

Jesuits in Dialogue

the interreligious dimension



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China, Czech Republic, France, India, Italy, Israel, Spain

EUROPEAN JESUITS LOOK AT CATHOLIC-ORTHODOX RELATIONS

Report of the Consultation "The Role of Jesuits in Catholic-Orthodox Relations in Europe: Past, Present, Future"

On 3-7 October 2002, 46 Jesuits from 21 European provinces met in Velehrad, Czech Republic, to study ways that Jesuits might promote better East-West ecumenical relations in contemporary Europe. The consultation was the second in a series of meetings sponsored by the Conference of European Provincials (C.E.P.) on interreligious and ecumenical themes. The first was held in March, 2001, in Ludwigshaven, Germany, on the role of Jesuits in Christian-Muslim relations in Europe.

Velehrad, a village in the eastern part of the Czech Republic, was chosen for the consultation because of its historic and symbolic value. Site of early preaching by SS. Cyril and Methodius, Velehrad was named by Pope John Paul II "one of the cradles of Christianity in Europe." A century ago, Velehrad was chosen as the site of a series of important conferences held between 1907-1949 which were organized by Jesuits and others and oriented toward promoting unity between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, as the idea was understood according to the ecclesiology of the time.

At this year's consultation, Fr. P.-H. Kolvenbach, Superior General of the Jesuits, opened the proceedings with general orientations on the need for Jesuits to be involved in ecumenism and on ways in which Jesuits in Europe can work for better Catholic-Orthodox relations, and with specific reflections on his experience as member of the Mixed International Catholic-Orthodox Theological Commission.

The Consultation continued with papers on Jesuit activities in the past, such as their involvement, not always positive, with the Orthodox in Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, Russia and Romania, their work among Eastern Christians in Lebanon and Egypt, and their activities in Russia during the Suppression. In the 20th Century, the legacy of the communist period as a factor affecting Catholic-Orthodox relations in some countries was recounted and reactions, positive and negative, to recent Catholic-Orthodox joint statements such as the controversial 1993 Balamand declaration were examined.

The Jesuits have made mistakes in the past in regard to their approach to Orthodox and Oriental Catholics, which continue to complicate efforts to work for unity today. Some Orthodox consider Jesuits, because of their involvement

in the creation and development of "Uniate" Churches, to be the great "enemy" of good relations between Catholic and Orthodox. Some speakers at the consultation held that this role is often exaggerated and noted that Jesuit involvement was undertaken at the explicit request of the Holy See. Nevertheless, Jesuits must be aware that today they approach East-West relations with a past which is not neutral and is often not easy to overcome.

Turning to the present, the discussions focused on the complex issues related to the Eastern Catholic (Greek-Catholic, Byzantine rite, the so-called "Uniate") Churches, and their place in ecumenical relations between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. The participants learned of the vitality of Greek-Catholic churches and the spiritual contribution they desire to make to Europe, to the Church, and to the Society of Jesus. In this context, the participants traveled to Bratislava, capital of the Slovak Republic, to take part in the Greek-Catholic vespers and Divine liturgy and to meet members of the Greek-Catholic parish.

Some of the interventions noted that Jesuits must not complacently regard all their errors as belonging to the past. Chauvinist attitudes and prejudices which regard Latin-rite Catholicism as the norm to which Oriental Christians - Orthodox and Greek-Catholic - should conform are still present among Western Catholics, including Jesuits. European Christians today are in serious need of the kind of deep liturgical spirituality and prayer life to which Eastern Christianity can, if their insights and traditions are given due respect and attention, make an important contribution. Even within the Society of Jesus, Jesuits of East and West must engage in a dialogue aimed at mutual understanding and appreciation.



Greek-Catholic Sacred Liturgy in Bratislava

In turning to the future, attention focused on forgiveness as an ecumenical methodology aimed at reconciliation and full Christian unity. The sacrificial nature of forgiveness as an ecumenical method and its role in the healing of memories were examined, with examples from the political and economic spheres, and the question of communal responsibility and ownership of wrongs committed in the past was raised.

The Society of Jesus has two outstanding resources which it can employ in its efforts to bridge the gap between East and West. These are the Pontifical Oriental Institute and the Pontifical Russian College, both located in Rome. The ways in which these institutes, in collaboration with regional efforts such as the Centro Aletti, in Rome and Olomouc in the Czech Republic, and the East-West Spirituality Center in Kosice, Slovak Republic, can play a positive role in promoting friendship and unity between Catholic and Orthodox and between European Christians of East and West, were explored. The serious problems of staffing and finance which will affect these apostolates in coming years must not be ignored or underestimated, but the importance of the work they carry out demands an ongoing commitment on the part of the Society of Jesus.

In Europe today, there are many efforts on the part of bishops' conferences, religious orders, funding agencies, and ecumenical movements that seek to build bridges of love and respect between Christians of East and West. Jesuits should not try to "go it alone," but rather to collaborate humbly and purposefully to these broader efforts which are aimed at the building up and renewal of the One Church of Christ and the reconciliation and unity of all Christians in Jesus Christ.

