



# BAT KOL INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH STUDIES,

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## OCTOBER NEWS BULLETIN No. 5

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**KI MI TZION TETZEH TORAH UD'VAR ADONAI MI YERUSHALAIM**

### **A milestone in interfaith understanding: Rabbi Dow Marmur**

Fifty years ago next Wednesday, the Vatican published a declaration that changed Catholic-Jewish relations forever.

Jews and Judaism had been a problem for Christianity since its inception. When the Church began to gain Gentile adherents, they wanted to know why Jesus' own people rejected him. The standard canard that Jews and not Romans had crucified Christ gave rise to the doctrine of deicide: the Jews had killed the Son of God.

Since the accurate version wouldn't be tolerated by the then exponents of the religion about Jesus, they determined that the Jews were renegades, stuck in their obsolete religion of law instead of embracing the new and true religion of love.

When Christians gained power, they wanted Jews to be humiliated in order to show the world what happens to a people that reject Christ. Jews weren't to be exterminated but debased to serve as living albeit negative witnesses to the truth of Christianity. That's the origin of Christian anti-Judaism.

The Nazis secularized it into racism. Whereas the inferior religion had "only" to be humiliated, the "vermin race" must be exterminated. Hence the death camps and the six million Jewish victims.

The roots of the Holocaust in the history of Christianity made its responsible leaders rethink their theology. By all accounts, that's largely behind the publication on Oct. 28, 1965, 50 years ago next Wednesday, of *Nostra Aetate (In Our Time)*, the Vatican's "Declaration on Relations of the Church to non-Christian Religions."

People of all faiths and none have reason to celebrate this event as the dawn of a new era in the history of religion.

Though the Declaration deals with many faiths, the emphasis is on Catholic-Jewish relations. It affirms the incontrovertible truth that Christianity is rooted in the Hebrew Bible and that it can only be understood in that context. In its own words: "The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God in His inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant."

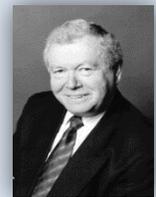
And again: "Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred synod wants to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues."

The Declaration marks the beginning of the end of Christian anti-Judaism. Other denominations have taken up the call and today commitment to interfaith relations based on mutual respect and seeking common ground is part and parcel of mainstream Christianity.

Canada, which cherishes freedom of thought and celebrates its multiculturalism, is a serious and respected partner in this work. Thus to mark the jubilee, St. Michael's College in Toronto hosted a conference under the telling title, "The Responsibility to Engage." Having taught Jewish thought in its faculty of theology for many years I know how seriously the college takes this responsibility. And it's by no means alone.

*Cont. overleaf*

An article  
written by  
Rabbi Dow  
Marmur



in the Toronto  
Star,  
in  
commemoration  
of the

**50th  
Anniversary of  
Nostra Aetate  
28 October  
2015.**

*Submitted by Maureena*

Though much has been achieved, more needs to be done. Writing earlier this month in the Canadian Jewish News, the Reverend Damian MacPherson, the director for ecumenical and interfaith affairs at the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto, stated candidly that “while relationships between Catholics and Jews have improved greatly, they need to continue to do so in the future.”

*Nostra Aetate* initiated the process of reconciliation, but its noble goals can only be achieved through the continued efforts of all women and men of good faith.

Unfortunately, there are still painful pockets of anti-Semitism in some Christian circles. Of late, tragically and shockingly, some Jews in Israel have come to manifest violent hatred of Christians and their faith. But the Declaration has set the agenda; it challenges us all to help realize its lofty message.

*Dow Marmur is rabbi emeritus of Toronto’s Holy Blossom Temple. His column appears in the Toronto Star every other week*

**“Homage to *Nostra Aetate* is insufficient. True homage examines the results, the shifts that have taken place in our ecclesiology and Christology because of *Nostra Aetate* over the past 50 years”**  
*(Statement made by Maureena Fritz).*

## NEWS FROM JERSALEM

### INTERNATIONAL SHABBATH OBSERVANCE

**FROM SUNDOWN TO STARS OUT** people in 465 cities and towns in 65 countries kept Shabbat. Millions of

Jews, thousands of Christians, people of other faiths and none: all touched by this amazing campaign. Surely it could not have been as far reaching were it not inspired and led by the Holy Spirit.

