

Jesuits in Dialogue

the interreligious dimension

Secretariat for
Interreligious Dialogue
Society of Jesus

“The 18th International Congress of Jesuit Ecumenists” 2

“Conversion to Interreligious Dialogue.....”, *James T. Bretzke, S.J.* 2

“The Practice of Daoist (Taoist) Compassion”, *Michael Saso, S.J.* 3

“Kehilla, Church and Jewish people”, *David Neuhaus, S.J.* 6

“Let us Cross Over the Other Shore”, *Christophe Ravel, S.J.* 10

“Six Theses on Islam in Europe”, *Groupe des Deux Rives*..... 11

“Meeting of Jesuits in Islamic Studies, September 2006” 13

“Encounter and the Risk of Change”, *Wilfried Dettling, S.J.* 14



THE 18TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF JESUIT ECUMENISTS

The Jesuit Ecumenists are an informal group of Jesuit scholars active in the movement for Christian unity who have been meeting for the past 40 years. The goal of the group today is not greatly different from that of its founders in the 1960s: to promote the visible unity of Christians by making a joint contribution to the development of Ecumenical theology and the promotion of Ecumenical relations among Christians of various Churches.

- 1.) Since 1964, the International Congress of Jesuit Ecumenists has been held 18 times. At the 17th Congress in Dobogókö, Hungary, in July 2003, it was decided to hold the next congress in the Republic of Ireland. The 18th Congress, whose papers are included in this volume, took place at Clongowes Wood College, a boarding school run by the Society of Jesus, in County Kildare, Ireland on 12-18 July 2005.

This congress had special significance, as it was the first held after the 40th anniversary of the promulgation of the Second Vatican document on ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, on 21 November 1964. It thus became an occasion for the Jesuit ecumenists to take stock of developments in ecumenical relations in the last 40 years and to try to identify key issues of concern in ecumenical theology.

The papers delivered at the Congress approach these questions from various perspectives. John Haughey takes a philosophical approach to the movement for Christian unity and suggests that Lonergan's understanding of emergent probability could pump new energy and vision into the movement. Michael Fahey's approach is historical, tracing Jesuit perceptions of unity from their mainly negative origins before

Vatican II, through the conceptual revolution in ecumenical appreciation produced by *Unitatis Redintegratio*, and into the more recent involvement of Jesuits in the ecumenical movement since the time of the Second Vatican Council. Edward Farrugia looks at a specific issue that lies at the heart of Catholic-Orthodox relations, that of the nature of the Petrine ministry.

On a thorny question of ecumenical theology, Paolo Gamberini studies the meaning and significance of *subsistit in* in Vatican II statements that the "Church of Christ *subsists* in the Catholic Church." He contrasts the view of Catholic theologian Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, with that of the Lutheran theologian, Eberhard Jüngel, and then examines the use of *subsistit in* in the declaration of the Congregation of the Faith, *Dominus Iesus*. Frank Sullivan takes a critical look at agreements of full communion reached between Anglican and Lutheran churches and seeks to spell out the implications of the *communio* theology expressed therein. Donald Hawkins recounts the theological controversies which have erupted down through the years within the Southern Baptist Convention in the U.S.A.

In the area of ecumenical approaches to worship and liturgy, Thomas Rausch takes up the question of Eucharistic hospitality and makes a case for Eucharistic sharing even before full Christian unity is achieved. Robert Daly offers critical comments on the newly approved statement on Holy Communion by the United Methodists in the United States.

Finally, in the area of "lived ecumenism," Thomas Hughson looks at the sensitive issue of proselytism, a frequently controverted question between Catholics, Orthodox, and "ecumenical Protestants," on one side, and Evangelicals and Pentecostals, on the other. Ralph Woodhall raises the missiological implications of ecumenism and proposes ecumenical cooperation in theological research. Finally, Patrick Howell describes a unique and creative experiment in ecumenical

study and experience sponsored by one of our Jesuit universities.

This volume is dedicated to all Jesuits who have worked for Christian unity and to all those who seek the unity in love and witness that Jesus desired for his disciples.

**CONVERSION TO INTERRELIGIOUS
DIALOGUE:
A DUTY WITHIN THE CHURCH'S
MISSION**

James T. Bretzke, S.J.

Recently I came across some remarks by a former acquaintance from my years of teaching at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. Fitzgerald, a former missionary in Africa, was commenting on a forthcoming document from the Holy See on interreligious dialogue. He strongly affirmed that dialogue with believers of other religions “is not a hobby or an extra activity but a duty within the mission of the Church.”

Dialogue, though, involves more than merely conversational etiquette. Fitzgerald stated “the problem that arises is how to reconcile dialogue as part of the mission of the Church with Jesus’ mandate to go out and preach.” Thus there is an intimate connection between evangelization and dialogue. Fitzgerald stated that the Church must do both, noting the two tasks “are different but not opposed,” since the ultimate judge and animator of the Church’s mission, including interreligious dialogue, is the Holy Spirit.

Interreligious dialogue is a bit like inculturation: everyone seems to be in favor of it, but the precise roadmap to reach these

theological destinations remains open to some considerable debate.