The consultation was mainly of an exploratory nature. Many issues were raised but few conclusions were reached. The main value of the consultation lay in the formation of a body of European Jesuits who will continue to reflect on East-West relations and, it is hoped, who will be able over the course of time to offer to the Jesuits in Europe proposals aimed at a communal pursuit of the Society's mission in the area of ecumenism.

The Acta of the consultation are available in book form. Those interested in obtaining a copy can contact the Secretariat for Interreligious Dialogue of the Roman Curia (dialogue@sicuria.org).

**GREGORIAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE
PROPOSED BY 34TH GENERAL CONGREGATION
APPROVED BY VATICAN**

**INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS AND CULTURES
in collaboration with The Cardinal Bea Centre for Judaic Studies
and the SIDIC Library**

Nearly forty years after the Council, many Catholics still do not understand well what the Church is proposing in the mission and spirituality of dialogue... Dialogue is not the job only of experts and professionals. Dialogue means sharing one's own life at all levels with people of other religions.

Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.,
address at the Synod of Bishops October, 2001

Our educational institutions will conscientize their students on the value of interreligious collaboration and instil in them a basic understanding of and respect for the faith vision of the members of the diverse local religious communities, while deepening their own faith response to God.

"Our Mission and Interreligious Dialogue," GC34

On 15 June 2002, the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education gave full approval for a new Jesuit venture at the Gregorian University in Rome, the Institute for the Study of Religions and Cultures. The Institute is a response to the recommendation made in the Document "Our Mission and Interreligious Dialogue" issued by the 34th General congregation of the Society in 1995. The Institute opened its doors to students in the academic year that began in October, 2002.

The Institute is a collaborative venture within the Gregorian Consortium and with Jesuit universities and faculties in various parts of the world. These institutions will provide visiting professors as well as exchange programmes for students. With the presence of professors and students belonging to other religious traditions, the Institute can offer a lived experience of dialogue and a more concrete appreciation of other traditions.

The Institute aims:

- To prepare Christians able to engage in dialogue, especially in religiously plural areas where Christians may be in a minority, but also in Europe and North America where believers of other religions constitute growing minorities.
- To provide a similar service for people of other faiths who wish to deepen their understanding of Christians and Christian faith in order to foster more cordial relations among religious communities.
- To provide students of other faculties with adequate and informed insights into the world's religions
- To provide an institutional base and academic forum for activities related to interreligious dialogue. The Gregorian has developed in recent years academic exchange and cooperation agreements with universities in Britain, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Japan, Korea, Tunisia, Turkey, and U.S.A.

The study program consists of a core curriculum common to all students and specialized courses according to the student's interests:

Core Curriculum:

- 1) cultural anthropology, psychology, sociology and philosophy of religion.
- 2) theology of religions
- 3) the theory and practice of interreligious dialogue
- 4) introductory courses in the more important Eastern and Western religious traditions

It offers the following specializations:

- 1) Judaism (through the Cardinal Bea Centre for Judaic Studies)
- 2) Hinduism and Buddhism
- 3) Islam
- 4) Christianity

Students who are not Christians normally specialize in the study of Christianity. An introductory curriculum is provided for them so that they may also profit from courses in the other faculties.

Degrees: The Institute grants a *Master of Arts* degree after two years of study, a comprehensive examination and a thesis. Qualified students may earn a *Diploma* after one year of study.

Shorter, personalized courses of study can be arranged for groups and for individual students.

For more information, contact

Fr Daniel Madigan SJ (Director) at madigan@unigre.it
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**"Quest for Harmony -
An Anthology
of Religions in Dialogue"**

Vincent Sekhar, S.J.

The whole of creation is the work of God and the task is continued through human efforts. In the task of building an integrated society, one has to recognize and appreciate or at the least tolerate the presence of diversity of cultures and people. The relationships have become so complex now than ever before that one needs to dialogue, negotiate, or even bargain in their process. Religions play a vital role in forming our attitudes and thoughts, ideals and values of living. God inspires and guides every individual and group to engage in the world in a special way.

Hence religions, being the finite, human expressions of the One divine Mystery, have to fulfill the task of bringing people together as believers of this Mystery in love and justice. Concretely it means the spiritual and human development of all, leading them to harmony and transcendence.

Every religion is unique in the sense in which the believers of that religion understand and express this divine Mystery. The formulations of their beliefs and

ideals may differ from or even be irreconcilable with one another. Yet all religions preach love, justice, equality and fellowship. Language and thrust might differ but the content of their message may be similar. Every living being wants to be free, wants to enjoy life, hates pain and fears extinction. Religions, if they are true to their goals and objectives, cannot overlook these aspects. Religions are for Life and for Living. Integral growth and maturation is both a gift and a task. Hence the believers have a great responsibility in exemplifying the ideas and inspirations they have received from their religions, particularly in ushering a life free of dangers. In this enterprise they need to come together to be aware and to discover the common meaning of their religious aspirations and join hands in exploring the possibilities of their implementation.

In the process, they might recognize and appreciate the richness of one another, of their religions or even discover in a comparative, new light their own rich resources. Thus they may cherish their togetherness, pray and share a common meal, experience the joy of fellowship and oneness, etc.