Here in Jerusalem, crowds gathered on the leisure area known as the First Station to join in the Great Big

Challah Bake on Thursday evening, to learn how to make Challah bread and then to take their loaves home to bake for the next day. There was a spirit of delight and fun in what we were doing but especially *why* we were doing it, knowing we were joining with so many others to observe the Shabbath. (Ex.20:8-11, 31:12-17)

### THE GREAT BIG CHALLAH BAKE



*A warm welcome*



*Beginning*

In a very short while the ingredients had been changed into the finished product!



*Finished Products*

From Friday sundown until Saturday stars out, the peace of Shabbat enveloped the world and those who chose to receive it. Walking to synagogue, not cooking after Shabbat had begun, (a challenge but such a good feeling to know that a special hot meal is ready, thanks to the slow cooker), and of course no computers, phones, etc.

On the next page there is a simple recipe we were taught for making our own challah bread.

## ***CHALLAH RECIPE:***

**INGREDIENTS:** 1 kg Flour  
1.5 tbsp active dry yeast  
1.5 tbsp salt  
0.5 cup of sugar  
0.5 cup of oil  
2.75 cups tepid water.

**METHOD:** Mix first four ingredients together.  
Make well in middle of dry ingredients, add oil and 2.5 cups of the water, start mixing with a wooden spoon and then working all the ingredients in with your hands. You may have to add more water.  
Knead for at least 7-10 minutes.  
Cover, put in a warm place and allow to rise for at least one hour.  
Punch dough down and gently knead again for a minute.  
Divide into 3 parts and make loaves.  
Place on parchment lined loaf pan.  
Option 1: brush with egg and sprinkle with sesame.  
Option 2: brush with olive oil and sprinkle with zata, garlic granules or coarse salt.  
Allow to rise for another half hour.  
Bake until golden brown, about 30-40 minutes in a pre-heated 180 degree oven. **Enjoy! Shabbat Shalom!!**



## ***HAVADALAH***

All too soon Shabbat was gone, the three stars were in the sky and it was time for havdalah to put closure on Shabbat, to give thanks and to return from the sacred to the secular. So it was back to the First Station leisure park for another crowded celebration, Havdalah candle, spices, wine, a concert of song, dance and the start of a new week, stepping from the sacred into the secular.

**The candle is lit.  
Aromas of spice fill the air.  
The crowd is waiting.  
The band is on stage.**

**LET HAVDALAH  
BEGIN!**



## NEWS IS ALREADY COMING IN OF HOW BAT KOL ALUMNI WORLDWIDE JOINED IN THE CELEBRATION.

### FROM AUSTRALIA AND INDIA:

Roy daSilva, India, tells us how he and Elizabeth Young, Australia: *'Though thousands of miles and several time-zones apart, celebrated this International Shabbat as havrutah partners.'* and Roy sends the following description:

Welcomed the Shabbat with candle lighting and the Blessing.

- Set up a prayer corner with special table cloth, the two lighted candles, Torah and some flowers.
- Did not do any work or e-mail or any other planning" in order to..."
- Listening to some inspiring and soul-stirring Hebrew songs.
- Talmud Torah, Torah study on the Parashat HaShavuah.

### FROM ENGLAND:

Gill and Dave Meyer, UK, kept Shabbat and in the afternoon attended an Interfaith gathering at which Ruth Barnett came to speak. Ruth came to England on the Kindertransport when she was three years old. Now eighty and living in North London, Ruth is a wonderful communicator and teacher and shared some of her thoughts and feelings, especially her concerns with the way the Gypsies/Roma, asylum seekers and all those on the edge of society are treated.

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## HOLD THE DATE FOR THE JULY 2016 PROGRAM GENESIS – A BOOK OF ENCOUNTERS 4-24 JULY 2016

APPLICATION FORM IS NOW AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE [www.batkol.info](http://www.batkol.info)  
SEND 100USD DEPOSIT BY 30 APRIL TO SECURE 10% DISCOUNT

The theme of the Bible (a book composed of many books) has one basic theme that unites all the stories and songs, sayings and prophecies contained within it.

### THE FOCUS OF THIS COURSE IS THE I-THOU ENCOUNTERS IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS

The theme is the encounter between God and a group of people and how these biblical characters, such as Adam and Eve, Cain, Abraham, Hagar and Tamar heard and responded to the Voice of God. Lectures are combined with a number of study tours in and around Jerusalem and the Negev desert.

Accommodation is in single, en suite rooms in the beautiful St Charles Hospice in the German Colony of Jerusalem.