At the time of Pope John Paul II’s 1990 Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (“On the Permanent Validity of the Church’s Missionary Mandate”), one of my colleagues at the Gregorian lamented that too many of our international students wanted to do their thesis research on topics related to their native culture and contexts.

Qui si fa la teologia universale. “Here we do universal theology” was his reply to these requests and that remark reveals the ongoing tension over the universal and particular that any, and every, valid theology must encompass.

The old Italian travel advisory, “All roads lead to Rome,” would mark a danger indeed if these roads all turned out to be one-way and/or dead-ends. The road that led me personally to Rome (and later on to California) started in Asia. After ordination I went to Korea as a missionary and my Korean superiors sent me to Rome for my doctorate in moral theology, with a view to teaching in a future theologate back in Seoul (that still has not quite opened). Probably my encounters with the religious and philosophical traditions of Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Shamanism in their native Asian contexts convinced me that a “teologia universale a la Romana” might not be the only, or best response, to the twin task of mission and dialogue that Archbishop Fitzgerald underscores. The year after my Roman arrival (1987) the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC) with the Protestant Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) released a joint statement titled “Working With Other Religions,” in which they spoke of dialogue as being not “primarily a matter of talking. It is, in the first instance an attitude, an openness to the neighbor, a sharing of spiritual resources as people stand before the great crisis of life and death, as they struggle for justice and human

dignity, ... In dialogue, Christians and their neighbors enter into a reciprocal relationship which becomes a process of mutual learning and growth.”

Another colleague of my days in Berkeley, the well-known Protestant Taiwanese theologian C. S. Song, has written extensively in this area, and argues that genuine interreligious dialogue is not so much a communication technique as it is a multi-stage process of conversion for those involved.

An initial stage Song labels “bi-lateral cease-fire,” which requires that those involved in the dialogue have to stop trying to conquer the other side by converting them. If the parties agree to this theological armistice then they might reach the next crucial stage of “blessed ignorance,” in which we recognize (or least entertain the suspicion) that our own religious-cultural experience is not the sum of all possible truth. If we accept the possibility that the absolute fullness of complete truth does not reside in our religious tradition or moment in history, then this may lead us to accept that our dialogue partners might have something to contribute to the mutual search for the splendor of the truth. Song calls this ignorance “blessed” because it is a graced development, which allows real dialogue to begin.

This grace supposes a human nature of incompleteness, and builds on and perfects it through the practice of epistemological humility, leading to a real conversion to a new goal, a commitment to entering into what the FABC calls the dialogue of life.

Like conversion from sin, dialogic conversion involves a metanoia, turning away from using dialogue as a strategic means to convert others and turning towards stepping more fully into the richness of the lives of our dialogue partners.

Let the conversion begin.

THE PRACTICE OF DAOIST (TAOIST) COMPASSION

Michael Saso, S.J.

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 Lao-tzu or Chuang-tzu, or meditative breathing exercises. Even in today’s China, very few “popular” ritual experts make use of the book of Lao-tzu in

their spiritual practice, but Daoshi or Daoist priests of the traditional schools (Zhengyi, Qingwei, Beidou, Sanqing, and Shenxiao) do use the text of the Laozi in their daily lives, and as a text to be chanted publicly during ritual.

Yuan Emperors (1280-1367) especially patronized and supported the *Quanzhen* “All Truth” school, while the Ming dynasty (1367-1644) used Daoist masters as mandarins in the Imperial Board of Rites, because of their knowledge of, and ability to perform classical Yinyang rituals deriving from the ancient *Book of Rites (The Monthly Commands* chapter, *Yueling*, was the structural basis of the Lunghu Shan Celestial master, and Lingbao liturgies to the Five Sacred Peaks). The emperors of the Ming dynasty, for instance, relied on Daoists to perform the imperial sacrifices to Mt. Tai in the East, and the other sacred peaks, in a temple especially erected in Beijing (and most provincial capital cities) for that purpose.

Though the Qing-Manchu dynasty (1640-1912) did not especially favor the liturgical, or the healing, aspects of the Daoist tradition, a new movement amongst lay Daoists (i.e., non-ordained, married practitioners) became immensely popular. Its followers developed a form of meditative Daoism devoted more to inner practice, rather than to the thriving and ever-popular village liturgies asking for nature’s blessing and compassionate healing. This form of private Daoist practice, though by no means new, became widespread and dominant during the waning years of the Qing dynasty and the first half of the 20th century, led by a famous Shanghai scholar named Chen Yingning. It is also practiced in contemporary Hongkong and Taiwan, and is well described in most of the modern Chinese studies of contemporary Daoism.

The practitioners of this new kind of “breath circulating” and “inner peace” Daoism did not base themselves so much on the Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu, as on formulation for

breathing and meditating, which derived from the Song (Sung) and Yuan dynasties' Quanzhen "All True" and other meditative practices. The neo-Daoists divided themselves, typically, into five schools, the eastern school centered around Shanghai, the western school of Chengdu and environs, the northern, central, and southern schools, each claiming a Qigong/meditation master from the Song or Ming dynasty as their founder. The special features of these late 19th-20th century scholarly Daoist movements is that they did not practice Daoist liturgy, did not transmit an esoteric lineage poem to their disciples (see the paragraph below for an explanation of this practice), and did not call themselves "Daoist" (Daoshi or Daoshu) in the Chinese linguistic sense of that term. Nor did they use the Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu as systematic spiritual guides, as did the earlier Lunghu Shan Celestial Master and Mao Shan "Shangqing" (Highest Pure) Daoism.