There are possibilities of misunderstanding, even strong resentment and irrevocable differences especially at the level

of ideas, as they bear testimony to a long-cherished traditional belief structure. But everything is to be resolved only in and through a meaningful dialogue. The significance of being related to one another is not new to any religious tradition. Every religion stresses the need for belonging, need for acceptance, and the need for enriching the individuals and groups in society.

The goals or the objectives intended by these religions can be adequately, if not fully, realized more easily through an art of inter-being and inter-acting. Hence believers dwell on this area of dialoging with one another.

It is not a mere conversation, much less, a business relationship. It is a conscious exercise of being exposed to an experience of *osmosis*, a process of becoming anew through a sharing of one's essence. It is my long-cherished ambition that I should prepare an anthology of passages related to *Religious Pluralism and Dialogue*, culled from various sources, original and secondary. This work is in no way exhaustive, nor does it claim to solve controversies in the field of religion.

The content page furnishes the readers with a range of topics and the body of the text with a depth of reflections from various authors on issues related to the topic.

A word about the arrangement of topics:

Each author has said many things in the same paragraph. Ideas got repeated, sometimes overlapping with others and hence classifying them strictly according to the themes was difficult. Therefore the divisions mentioned in the Contents page could only be provisional. But one is sure to find the main ideas or themes focussed in their respective sections.

Secondly, as I am from India/Asia and my context, multifaceted, I have given priority to the reflections of Indians/Asians, theologians and others. But the index at the end of this book will indicate not only the subject matter but also the ideas of several authors of dialogue and religions from outside India, especially from the West.

I believe this will be a useful *Source Book* to all those who believe in a positive role of religions in society and to all secular-minded persons who accommodate a variety of knowledge and persons or may even think beyond all religious categories on the basis of *humanum*.

The book hopes to make a *Handbook* or a *Reader* to all students of Religion, especially theologians.

Searching for new paths
of Islam-Christian Dialogue

Antonio Maldonado Correa, S.J.

From the 1st to the 5th July 2002, and according to the program previously forwarded, the Vth Islam-Christian Course has taken place at the Jesuit Faculty of Theology, in Granada (Spain). As in the past, the present Course has been jointly conducted by the North Africa Bishop Conference and the Faculty of Theology.

One again this Course has amply contributed to the promotion of personal formation and to the acquisition of such knowledge and attitudes which will foster the line of dialogue initiated by the II Vatican Council and ratified and magnified by the example, the writings and apostolic travels of His Holiness, John Paul II. We as Jesuits count as well on the request of the Decree 9 of the 34th general Congregation.

After each conference those attending were distributed into small groups to discuss and share the ideas and experiences each one might have related to the ideas and guidelines explicated by the speaker.

Later on in plenary sessions, the main ideas, testimonies and experiences of the groups were summarily shared before all. The main topic treated this year has been Islam and Modernity.

The of an authentic progress in the Koranic hermeneutics together with such actual themes as are woman, youth, migrations, Human Rights.... in the wide world of Islam has been dealt with.

The organizers and sponsors of these Courses can very reasonably be quite satisfied for the work accomplished.

Throughout the Course we have been enlightened about many theoretical and practical problems and their possible long term solutions. As well chosen panel of native speakers and christian specialists on Islam have enriched us on many aspects of the vast world of present day Islam as confronted with modernity. In the last conference Mons. Khaled Akashed explained to the audience the immense work actually being carried out by the Pontifical Council for the Interreligious Dialogue in Rome.

Throughout the Course the Very Revd. Mons. Antonio Peteiro, Archbishop of Tangier has encouraged all of us with his well measured words and conciliatory attitudes. And in his homily and closing words of the Course, Mons. Antonio Cañizares, Archbishop of Granada (Spain), invited us all to continue widening and deepening our knowledge and acceptance of God in our lives as a very sound and solid way of increasing our dialogue and fraternization with all peoples.

**ANNOUNCING
THE 17TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS
OF JESUIT ECUMENISTS**

DATES: 25-29 JULY 2003
24 July arrivals - 30 July 2003 departures)

PLACE: Manreza Retreat House, Budapest, Hungary

GENERAL THEME: "CURRENT ISSUES IN ECCLESIOLOGY"

TOPICS SUGGESTED AT THE LAST CONGRESS
(ALEXANDRIA, 2001):

1. Reconciliation between the Churches
2. *Lex orandi, lex credendi*
3. Ecumenism and the challenge of modernity
4. The mystery of the Church
5. The Petrine office as an instrument of unity

CALL FOR PAPERS: Those wishing to give a paper, please send the title by 1 March 2003

Time will be given to informal presentations and reports

LANGUAGES: the official languages will be English and French.
No simultaneous translation

POSSIBLE VISITS: Esztergom-Visegrad-Szentendre (Sunday?),
Meeting with Serbian Orthodox at Szentendre (Tuesday?)

RETREAT: As in previous congresses, if there enough who are interested, an optional retreat will be offered, perhaps at a monastery, following the Congress.