St Charles Hospice



Jerusalem



Negev Desert

## NEWS FROM THE PHILIPPINES:

### ***A VISIT TO THE SYNAGOGUE: AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE*** from ***Mai Thi Thu Trang, LHC-H,***

*“I rejoiced when they said to me Let us go to the house of the Lord” (Ps  
122:1 NAB)*



These are the words of the Israelite people, exhorting one another to go and attend to the worship of God in God’s Tabernacle or temple in Jerusalem, and especially during the three great festivals. The words are intended to show the great joy the Israelites, as pious people, received when their brethren invited them to join with them on these occasions. These words also express the involvement of all the students in the Torah class in their visit to *Beth Yaacov* Synagogue. Needless to say, all of my classmates were very curious about visiting the synagogue. It is an important part of the course to understand the worship place of the Jews. We had been eager to get to the Synagogue since Sister Helen Graham, MM, informed us of the trip. So, we tried to read some background information about the Synagogue so that we could ask the Rabbi intelligent questions.

Beth Yaacov Synagogue, located in Makati City at the heart of Metro Manila, is the only synagogue in the Philippines. It has been developing along with the Filipino history and the growth of the Jewish population in the Philippines. It is almost 100 years since the first Jewish congregation was established (1917-2015). The first synagogue was built in 1924 in Manila. Because of World War II, the Synagogue deteriorated, the congregation moved into Makati and then the Beth Yaacov Synagogue which was built in 1982, and which is now led by Rabbi Eliyahu Azaria.[1]

The journey to the Synagogue was a fabulous experience. The foremost part of the experience for me was seeing the Ten Commandments in Hebrew. Also, seeing the sacred Torah scroll behind it was very moving. Then, Rabbi Eliyahu Azaria greeted us by saying *“Shalom”*. He looked so friendly and open-hearted. It felt like one “big family reunion” without boundaries of religion and age. We had a moment of sharing about the “ups and downs” of history, the Synagogue’s gorgeous architecture, and the significance of a number of its images and words. More important, we discussed the interesting traditions of the Jewish people, Jewish prayers and festivals, increasing our understanding.

Then the rabbi took time to explain the importance of reading Hebrew correctly; that even taking a breath in the wrong place can mess up the entire meaning of the verse. In addition, we learned the importance of the rituals, like kissing your own Torah and then tapping the synagogue’s Torah to symbolize that the Torah doesn’t just belong to the rabbi or the synagogue, but to the Jewish people. The class is now conscious of what happens on the Sabbath and when the Jewish people celebrate the feast days and the spirituality of the three great festivals: *Pesach*, *Shavuot*, and *Sukkot*. After the talk ended, the rabbi approached us to ask if we had any questions. We learned so much from the questions and his answers. We better understand the Jewish approach to the Scriptures, learning Hebrew, and teaching the Torah to others and especially the benefit of learning Havruta theory.

All in all, I appreciate the fact that I was encouraged to overcome my timidity, experience new cultures and gain a better understanding of those in the world around me. I am inspired to open my heart and mind to respect the distinctiveness of other faiths and to join in interreligious dialogue and theology. I have discovered the wonderful meaning of *Nostra Aetate*[2] in the reunion of Judaism and Christianity because we are all children under God. We have a common spiritual heritage which is the Hebrew Scripture which helps us sharpen our faith and deepen this relationship.

After the visit to the Synagogue along with the amazing lessons in my Torah class, I am eager to learn the Hebrew language to improve my understanding of the Bible. It, for me, is both frustrating and interesting. Interesting because I feel involved in learning this pragmatic language, to study Scripture as a priceless “treasure” that God has left us. However, Hebrew is difficult, thus I may easily give up on it rather than persevere; for that I make an attempt to learn it by having a Bible-centered reason for my learning and as Luther said: *“We will not long preserve the gospel without the languages. The languages are the sheath in which this sword of the Spirit is contained; they are the casket in which this jewel is enshrined; they are the vessel in which this wine is held; they are the larder in which this food is stored; and, as the gospel itself points out, they are the baskets in which are kept these loaves and fishes and fragments”* [3]. This states how crucial learning the original language of the Scriptures is and I consider this saying as motivation for me to move ahead in my learning. Hopefully, with God’s assistance, the goal of improving my Hebrew will be burning in my heart and nurturing my dream of studying the Bible in the future.

[1] *The Jewish Community in the Philippines* (handout).

[2] The declaration on the relationship of the Church to Non-Christian religions of Vatican II Council on October 28, 1965

[3] <http://www.westernseminary.edu/transformedblog/2012/05/14/is-learning-greek-and-hebrew-really-worth-it>. Accessed September 15, 2015.