3. Daoism as it was seen through the eyes of Daoists, and the people who follow them.

Important changes took place in reformed and popular Daoist movements during the Song (Sung), Yuan-Mongol, and Ming dynasties. The first and most important of these was the formation of the "ch'uan-chen" (*Quanzhen*) "All Truth" Daoist movement, which included monastic as well as lay (married) practitioners in an all-inclusive embrace. For the "All Truth" Daoists, Zen meditation, Confucian family virtues, and (as in the case of the Bodhisattva vows of perfection), all paths which lead to (union with) an ultimate, absolute, Transcendent Dao present in nature, were followed.

We note that the meaning of "*Wu Wei zhi Dao*, (often translated as Dao of non-act) is in the meditative awareness practice of the

Daoist master not so much a "non act" as a kind of "transcendent act," (i.e., transcendent aspect of Dao's activities). By emptying the mind of mental judgment (Zhuangzi's "*zuowang*" sitting in forgetfulness) and the heart-will of self-oriented desires (*xinzhai*), all practitioners are called to union with Dao's gestating work in nature. The opening lines of the Lao-tzu, calling the practitioner to seek Dao Transcendent inwardly, and Immanent Dao (*Yu Wei zhi Dao*) outwardly, hidden in all of the myriad creatures, even to the utmost reaches of the cosmos, became a way for all men and women to follow during the Song (Sung) dynasty and thereafter. Laity and monastics alike followed the practices of the Quanzhen Daoist movement.

The *Lungmen* (Dragon Gate) branch of All Truth Daoist practice also developed a finely tuned method of internal alchemy, or breath circulation meditation, which taught lay people how to concentrate on the presence of Transcendent Dao in the center of gravity of the body's microcosm.

This form of meditation called for focusing the awareness of the practitioner on the "Lower Cinnabar Field," i.e., the lower solar plexus (called the "Yellow Court," *Huangting* in earlier forms of Daoist practice). It was used first by the *Shang-ch'ing* (*Shangqing*), "Highest Purity" school, and all the great centers of Daoist practice, such as Lunghu Shan, Wudang Shan, Gozao Shan, Qingcheng Guan).

Daoists focused on the body's center-of-gravity, as a locus for attaining to "Oneness with the Dao."

All of these practices are still current today, and help constitute what a "Daoist" is in the original meaning of that word.

4. Popular Ritual Daoism after the Song (Sung) dynasty reformation.

A third and also extremely important development in Daoism which took place from the Song (Sung) dynasty (960-1280), the Yuan-Mongol Dynasty (1280-1368), and the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) was the formation, expansion, popularization, and *legitimizing* of a myriad forms of local Daoist practice. Some of these popular local movements are still extant in the modern world, while others are recorded for posterity in the writings of scholars and (mainly) non-Taoist historians. A list of the various orders and schools which flourished until the 20th century was published by the White Cloud Daoist monastery (Bai Yun Guan) in Beijing, in the 1920's. I shall refer to this list in a moment, to show among other things that Daoism (until its entrance into the Caucasian western world) is indeed quite inclusive, admitting to the title and rank of "Daoist", any and all schools who registered themselves with the great Daoist centers, and practiced rituals and meditations described in the paragraph directly above. In keeping with the system of inclusion and non-judgmental acceptance, all the local and provincial Daoists who came to Lunghu Shan, Mao Shan, Gozao Shan, Wudang Shan, and other accepted provincial centers, and registered themselves as Daoists in their meditative and liturgical orientation, were listed as such in the 1920 Gazetteer of Baiyun Guan ("White Cloud Monastery") in Beijing. *The criteria for inclusion on the list was simply the demonstration, by recitation or in writing, of the 20, 40, or 100 character poem which is given to Daoists, male and female, at the time of their reception into a Daoist school.* The major criterion for being a Daoist, therefore, was the reception of this poem, along with the paraphernalia, music,

meditative and ritual knowledge which came with the poem.

Whether long or short, 20, 40, 100, or however many characters, the poem showed a number of crucial and revealing things about the Daoists themselves, by which their title, rank, "register" (*Lu*), a list of meditative and liturgical training, and other accomplishments, could be learned. The origin, school and meditative/liturgical practices of the Daoist are known from the title of the poem itself, while the Daoist's place in the lineage (how many generations the poem has been transmitted) is known from his/her title. When signing documents, visiting other Daoists, or seeking to be instructed by a master, Daoists always identify themselves by the special character in the poem, given them by their master.