OPEN TO: Jesuits (others, space permitting)

INQUIRIES, INFORMATION, REGISTRATION:
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VISIT THE MANREZA WEB PAGE: www.manreza.hu

Building a United Secular India

Victor Edwin, S.J.

"Communalism breeds pride and prejudice, intolerance and hatred, differentiates groups as we and they and discards others as outsiders and enemies. Such a mentality demolished Babri Masjid and forced all to say Jai Shri Ram", said Dr Roop Rekha Verma, the former vice-chancellor of Lucknow University. She addressed the Jesuits, their collaborators in interfaith dialogue, representatives of Peoples's movements and other secular individuals who gathered together at Cathedral School Hall on 11th October 2001 to reflect on the task of Building a Secular India.

She further noted that the cast amount of literature produced, displayed and distributed by RSS among the masses, which speak of a Hindu Rashtra, wherein Muslims and Christians would be second class citizens, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad's resolve to go ahead with its agenda on Ram Mandir disregarding the law of the land and Bajrang Dal's arms training to its cadres to protect the Hindu culture are a real threat to the secular fabric of our country. The Jesuits and their partners in interfaith ministry came from the States of Punjab, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal to reflect on the dimension of interfaith dialogue in the present context.

Prof. Shamsul Islam, professor of Political Science at Satyawati College, Delhi, told the audience that events such as heightened reassertions by VHP that a temple will be built in Ayodhya, the growing power of hard-liners in States such as Gujarat, the attempts to exclude Muslims from electoral rolls in U.P. make it an urgent task for all secular-minded individuals agencies to network.

The participants felt that is important to understand the basic principle of secularism. Secularism is not a partisan to any one culture or religion. It recognizes and appreciates differences. It believes that today to be Indian is to be inter-Indian, to be cultural is to be inter-cultural. The cultures, languages, customs, dresses, festivals, and habits enrich us.

When the proponents of Hindutva sing to the tune of one nation and one culture, they vehemently deny these differences. Uniformity is imposed in place of unity. In this process religion is used as a political tool. The participants felt that as an enlightened response to this fundamentalism and communalist threat, we must strengthen the secular bonds that exist in our country.

Fr. Thomas V. Kunnunkal suggested the tasks and challenges before the nation are so large and so crucial that it becomes imperative to make dialogue an effective strategy for building a secular India. Thomas V Kunnunkal

along with Victor Edwin was the local organizer of the meet. The group worked together and formulated the following action-oriented Vision.

Drawing upon our multi-religious and multi-cultural heritage we build a humane and caring society in our localities. Dialogue, in this light, is an integral part of all our ministries.

Aiming at human togetherness, peace and harmony, as a first initiative, we propose to take concrete steps in the education and pastoral ministry.

In Education, we join hands and plan together concrete programs to unite staff, students and parent across borders, which presently divide them.

Similarly, in the Pastoral ministry, steps are taken to unite different factions and groups of the parish. At the same time efforts are made to treat people of other faiths with respect as equals and partners, which will then facilitate our working with them in common programs.

This prepares us as citizens, to build a United Secular India. In the next Northern Zonal meeting, within twelve months, a review of the implementation of these two actions programs will be our first item.

It was interesting to note the local media was quite keen about the thrust of the meet. Indian Express, Hindustan (Hindi), and the Pioneer covered the event.

THE PRACTICE OF DAOIST (TAOIST) COMPASSION (Part I)

Michael Saso

One of the most compelling things about Daoism (Taoism), as a practice rather than doctrine-based system, is its truly personal, heart-felt sense of inclusion rather than exclusion, and avoidance of negative judgment. All forms of human belief and cultural systems must, by the rules of interior emptying, non-grasping and inner peace, be respected and allowed to thrive. Put in concrete terms, Daoists do not condemn, look down on, or exclude other forms of belief and practice, in their own personal interior life, or in their dealings with others.

In continuing this form of inner practice, Daoism until today follows Chuang-tzu (Zhuangzi), who made Confucius into a Daoist sage, and Lao-tzu (Laozi) who held only three things precious: compassion towards others, frugality towards self, and not putting one's own self over others (Daode Jing, 67).

Though the works of both these ancient sages contain overt political messages, the way of inner cultivation, and compassionate healing came to dominate Daoist practice from its very beginnings, even during the period of disunity that preceded the founding of the first empire.

It was during this first period of its development that Daoism spread into and influenced many aspects of ancient Chinese life, which later were called "Daoist."

1. How Daoism developed during the course of Chinese history.

Daoism developed dramatically during the Han dynasty, (200 BCE to 200 CE), due to the various professions that accepted its premises, and also to the unification of China into a central imperial system, with an emperor as head. The new political entity formed by the first Han emperors, soon saw the development of a unified cultural system, combining the morality and ethics of Confucius with the new doctrines of universal salvation and liberation brought by Buddhism, and the harmonious attitudes towards nature and fellow humans, typical of Daoism.