## FROM SOUTH AFRICA:

**Sr Marie André Mitchell writes:** *CELEBRATION OF 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF NOSTRA AETATE*

On the evening of 7<sup>th</sup> October St Augustine's College hosted a public lecture to commemorate the promulgation on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1965 Vatican II's "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" (*Nostra Aetate* - In our time). Although the Declaration significantly changed and developed the nature of the Catholic Church's engagement with all world religions, the greatest change was the relationship towards Jews and Judaism. One of its key statements was "The Jews still remain most dear to God because of their fathers, for God does not repent of the gifts he makes nor of the call he issues (N.A # 4). The document opened up a new era of relations with the Jewish people and offered the basis for sincere theological dialogue.

The lecture was titled, "How has *Nostra Aetate* transformed Jewish-Catholic relations? A conversation with Fr John Enslin SJ and Rabbi Sa'ar Shaked chaired by Bishop Graham Rose, Chair of the SACBC's Department of Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue. The meeting set out to answer the question: "How has *Nostra Aetate* helped the Church to say 'Yes' to her Jewish roots and 'No' to anti-Semitism?" It also gave the audience the opportunity to find out about the Jewish response included in Dabru Emet ("Speak the truth") and discover the state of Jewish-Catholic relations today.



Sr Judy Coyle IHM, acting Head of the Department of Theology St Augustine's College welcomed the audience of Jews and Catholics. Bishop Rose introduced the speakers: Fr John Enslin SJ who pursued his theological studies in South Africa (Pretoria and Stellenbosch) and Heythrop College, London and is assistant pastor of Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Braamfontein. Rabbi Sa'ar Shaked serves in Beit Emanuel Progressive Synagogue, Parktown. He has a Rabbinic ordination from Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem, an M.A. in Hermeneutic Studies from Bar Ilan University and a B.A. in classical studies from Tel Aviv University. Before coming to South Africa in 2013 he was involved interfaith reconciliation initiatives in Israel/Palestine.

The evening began with a short Powerpoint presentation "Milestones in Catholic-Jewish Relations" as background to the talks. ([www.scarboromissions.ca.interfaith](http://www.scarboromissions.ca.interfaith) \*)

\* The material is intended for a wide range of audiences. The compilers hope that it will be used to make these important 'Milestones' better known.

Fr John Enslin introduced *Nostra Aetate*. He began by reciting a moving poem by Dan Pagis written in a sealed freight car on the way to a death camp. The poem not only speaks to us but also calls us to respond. He pointed out that a truly groundbreaking insight of *Nostra Aetate* was its statement: "The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these [world] religions... they often reflect a ray of truth which enlightens all men. Yet she proclaims and is duty bound to proclaim Christ" (N.A.#2). Fr John then went on to discuss in detail Article 4 with deals with Judaism. Looking at the situation today he quoted Erich Zenger a German theologian who referred to the Pontifical Biblical Commission's document "The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible (2001), he also quoted Cardinal Kasper who wrote "Jews and Christians share a common root with one another and a common hope for one another" (6.12.2004). He ended by saying "*Nostra Aetate's* call is a call to conversion to openness and to good will... I pray that this is a beginning on which the blessings of the Almighty may rest."

Rabbi Shaked replied by explaining Dabru Emet (Speak the Truth- Zechariah 8:16) which was the Jewish response to the positive changes of Christians towards Jews, This remarkable document emerged after several years of research and one intense year of conversations and meetings. It was produced by an interdenominational group of Jewish scholars and signed by 220 Rabbis and intellectuals as individuals and not as representing any organization or stream of Judaism. As Rabbi Shaked explained Judaism does not have a "Synod." Dabru Emet was published as a full page document in the New York Times on 10 September 2000 and sought to put on public record the most current Jewish perspectives on Christianity. It offered 8 suggestions about how Jews and Christians might better relate to one another. Rabbi Shaked handed out a copy of the document to everyone present and because of time constraints briefly explained the main points under each heading. He suggested that the audience take it home to study. It was an enlightening exposition delivered in the Rabbi's own inimitable style. He ended by praying the Lord's Prayer in Hebrew and then in Latin. A lively question and answer session followed.. It was all too short,

**Finally, please remember that Bat Kol needs funding for scholarships, teaching, administrative costs, etc. All donations, small or large will be most gratefully received.**



**Please click here to donate to the work of the Bat Kol Institute. Thank you.**

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