The importance of this poem was due to the following facts. First, the age and origin of the earliest Daoist lineages can be traced by asking a Daoist which character in the poem was given to him or her at the time of "ordination" or acceptance into the coterie of a master's disciples. For the Daoists of Lunghu Shan, Mao Shan, Wudang Shan, Gozao Shan, and those in lineages deriving from these mountains, one character is advanced in the poem for each generation of disciples. Thus, the Lunghu Shan "*Zhengyi Mengwei*" poem has forty characters. In today's world, Daoists of this lineage are given titles for signing ritual and official documents from the 35th or 36th character in the poem, showing that the present generation of Daoists are now in the 36th generation since the transmission began, that is (averaging 4 generations per 100 years), some 900 years since the poem was first transmitted.

(A survey made throughout China between 1986 and 1988 found that Daoist masters of Mao Shan, Lunghu Shan, Zhangzhou and Quanzhou in Fujian province, and much of Taiwan, use the 36th and 37th characters in signing the *Piao* memorials and *Shuwen* rescript documents of the Jiao ritual of renewal, and Zhai funerary services, showing the 40 character Zhengyi Mengwei poem common to Lunghu Shan and Mao Shan to be commonly used throughout central and south China today).

Daoists of the reformed *Quanzhen*, *Shenxiao*, and the popular southern and central Daoist village lineages, use a 100 character poem to identify their lineage, and advance one character each time a new lineage master or teaching center is established. Thus the more recent, i.e., post Song dynasty orders use their poem to trace the lineage of their master, but not to tell the age of their lineage. This is because a new character in the poem is chosen each time a school of disciples is established, or a new village center for Daoist meditation is set up. Quanzhen Daoists of the monastic tradition use the poem to identify their monastery of origin, and Daoist master; lay practitioners trained in Quanzhen centers learn the meditations and rituals, but do not receive the character of transmission until ordained as a Daoist master).

The practice of seeking as many masters as possible, and learning as much about Daoist practice as feasible from pilgrimages and study at the great sacred mountains of China, has been popular almost from the beginning of organized Daoist practice, but it became especially popular in the Song dynasty (960-1280) and thereafter. This tendency was encouraged by the fact that the Imperial Court began to demand that Daoists be licensed, in order to perform in the local villages and temples, an arbitrary legal procedure attested to in the reports of local mandarins in their memorials to the throne. (Ancient China was not that much different from modern China, in controlling and curtailing the free practice of religion). Extolling the enforcement of Daoist

“licensing” was a relatively “safe” thing for local officials to report to the emperor’s throne. Daoists were motivated to seek “licenses” or “registers” from the great monastic centers, under imperial approval and protection, thus assuring their registration and “control” through a method that all Daoists were anxious to implement, with or without Imperial regulation.

5. Daoism as it appears to western eyes.

In the process of coming to the western world, Daoism has both preserved, and “left behind” much of the cultural inheritance of its origins in China’s ancient past. The major reason for the changes that have effected Daoism in western garb have been the exclusion of language from the process of transmission. All those processes, orally transmitted teachings, and musical or liturgical performances that require Chinese language, must perforce be dropped from the teachings of the Daoist masters who find disciples amongst the languages and cultures of the west. This in no way inhibits the use of the Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu in translation, nor does it prevent the teaching of the various meditations, simple rituals of healing, or compassionate accompaniment through life’s passages.

Among the things frequently dropped from Daoist practices in the west have been, unfortunately I believe, the lack of understanding of the nature of the “*Lu*” register, the assigning of a character from the 20, 40, or 100 word poem, and the sense of inclusiveness or “non-judgment” that typifies Daoism as it is found at its cultural roots. It is easy to understand why the “*Lu*” register is so rarely discussed by western savants, or seen in the writings of the great learned professors of the Sorbonne, the Ivy League colleges, or Japanese finely tuned scholarship. The Daoist master is forbidden to tell the content of his register to anyone but one successor per generation, or a student who becomes like an adopted or “dry” son. In this regard, Daoism is very similar to

Tantric Buddhist practice, as it is found in Japan and Tibet. One must become a monk or a Daoist priest, and train for many years, in order to be given access to the method for envisioning spirits, (mandala), summoning (mantra) and becoming one with the vision (mudra), and then destroying or totally “emptying” the vision, to obtain the emptiness requisite for union,

Though the transmission of the sacred character from the 40 word poem is not as esoteric or difficult to find as the contents of the “Lu” register, (the poems are, after all, published by Baiyun Guan in Beijing), the Daoist is usually reluctant to speak of his or her special character, and uses it only when signing liturgical documents (*shuwen* rescripts, and *biao* memorials) used when addressing the Dao, or the spirits of the heavens. The fact that few or no western scholars are aware of this practice, or have not written about it in their published studies, demonstrates the beginning nature of Daoist studies as a discipline, and the need to spend many years of dedicated study in the field, to master this truly esoteric subject.

But that which can and must be transmitted to the West, and everywhere that Daoism has had some sort of spiritual influence, is the sense of compassion, healing, non-judgment, “not putting oneself over others,” and **inclusiveness** that is the signpost of real Daoist practice. All of those systems that have been deeply influenced by Daoism, whether Sufi practice (see the magnificent study of Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism*, comparing Ibn Arabi with Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu, and Farid-Ud-Din Attar’s *Conference of the Birds*), The Sefirot chart of the Kabbalah, the emptying prayer or “Dark Night” of western Spanish mysticism which precedes mystic union, all are in some way or other analogous to, or in some cases directly influenced by Silk Road and mediated Islamic contacts with Daoism in China. It is not as important that the linguistic aspects of Daoism be preserved, as the sense of healing compassion, which makes its transmission true and valid.