This unified cultural system was given the name "**Three Teachings, One Culture**" (*San jiao guei yi*). Though this term came to have other meanings during later dynasties (i.e., from the 15th to the 20th centuries the term *San jiao guei yi* included the cults and secret societies of the Ming, Qing, and early republic era), the basic Chinese value of inclusion did not change. Thus, Daoists had an immense influence on Chinese society, by teaching respect, and speaking well of Confucianism, Buddhism, and religions introduced from the west such as Islam and Christianity, while providing rites of

passage and healing for the popular culture.

During this beginning period of its influence in China's cultural history, Daoists also became the priesthood of the popular Chinese folk religion. As such it provided rites of passage, i.e., customs to follow at birth, "*Guan*" capping for maturation, *Hun* rites for weddings, healing, burial (*sang*) and ancestor liturgies (*ji*). It also supported and provided rituals for the annual cycle of customary festivals celebrated in the family and in village temples. Thus the lunar 1/1 festival for family unity, the 3/3 -thru Qingming festival for girls (girls are allowed to choose or refuse a family provided mate during this period), the 5/5 festival for boys - health in all children, the 7/7 festival for teenagers (girls are allowed to propose to a boy during this period) and 9/9 for the elderly, and for the celebration of the Pole Star "Beidou" ritual (the seven stars of the Big Dipper always point at Dao in the center), are capped by the grand Daoist *Jiao* festival of renewal performed from 9/9 thru the Winter solstice. In this same sense, Daoism also provided a definition of Chinese religion, ie, the rites of passage and the annual cycle of festivals.

Two facts are to be noted here. First, works by foreign scholars who claim that Daoism and Folk Religion are not defined, refer to the study and work of foreigners, not to the reality of religious custom and its practice in China.

It is thus wrong to think of "Three Religions One Culture" as a belief system, rather than a way of customary practice, served by Daoist priest, Buddhist monk, and Confucian moralist. Mandarins who memorializes the throne concerning local practice, are not necessarily observant of Confucian or any other form of moral practice. The morality of the Confucian system, Buddhist compassion, and Daoist oneness with human needs and nature's process, are in fact part and parcel of the "Three teachings One Culture," but not of the political mandarin or the foreign scholar's personal mode of belief or behavior.

Second, the spirit of Daoist practice, as described in the Laozi and Zhuangzi, remain a deep, profound, subconscious force in forming the Chinese attitude toward life, human relationships, and inner moral behavior. Not putting self over others, inclusive acceptance of others right to personal views, and compassion in the Daoist sense of "healing" and acceptance, are of the very essence of Daoism in China.

To understand the profound effect that Daoist practices had during the Han and later Three Kingdoms, North-South Period, and Tang dynasties (these latter periods extended from 220 thru 905), we can best use the symbol of water, so basic to the sense of the teachings found in the text of Lao-tzu. Daoism is like a living stream, flowing through and nourishing spiritual growth throughout the

course of Chinese history. The fresh, clear waters of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu, were first embellished by the inclusion of the *I-ching* (*Yijing*), and the Yinyang Five Element cosmology. Other currents of endeavor soon flowed into the mainstream of Daoist practice.

These included Chemical Alchemy (a stream which later dried up), Inner Alchemy (meditation, and breath circulation), the healing arts, martial arts (developed in the later Song-Ming dynasties by the Daoist Zhang Sanfeng, and centered around Daoist Wudang Shan in central China, and Luofu Shan in the south), and village ritual-and-medical experts (*Fang-shih*/*Fangshr*) who later became known as *Tao-shih*/*Daoshr*, i.e., Daoist healers, libationers or ritual experts). For all these practitioners of arts that converted to or became a part of the great flow of Daoist teachings, meditation on the Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu remained as the source and inspiration of inner spiritual life.

2. Daoism as it was seen through the eyes of the Emperor, and scholars of China.

The height of Daoist influence at court and in learned circles came during the Tang dynasty (619-906), when the emperors (whose surname was the same as Lao-tzu, i.e., "Li") declared Lao-tzu to be the patron of the dynasty. Daoist investiture (*lu* registration), initiation, and the acting out of Daoist cosmology in ritual acts of renewal called *Jiao*, was practiced even by princesses of the royal family at

court. (The Daoist scholar Charles Benn has written about this phenomenon). Daoists were also patronized by Emperors during the Song (Sung, 960 - 1280), who favored classical masters from Lunghu Shan and Mao Shan, and sponsored a new form of popular Daoism called *Shenxiao* (often translated as "Divine Empyrean", but referring in fact to the emphasis of this new "reformed" school of Daoism on compassionate healing and benefitting the village community by exorcising spirits and praying for blessing).

Though the Lunghu Shan and Mao Shan Daoists did use the Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu, the new popular Daoists of the Song dynasty, such as the *Shenxiao* and others, specialized mainly in rituals of healing and blessing, and did not practice daily meditation on Lau-tzu or Chuang-tzu, or meditative breathing exercises.

[Fr. Saso's talk will be continued in the next issue of *Jesuits in Dialogue*. The complete text in English can be obtained by writing this Secretariat.]



