God and humanity.

May the words of the Psalmist resonate in this Holy Land, the same words which may have sustained in their torment many of those whom we are mourning today: "*As a father has compassion for his children, so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him. For he knows how we were made...The steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting...!*" (Ps 103: 13; 17). If the worst can always come forth from the heart of man, so can the good always equally be made manifest. It is for this reason that we are here today.

¹ Meeting with the representatives of the Jewish community, Warsaw, June 13, 1991.

² Message for the celebration of the 60^o Anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau, January 15, 2005.