“KEHILLA, CHURCH AND JEWISH PEOPLE”

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:

- 2.) Catholic Christians of both Jewish and Gentile origin,
- 3.) who are Israelis or residents in Israel and live in the Jewish milieu,
- 4.) praying and giving expression to their faith in Hebrew,
- 5.) with a profound appreciation of the Jewish roots of their faith and practice,
- 6.) 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.

4. Living and bearing witness to “good news”

The *kehilla* is not engaged in any kind of traditional missionary activity whatsoever. Missionary activity in its traditional sense (explicitly preaching or distributing Christian matter) is no longer seen as appropriate in relationship to the Jewish people and the *kehilla* is in harmony with the Universal Church on this score. Summing up the new attitude, in Jerusalem itself, Cardinal Kasper, head of the Vatican commission for relations with the Jewish people, stated: “Now we are aware of God’s unrevoked covenant with His people and of the permanent and actual salvific significance of the Jewish religion for its believers. The *kehilla* is profoundly sensitive to the Jewish world in which it lives. The fact that some Jews are drawn to faith in Jesus Christ and among them some do become members of the Catholic Church, is a painful reality for most Jews. Many of the Jewish members of the *kehilla* live this pain as an integral part of their identities and recognize the historical reasons for widespread negative Jewish reactions to the phenomenon. However, reactions are not always negative and sometimes deepen dialogue and relationship.

When it comes to mission (“being sent”) though, the *kehilla* does sense a mission to the Universal Church. It is sent, first and foremost, to remind the Universal Church of its claim to catholicity. The *kehilla* sees itself as part of a movement towards the reconstitution of a community of Catholic believers within the Jewish milieu. Even before the liturgical reforms, which allowed mass to be celebrated in the vernacular languages (spoken languages rather than Latin), the *kehilla* received authorization to celebrate the mass in Hebrew. Thus, Hebrew was restored to its rightful place as one of the venerable languages of Christian tradition and liturgy. This mission to the Church is to awaken the slumbering Jewish roots of Christian faith and Catholic practice and tradition. Moreover, the *kehilla* is called to

bear constant witness to the fundamental unity of the Old Testament with the New, the rootedness of Jesus and the first Christian community within the Jewish people and God’s fidelity to His people.

Within the Catholic Church today the word “mission” is often replaced by the words: “evangelization” or “witness”. Recent Catholic thinking has stressed that each individual must be respected in his or her particularity. Thus, Catholics today tend to speak more of “witness to the faith” than active missionary activity through argumentation and disputation. By “witness” is meant the attempt to live Christian lives as clearly and radiantly as possible. Words have been so long contradicted by acts in the history of Christian communities that they seem to ring out meaninglessly. Believers have often spoken too much and acted too little. It is acts rather than words that can bear witness to the message of love and respect upon which the lives of believers are based. Particularly within the *kehilla*, the word “mission” conjures up a concept and a strategy that are no longer acceptable within the Israeli and Jewish contexts. “Mission” has too often been understood as “proselytism”, in which respect for personal freedom and cultural, historical and social particularity has been overridden in the name of the supposed salvation of souls. The Jewish people are deeply wounded by centuries of offensive missionary activity that sought to bring them “to the light” even in spite of their resistance. Within the Church today, this aggressive and offensive missionary activity, strongly linked to a teaching of contempt for Judaism, has given way to an appreciation of the internal dynamics of the Jewish tradition.

Many in the *kehilla* believe that believers in Jesus should be measured and humble in their faith when face to face with the Jewish people. This humility is the necessary prerequisite for the much needed healing. Only when a relationship of trust is restored can Jews and Christians look confidently at one another once again and re-evaluate the

place of Jesus Christ in the history of salvation. This means that the attitude towards others should be governed by a profound respect for their freedom, a sincere humility regarding the history of the Church and a burning desire to live faith simply and clearly, more in acts than in words. When questioned explicitly by Jews (or anyone else) about faith, the words of St. Peter might best capture the attitude generally adopted in the *kehilla*: “Reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts and always have your answer ready for people who ask the reason for the hope that you all have, yet do it with gentleness and reverence” (1P 3:15).

5. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem

It is clear that the primary vocation of the *kehilla* is to be a community of prayer and life in the midst of Israeli society. Within this community, prayers for the wellbeing of the people, the country and for peace and justice in the region have a very special place. Living within Israeli society, prayers in the *kehilla* are all the more the prayers of and for this society. Common life with the Jewish people makes the *kehilla* particularly sensitive to the need for healing and reconciliation. Yet, the other dimension of this Land is never far from the prayers of the *kehilla* too. The proclamation of faith in the Prince of Peace places the *kehilla* at the center of the painful reality being lived in this Land – the continued violence and bloodshed. Common faith with the other Christians of the Land, most of them Palestinians, makes the *kehilla* particularly sensitive to the need for peace and justice. Instead of widespread discouragement, though, the *kehilla* seeks to live hope at the center of society in Israel.