Daoist monks engage in theological discussion

THE TRINITY AS RADICAL MONOTHEISM "Jesuits among Muslims" meet in Aix-en-Provence

Belief in the Triune God is a cornerstone - some would say *the* cornerstone of Christian faith. The Trinity is that characteristic of Christian faith which most clearly distinguishes the Christian understanding of God from the profession made by Jews and Muslims. Christians in dialogue with Jews and Muslims often find themselves "defending" their belief in the One, Triune God as genuine monotheism, consistent with the Biblical prophetic tradition.

Since 1980, Jesuits whose apostolate is carried out with and among Muslims have met periodically to study various aspects of the Jesuit mission among Muslims. Sometimes, the topics studied have treated sociological and political themes, and at other times they have focused on reflections about our own Christian faith and on theological issues that arise from our involvement with Muslims.

The meeting of Jesuits among Muslims that took place at La Baume in Aix-en-Provence, France, on 1-8 April, 2002, concentrated on the theme of the Trinity in light of the encounters between Christianity and Islam, asking the fundamental question of whether Christian faith can and should be understood as a radicalization of the belief in One God. Although most of the Jesuits taking part were trained in Islamic studies or had long experience of living and working with Muslims, the participants also included two theologians, Frs. John O'Donnell of the Gregorian University in Rome and Michel Fédou of the Centre Sèvres in Paris. The papers included:

- John O'Donnell, S.J., "Christianity as Radical Monotheism?"
- Christiaan van Nispen, S.J., "Unité-Unité de Dieu entre Islam et Christianisme"
- Christian Troll, S.J., "The Holy Trinity as the Epitome of the Christian Faith"
- Thomas Michel, S.J., "The Trinity as Radical Monotheism"
- Daniel Madigan, S.J., "The Word of God in Muslim Theology: Virtual Trinitarianism?"
- Michel Fédou, S.J., "Le conflit des monothéismes: un débat interne à la tradition chrétienne"
- Jean Desigaux, S.J., "Sur les difficultés de compréhension de la Trinité en Dieu"
- Paolo Dall'Oglio, S.J., "Bozza per un'elogio del sincretismo"
- Ricardo Jimenez, S.J. et Christian Reille, S.J., "Expérience de vie en algérie"

Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of the Acts can write to Thomas Michel, S.J., Secretary for Interreligious Dialogue, at the Jesuit Curia in Rome, or by email at dialogue@sjcuria.org.

*"Kehilla,
Church and Jewish people"
(Part I)*

David Neuhaus, S.J.

1. What is the "kehilla"?

Hebrew-speaking Catholics in Israel come together in the kehilla (meaning "community", established formally within the local Latin Catholic Patriarchate of Jerusalem in 1955. Formally it is known as "Œuvre Saint Jacques Apôtre". Members of the kehilla are:

Catholic Christians of both Jewish and Gentile origin, who are Israelis or residents in Israel and live in the Jewish milieu, praying and giving expression to their faith in Hebrew, with a profound appreciation of the Jewish roots of their faith and practice, and seeking to understand the relationship between contemporary Judaism (in all its diversity) and Christian faith today.

The kehilla is neither a missionary organization nor a Jewish-Christian dialogue center. It is rather a community of believers that comes together in prayer and love like communities of Christians throughout the world. The kehilla does not have a theological, philosophical or ideological set of principles upon which all members are agreed other than belief in the God who so loved us that He sent

His son, Jesus Christ, into the world. Like all Christian communities, the kehilla tries to live according to Christ's teachings within the Catholic Church. As there is no one system of thought that is at the basis of coming together as community, there is a great diversity of views on all subjects within the kehilla.

There is, however, something that distinguishes the kehilla from other communities, and that is the unique context in which it lives its faith, a context that places the kehilla at a crossroads between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people.

Prayer and community life conducted in Hebrew within a Jewish milieu as Catholic Christians as well as work and social relations within Jewish Israeli society define the perimeters of life and reflection. Creating, nurturing and sustaining a prayer community within the Jewish milieu as Christians from Jewish and Gentile origins is a distinguishing mark of the kehilla.

Some members are Jewish by origin, history, culture and identity. Some of these believers live their faith openly and publicly; others live discreetly and privately. Some, who are not Jewish, have become Israeli citizens or permanent residents, opting for life here, connected to Jewish and Hebrew culture, history and tradition. It is thus clear that the kehilla sees itself as intricately connected to the life of the Jewish people in Israel. While no distinction is made between Jew and Gentile in the life of the kehilla,

particular attention is paid to the Jewish milieu in which the kehilla lives, breathes and has its being. Yet, in addition to being implanted in Jewish Israeli society and maintaining manifold connections to the Jewish people, the kehilla is also part of the Universal Catholic Church, united in faith with Catholics throughout the world.

This belonging to a traditional church is a conscious choice for many in the kehilla, who thus choose to associate themselves with the long history of Christian believers through the ages. Within this history there is much joy and light but also much pain and darkness, especially in relation to attitudes and behavior towards the Jewish people. It is this belonging that places the kehilla in a privileged position to work for healing and reconciliation. Within the local context, the kehilla is part of the local, indigenous Catholic Church, which is predominantly Arab in culture and language and headed by its first indigenous Palestinian Arab Patriarch, H.B. Michel Sabbah. These axes of belonging are the bases for reflection on the place and role of the kehilla in the relationship between the Church and the Jewish people.

