**CATHOLIC BISHOPS’ CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES**

**Committee for Catholic Jewish Relations**

**Holocaust Memorial Day**

**27th January 2017**

**“How Can Life Go On?”**

*“For the survivor death is not the problem.*

*Death was an everyday occurrence.*

*We learned to live with death.*

*The problem is to adjust to life, to living.*

*You must teach us about living.”*

*Elie Wiesel - author and survivor of the Holocaust*

**Homily Notes For Sunday 22nd January**

**The 3rd Sunday In Ordinary Time**

In the first reading of today’s Mass, we hear the prophet Isaiah speaking words of hope to God’s people.

“The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone.”  *(Is. 9:1)*

This text, also reflected in the gospel reading of today, offers a pathway into a homily on the importance of highlighting the memory of the Holocaust, and genocide in general, ahead of Holocaust Memorial Day this coming Friday.

* We can only guess at the sense of relief felt by those Jews who were still alive at Auschwitz and the other death camps when they realised that they were being freed and the days of torture were over. As we remember them and think about them slowly recovering and deciding how to rebuild their lives in order to create a future for themselves, those words of Isaiah speak to us of the terrible experiences that they had endured during those dark days in the camps.
* Pope Francis, in agreement with his two predecessors, reminds us often that, because of Jesus, Our Lady and the apostles, we have a unique relationship with the Jewish People. As Pope Pius XI put it in 1939, “We are all Semites”. Holocaust Memorial Day matters to us because of that special relationship with the Jewish People and because Christians care when anyone is treated badly or unjustly.
* Sadly, other genocides have taken place since the end of the Second World War, most notably in Rwanda and Bosnia. In Syria and Iraq today Catholics and other Christians are being killed purely because of their religious faith and what they are.
* Elie Weisel, a Jewish Holocaust survivor, said: “I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.”
* Holocaust Memorial Day is our opportunity to stand in solidarity with the victims of genocide and to make a clear statement that genocide is evil and that it should not be tolerated under any circumstances whatsoever. Unfortunately, genocide happens when ordinary people fail to stand up and be counted. On Friday, special commemorative events marking Holocaust Memorial Day will take place all over the United Kingdom. *(Here, give the time and place of the event in your locality.)* It would be good if there were a good representation at it from our parish.
* When Pope Francis visited the Jewish community at the Rome synagogue last year, he commented:

“The Jewish People, in its history, was subjected to violence and persecution, culminating in the extermination of Jews in Europe during the Holocaust. Six million people, for the sole fact of being members of the Jewish People, fell victim to the most inhuman barbarity, perpetrated in the name of an ideology that sought to substitute God with man.

“The past must serve as a lesson to us in the present and in the future. The Holocaust teaches us to always maintain the highest level of vigilance, in order to be able to intervene immediately in defence of Human dignity and peace.”

**General Intercessions**

Let us pray for our unique and special relationship with the Jewish People… may Christians everywhere commit themselves to genuine brotherhood with the People of the Covenant.

Let us pray for an end to genocide, for the purification of our hearts from prejudice and hatred of any kind and for the courage never to stand by in the face of evil… may we keep the memory of the past alive so that the future may be free from the evil of genocide and all other injustice and hate.

**Other Resources**

**The Vatican Documents on Catholic-Jewish Relations**

Documents from the Holy See; Guidelines for Catholic/Jewish Relations - Catholic Truth Society, London

Dialogika

The English Language Supersite for Resources & Research in Christian Jewish Relations

Website: www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources

**For Holocaust Memorial Day Pack**

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust

PO Box 49743, London, WC1H 9WU

Tel: 0845 838 1883;

Email: [enquiries@hmd.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@hmd.org.uk) Website: [www.hmd.org.uk](http://www.hmd.org.uk)

**For outreach to schools, resource materials, visits to Auschwitz:**

Holocaust Educational Trust

BCM Box 7892, London WC1N 3XX

Tel: 020 7222 6822

Email: [info@het.org.uk](mailto:info@het.org.uk); Website: [www.het.org.uk](http://www.het.org.uk)

**For educational material and visits:**

Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre

Laxton, Newark, Notts NG22 0PA

Tel: 01623 836627 Website: [www.bethshalom.com](http://www.bethshalom.com)

The Imperial War Museum,

Lambeth Road

London, SE1 6HZ

Tel: 020 74165320 Website: www.iwm.org.uk

**For general information:**

The Council of Christians and Jews

Collaboration House

77-79 Charlotte St, London

**Tel:**[020 3515 3003](javascript:void(0))

Email: [cjrelations@ccj.org.uk](mailto:cjrelations@ccj.org.uk) Website: [www.ccj.org.uk](http://www.ccj.org.uk)

The International Council of Christians & Jews

Website: www.jcrelations.net

**For resources on racial justice and ethnic minorities**:

Catholic Association for Racial Justice

9 Henry Road, London N4 2LH

Tel: 020 8802 8080

Email: [info@carj.org.uk](mailto:info@carj.org.uk) Website: [www.carj.org.uk](http://www.carj.org.uk)

**For programmes throughout the year on Catholic Jewish relations; specialist library; advice:**

Sion Centre for Dialogue & Encounter

34 Chepstow Villas

London W11 2QZ

Tel: 020 7313 8286

Email: [sioncentrefordialogue@gmail.com](mailto:sioncentrefordialogue@gmail.com) Website: www.sioncentre.org

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