There has been much progress in the relations between Jews and Christians. Part of this progress is undoubtedly related to the establishment of the State of Israel and the development of a Jewish majority within Israeli society. The context of the State of Israel holds out two dimensions of specific

promise and eschatological hope for the *kehilla*:

1. In the midst of Israel, the *kehilla* might restore an important, even essential, element to the catholicity (universality) of the Universal Church. A “church” out of the midst of the Jewish environment, particularly sensitive to the inner life of the Jewish people, recalls the most primitive “church”, the church of the first disciples of Jesus. This earliest *kehilla* (the primitive Church in Jerusalem within the Jewish milieu) was greatly weakened after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70AD and it eventually disappeared from view, swallowed up into the Gentile Church. Today, in the midst of the historical, traditional Church, a Church from the Jewish milieu alongside a Church from the Gentile milieu restores a missing dimension to the universality of the Body of Christ, promising renewed vigor to the catholic (universal) community of believers.

2. On the other hand, a local Israeli Catholic community of believers in Jesus, living integrated in Jewish Israeli society, can serve as a bridgehead for profound healing and reconciliation in this beloved land. Within the *kehilla*, the Jew who has met Jesus within his Church remains firmly rooted in Israel. The less the Jewish people feels threatened in its survival, the more the Jewish people can afford to open itself. Might there come a day when Jews can freely express their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and remain fully integrated within the Jewish people.

Meanwhile, the *kehilla* seeks to be fully integrated in Israeli society as well as in the Catholic Church. From this unique vantage-point, the *kehilla*, in communion with both the Universal Church and with the Jewish people, incessantly prays for a full reconciliation between Jews and Christians and among all believers in this Land and in the world. The *kehilla* is aware that it is called to be a community of hope: hope that Jews and Christians will be fully reconciled, hope that Israelis and Palestinians will find

peace and security in this Land. Pope John Paul II expressed this in his meeting with the two chief rabbis of Israel in Jerusalem in 2000: “We must work together to build a future in which there will be no more anti-Judaism amongst Christians or anti-Christian sentiment among Jews. We have much in common. There is much that we can do together for peace, for justice, for a more human and fraternal world. May the Lord of heaven and earth lead us to a new and fruitful era of mutual respect and cooperation for the benefit of all”.

**“LET US CROSS
OVER THE OTHER SHORE”**

Christophe Ravanel, S.J.

Introduction.

As a first practical application of the Charter, a proposal to establish contacts with the Muslim world was put forward in France by the Young Jesuit Network and the Friends of the Mediterranean, in collaboration with the “Groupe des deux Rives”. The YJN is made up of young Jesuits, French and Spanish mostly, who are interested in the Euro-Mediterranean apostolate in the western sector. Three are particularly involved: Jesus Leon, Pep Buades and Christophe Ravanel.

Evolution of the project

Six students and young professionals, aged between 25 and 30, two from the sector of education and four from the work area, joined us. We proceeded in three steps. First, we went on a journey of exploration (on foot, by bus, sharing taxis, more rarely by car) of urban life, in Algiers principally, where we engaged people of the same generation as ourselves in a sharing of ideas and experience. A visit to Tipesa, with time on the beach, was included.

We then sought ways of occupying ourselves. A first day was spent in finding lodging with Algerian families or long-time religious residents in Algeria. In groups of two, we worked in a library, for a development organisation, for an association involved in formation projects. We kept up regular contacts with each other.

On our return to France, we spent time in personal and group reflection on our experience. Each shared with the others. We talked to Algerians who could enlighten us on the social, economic, political and religious life in their country. We concluded with a thanksgiving Mass at Our Lady of Africa.

Goals we set ourselves

- 1.) To visit people in their own country whom we had met in Europe (work companions, friends, relatives, students and teachers).
- 2.) To learn more of the culture and religious belief of other people.
- 3.) To share something with others of what we had received in life.
- 4.) To broaden our knowledge of the Arab world through intercultural and interreligious exchange.

Results of the experience

1. Discovery of a different face of the Church and more generally of religious faith.
2. Gaining a wider experience of fraternal life.
3. Acquiring a deeper awareness of our inner selves, of the values we profess to live by.
4. The benefits to be gained from sharing. Learning to listen to others.
5. Learning how to live the commitments of our vocation in a foreign environment.
6. Growing in respect for different ways of believing and living.

7. Accepting that it takes time to break down the barriers to mutual sharing.

In conclusion, we have learnt that these encounters with people of different outlook and experience, these moments of sharing, these new relationships, have helped us to define our own life's orientation.

Evaluation of the experience

We hoped to have more than six participants, but this smaller number allowed for more flexibility, in a country like Algeria, than twelve would have given us. It is interesting that only professionals accepted to enter into the experience and that these people already knew Jesuits who could vouch for us.

A project such as ours needs preparation. This along with the time required to obtain visas does not allow the acceptance of individuals at the last minute.