2. The grace and joy of present times

The kehilla is living a period of grace and joy. Since the middle of the 1960s the Roman Catholic Church has clearly and explicitly embraced the links between Christianity and Judaism and

encouraged dialogue with Jews and Judaism. In these days, the kehilla has seen an increasing openness with regard to issues that touch the Jewish people on the part of the Church in general and Pope John Paul II in particular. Especially significant for the kehilla was the warm welcome extended to the Pope on his Jubilee pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The kehilla saw a dream come as it witnessed the Pope stand in silent prayer before the Western Wall, symbol of contemporary Judaism, and in sorrowful repentance at Yad VaShem, the national memorial to the victims of the Holocaust.

When the kehilla was founded in 1955, few were the Catholics engaged in studying the Jewish identity of Jesus, the Jewish background to the New Testament and the primitive Christian communities. Few too were the Hebrew-speaking Catholics inserted into the life of the Jewish people in Israel. The Hebrew-speaking Catholic kehilla and its founders were among the pioneers in this field.

Today the kehilla notes with pride that the Jewish identity of Jesus, the Jewish roots of Christian faith and of Catholic tradition are celebrated throughout the Catholic Church. Interest in Judaism, dialogue with the Jewish people and awareness of Christianity's Jewish roots no longer uniquely characterize the kehilla in the margins of the (universal) Catholic Church, but characterize concerns at the very center of the Church.

This was summed up in the most recent document of the Vatican's Pontifical Biblical Commission, which concludes with the following statement: Dialogue (with the Jewish people) is possible since Jews and Christians share a rich common patrimony that unites them. It is greatly to be desired that prejudice and misunderstanding be gradually eliminated on both sides, in favor of a better understanding of the patrimony they share and to strengthen the links that bind them.

The past four decades have seen a significant theological reappraisal of Catholic thinking about non-Christian religions. The Church has moved from a position of seeing herself as unique depository of truth (all other religions being condemned as false), to a position of valuing the truths found in other religious traditions and seeking dialogue with them.

The Catholic Church conceives of the possibility of salvation outside the confines of the visible Church, which has no monopoly on the work of Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, for the salvation of all humankind. If this attitude of respect characterizes relationship with other religions in general, how much more so is this true for Judaism, which is so intimately related to Christianity (through shared Scriptures and traditions as well as Jesus' own identity and that of his disciples and the first community). Within the *kehilla*, the use of Hebrew as a liturgical language and a language of community life and Christian

religious expression naturally underlines the common heritage shared by Church and Jewish people. Theological reflection within the Church takes place within a particular historical context. The present context of Catholic-Jewish dialogue has been underlined by Pope John Paul II in his focus on the theme of repentance.

The Catholic Church is engaged in an ongoing reflection on the part Catholics have played in historical manifestations of intolerance, contempt and violence. If this is true in relationship with non-Catholics in general, how much more so is this true in relationship with the Jewish people. Catholics are currently engaged in a multi-dimensional review of the many forms of the "teaching of contempt" for Jews and Judaism within Catholicism which sometimes led to persecution and even genocide.

Within the *kehilla*, some have direct links to the Shoah and all are sensitive to the issue of anti-Semitism within Jewish society, which creates a particularly awareness of the need for repentance and healing.

It is especially significant within the local context that the local Latin Catholic Church, which is primarily Arab in hierarchy and composition, has recognized the particular vocation of the *kehilla*.

In the recent Synod of the Catholic Churches in the Holy Land, this recognition was expressed in the following terms:

There is a group within the Jewish people who have come to know Christ as God and Savior. They are part of our local Church and they live in their own special conditions. They too have a right to develop their own relationship with Jews and Judaism from the vantage point of their reality and situation, at the same time as remaining connected to the reality of the local Church and being open to it. We must preserve open bridges of communication between our Churches and this community in order to exchange experiences so that we can learn from one another and so that this community can develop according to its own particularity and as part of the community of faithful in our countries.

Communion and communication between the *kehilla* and the rest of the Church, especially the rest of the Local Church, is a fundamental part of the vocation of the *kehilla*. On the local level, some members of the *kehilla* have been and continue to be engaged in teaching within the local Arabic-speaking Church and promoting better relations between Jews and Palestinian Christians and Muslims too.

The *kehilla* realizes that there is still much to be done. The way to reconciliation between Jews and Catholics is a long and arduous one after centuries of estrangement, hostility and persecution. Even now, the *kehilla* must pray intensely for this new and relatively fragile relationship, as

the way is fraught with suspicions and pain. Nonetheless, the way has been paved for increasing trust and ever more honest dialogue. Many of the motivating dreams of the founding mothers and fathers of the *kehilla* have been realized. For this the *kehilla* is joyful and thankful.

3. A discreet presence

As much as the *kehilla* might rejoice in the establishment of increasing trust and dialogue between the Church and the Jewish people, so too many *kehilla* members are aware that the *kehilla* itself is called to be a discreet presence.