Observations

The persons we encountered spoke of terrorism as a thing of the past. A notable drop in incidents of violence has given new hope to people. They can now move about and speak freely. It is difficult to determine how or when these changes happened. Among the reasons that were put forward were the tacit decision to stop the killings and the effect on people of the September the 11th attacks.

The war in Iraq has had some negative effect on this development but not enough to reverse it. There remains a mistrust of the United States and England, which are perceived as countries seeking their own advantage, above all in the realms of finance and communications. We must keep in mind these contrasting and mixed views of the West perceived as organized, developed, rich on one hand, violent, dominating, antagonistic on the other.

We were frequently asked by various people, such as the personnel of the Algerian consulate, the travel agency, Algerians themselves, why we wanted to go to Algeria or why we had come. One of us remarked he

was getting tired of being asked these questions. While the Algerians were somewhat disconcerted by our presence, they were at the same time quite ready to meet us and expressed the desire that these encounters should continue.

Algeria is experiencing a deep change in religious thinking. The intolerance and violence of the fundamentalists is turning people away from Islam and from adherence to religion in general toward an interior, reflective search for truth with less dependence on an outside authority telling them what to believe and how to act. The stage is thus set for encounters with people of other faiths who are going through a similar experience. There is a passage from Islam, seen as the one, unique religion, to a desire to share common universal values such as tolerance, moderation, love, honesty, objectivity. The excesses of fundamentalists have mostly disappeared as well as a tendency toward laicisation. Only the month of Ramadan is still strictly observed. The mosques, as places of assembly, are presently the sole venue of communication with the people. The newspapers do not yet exercise a very strong influence. The media focuses mainly on the sensational because it is more marketable.

The Church's attitude on terrorism allayed people's suspicions on its presumed proselytizing intents. The press praised its humanistic approach.

Today, more Muslims accept the Church's perception of itself as a structure at the service of the poor, working not from an official declared policy but from commitments of individuals.

On the social-political level, Christians have acquired respect and are generally accepted in society. They play a role in the life of the nation.

The writings of Saint Augustine can help in the work of opening Algeria to outside thought. His reputation as a major philosopher and his presence over many years

in what is now Algeria make him an appealing figure.

The outlook for the future.

It will be advantageous to place the accent on spirituality rather on religion. This offers a choice and does not impose one truth to the exclusion of another. The problem is to find how to share a spirituality? What role do religion and philosophy play in this work? Whatever answers we come up with, it is quite obvious that personal relationships have a large part to play in interreligious dialogue.

SIX THESES ON ISLAM IN EUROPE

Groupe des Deux Rives

Introduction:

In March 2001, some Jesuits living among Muslims in Europe met at Ludwigshafen (cf. the conclusions forwarded to the government of the Society). Since then various incidents throughout the world have significantly influenced the mutual perception of Muslims, Christians and others of each other – especially in Europe. The Society of Jesus and its apostolic works cannot ignore this shift. This is the reason why it is so important to rethink both our apostolic engagement and the formation of Jesuits. Through the following theses we propose to concentrate on six fields of work:

I. Have a look at mutual prejudices:

In the face of the mutual prejudices between Muslims and Non-Muslims, one has to distinguish between those which have some basis in reality and those which have not:

- o Most of the prejudices are based on fear. Our reciprocal fears touch on terrorism, political Islamism, the

Muslim recapture of Andalusia, the accession of Turkey to the European Union, occidental neo-colonialism in Muslim majority countries, globalisation and proselytism both Christian and Muslim.

- o Ignorance causes a large part of prejudices. In part this ignorance can be overcome by proper formation. Another element of prejudice derives from the traditional sources of each religion. The Church does not recognise itself in the image of Christianity drawn in the texts of the Qu'ran. In the same way, the Christian image of Islam has changed since Lumen Gentium 16 and Nostra Aetate 3: it is still developing.
- o The Society could engage in deepening the knowledge of each other and in the attempt to differentiate oversimplified images of each other, in the formation of Jesuits and others and in encouraging meetings both in Europe and in countries with a majority Muslim. The Society could try to promote a relation of mutual confidence which is necessary to achieve this goal.

II. The challenge of living together within a pluralist society:

In the face of growing ideological, cultural and religious pluralism of European societies, we have to find a medium to ensure better social integration:

- o Since the mid 20th century, the Muslim population in Europe has grown following important waves of migration. Islam now has a much greater presence: mosques, people dressed according to oriental or Muslim tradition, organisations with a public profile, the requirement for specific practices with respect to food, education, healthcare, cemeteries etc.

- o Different institutions of the Society (schools, social centres, institutions for migrants and refugees) try to be places encouraging and searching for a way to live together and to build a new society. It is important to collaborate with associations and families of the Muslim tradition (both religious and secular) in order to educate youth in critical reflection, freedom of conscience and mutual respect.