The *kehilla* is privileged to be at a crossroads where Church and Jewish people are meeting in a new relationship of trust and friendship. However, the historical complexity of relations between Church and Jews calls the *kehilla* to ever greater sensitivity and love for both sides. This is even more true for the present tragic reality in the Holy Land.

The very fact that there are Jews who have recognized a call to enter relationship with Jesus within the Catholic Church is a very sensitive issue in the relations between the Church and the Jewish people. In recent times, some prominent Jewish figures that have entered the Catholic Church have been at the center of painful controversy. The Catholic Church has sought to celebrate the presence of such Jews in the center of the Church.

Thus, for example, Pope John Paul II has repeatedly celebrated the Jewish identity of Edith Stein, the German Jewish philosopher who converted to Catholicism in the 1930s, entered the Carmelite order and died because she was a Jew in Auschwitz in 1942. Edith Stein has been recognized by the Church as an exemplary figure of belief in the modern world, a philosopher turned mystic and has been formally recognized as a saint by the Catholic Church and made one of the patrons of Europe. Many Jews find this celebration of a figure they consider an apostate problematic in the dialogue between Jews and Catholics. Some Jews ask: "Is the Church suggesting that the best Jew is a converted Jew?"

In the *kehilla*, there is recognition of the pain that Edith Stein represents for the Jewish people and thus many insist on a discreet presence for a community at the core of which are Jews who have entered the Catholic Church. Within the move to firmly establish a new relationship of trust between Catholics and Jews, many in the *kehilla* see their role within the Church rather than in the direct and official dialogue between Catholic and Jewish representatives.

This role is one of constantly spreading awareness within the Church of the significance of the relationship with Judaism and the Jewish people. Within the Catholic Church, believers of both Jewish and Gentile origin have made a great contribution to the sensitization of the Church to both

the Jewish roots of the Church and to contemporary Judaism and the Jewish people.

Some of these prominent figures have been members of the *kehilla* or linked to it. Perhaps it is not yet time for Catholics from among the Jewish people to be prominent in the dialogue between the Jewish people and the Catholic Church.

Perhaps rather this is a time for the *kehilla* to engage in a vigilant and constant prayer for the success of this dialogue and the realization of true reconciliation between the Church and the Jewish people after so many centuries of pain.

This discreet presence clearly includes the weaving of friendship with neighbors in Israel. Members of the *kehilla* feel called to bear witness to the possibility of deep and respectful friendship with the Jewish people within the context of daily life.

They bear discreet and yet profound witness to the deep desire for friendship with the Jewish people and the fundamental changes in Church attitudes. These relationships will eventually register a different history of Jews and Christians, relegating to the distant past the centuries of suspicion and mistrust.

[Fr. Neuhaus's talk will be continued in the next issue of *Jesuits in Dialogue*. The complete text in English can be obtained by writing this Secretariat.]

NEW BOOKS FROM ORBIS ON INTERRELIGIOUS THEMES

Jacques Dupuis, S.J. *Christianity and the Religions: from Confrontation to Dialogue*

Fr. Dupuis describes his latest book as "more pastoral than academic, more concrete than abstract." In it, he intends to "help Christians of our time to discover more deeply the scope of God's plan for humankind, infinitely more beautiful and deeper than perhaps we had ever thought."

Paul Knitter and Chandra Muzaffar, eds., *Subverting Greed: Religious Perspectives on the Global Economy*

This work, co-edited by an American Christian and a Malaysian Muslim, brings together views on globalization from the viewpoint of the followers of seven religious traditions. After hearing the diverse evaluations, Dr. Muzaffar asks: "Can the religious communities of the world form any kind of common front from which to engage the global market?"

Catherine Cornille, ed. *Many Mansions? Multiple Religious Belonging and Christian Identity*

In her introduction to this ground-breaking volume, Dr. Cornille notes: "A heightened and widespread awareness of religious pluralism has presently left the religious person with the choice not only of *which* religion, but also of *how many* religions she or he might belong to." Any Christian who has had the experience of studying deeply another religion or of sharing life with its followers will be challenged by the questions raised in this book.

J.K. Kadowaki, S.J., *Zen and the Bible*

Fr. Kadowaki's book grew out of personal experience. "I learned Christianity by studying the catechism, but the catechism alone was inadequate to give me a deep understanding. Through the *Spiritual Exercises* I obtained a deeper knowledge of the essence of Christianity and learned how to put it into practice in my own body. Later, when I started practicing Zen, I discovered that the Exercises and a Zen *sesshin* greatly resemble one another. The many things I have learned from Zen have enabled me to put new life into my practice of the Exercises."

Stephen J. Pope and Charles Hefling, eds., *Sic et Non: Encountering "Dominus Iesus"*

The book offers helpful analyses of themes treated in the September, 2000, document of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith. Various authors examine its ecclesiology (Sullivan), relationship to themes in the theology of Karl Rahner (Egan), use of Scripture (Perkins), Trinitarian theology (Lawrence), Christology (Imbelli), and relevance to interreligious dialogue (Clooney) and presents thoughtful Anglican, Protestant, Jewish and Muslim responses to the document.