III. The common commitment to justice:

In Europe we need to realize that many Muslims live in a situation of distress. At the same time some social institutions and beneficent people both Christians and Muslims commit themselves to a path of solidarity that offers a base for collaboration:

- o The social apostolate of the Society, even beyond those institutions working with migrants or refugees and trying to encourage inter-religious meetings, should be aware of the Muslim tradition for the good of their clients and their partners. Many of these institutions work in Europe, others do so in the countries of origin of many Muslims: our cooperation should range from one coast to the other.
- o Whenever one talks about Human Rights today, the debate is centred around the rights of cultural and religious minorities. Muslim minorities demand the approval of certain rights that touch the self-understanding of our societies in its deepest roots: marriage, the status of women, cultural heritage, religious education, the regulation of pastoral care etc. The Society should engage with other partners in a discernment of such questions, which is focused on our own conception of justice rooted in the gospel.

IV. Knowing Islam in its diversity:

Islam is both one and pluralistic. The diverse tendencies within Islam as it exists in Europe have consequences for the coexistence, the social engagement and the construction of society itself:

- o Beyond the great traditional Sunnite and Shiite traditions and the law-schools one can find very different manners of understanding the Islam as it lives within the European context: some have taken on traditions of their country of origin (Turkey, the Sahel countries, the Maghreb, Pakistan, Near East...), others try to find their roots in reformist political movements (Wahabbism, Salafism, the Muslim Brotherhood), others explore a modernist and western re-reading of Islam (including secularists and, even agnostics) and last but not least are those claiming the spiritual heritage of the Sufis.
- o The Society should take care to have a sufficient number of Jesuits who are profoundly familiar with such a diversity and are able to discern its influences. Universities and social centres are the institutions best adapted to support this type of research which should result in an effective European network.

V. To meet one another on our genuine spiritual paths:

The spiritual wealth of our religions offers the possibility to encounter each other and to start a dialogue:

- o The Muslim spiritual heritage is transmitted via structures of spiritual orientation in orthodox Sunnism (the issue of fatwas – legal opinions concerning concrete situations of everyday life that assist people in taking decisions conscientiously), via confraternities and systems of spiritual guidance in Sufism.
- o The Society avails of a spiritual tradition, an experience in spiritual

guidance and centres of spirituality able to open themselves to Muslims and their spiritual needs. There are already experiences existing in other parts of the world and in Europe, which need to be further developed.

VI. Commit efforts to the theological dialogue:

The Society of Jesus should continue to form people in theology of Islam who will then be prepared for a profound dialogue, able to help the Churches to create fruitful and reflective relations with Muslims:

- 1.) Theological dialogue needs long years of study, many demanding meetings, subtle discernment, publications and intensive efforts over a long period of time. Without a proper spiritual foundation and outside a context where justice is respected as a basic value such a dialogue will bear no fruits.
- 2.) The Society has a network of Faculties of Theology where the teaching of Islam should be part of the basic course.

- 3.) To form its own experts in Islamology the Society should also consult specialised Church institutions such as PISAI, the department for religious and cultural studies at Gregorian university, Dar Comboni, the Oriental Institute of the Dominicans, and St Joseph University, Beirut...
- 4.) Jesuits who have received such a formation and have a sufficient knowledge of Islam are called to share their expertise via our institutions of education, our research and social centres – in cooperation with our dioceses.

Conclusion:

The group “Deux Rives” has prepared this paper based on the basis of its own experience and therefore based on commitment of the Society in terms of the theses developed above. These theses reflect the appeals we have heard that affect the Society as a whole.

PLANNED FOR 2006:

Meeting of Jesuits involved with Muslims. 3-10 September 2006.

The meeting of Jesuits interested in Christian-Muslim relations, which has been held every few years since 1980, takes up various aspects of Christian-Muslim relations. The most recent, held in Aix-en-Provence in April, 2002, had a theological theme on the Trinity as radical monotheism. This year the meeting will be held in Syria and the theme we propose is "Christian-Muslim harmony-building amidst today's tensions." The theme might sound a bit soft, as though it should be accompanied by balloons, baby chicks, and smiley faces, but we must remember that the host country's muhabarat are also interested in knowing what we will be discussing. The point is that the topic is broad enough for the various participants to treat the ways that global tensions are affecting relations at the national level.

Here's what we propose: 3 September 2006, everyone arrives in Damascus. 4 September, we meet Muslims in Damascus and afternoon we go to Deir Mar Musa by bus. Mar Musa is in the middle of the desert and it is not near to *anything*, so be sure to bring your toothpaste, blood pressure medicine, and whatever else you need for the week with you. 5-8 September are the working days, and one of these days will be an open day inviting Mar Musa community members, Christian (Orthodox, Protestant, and Oriental Catholic) and Muslim dialogue partners to address the issue of harmony building. 9 September is the feast of the (somewhat) nearby monastery of Deir Mar Elian on the desert track to Palmyra; we will have our excursion there, after which those who need to leave immediately will return to Damascus and destinations abroad.

For those who seek the ultimate desert spiritual experience, you are invited by Mar Musa to stay on and make your **retreat**, e.g., 10-17 September, at Mar Musa. For others who want a few more days to reflect and experience the unique interreligiously oriented monastic community of Mar Musa, they will be welcomed by the community. Paolo Dall'Oglio (deirmarmusa@mail.sy) is our local organizer, so any questions or suggestions you can direct to him.

As for now, this is a "CALL FOR PAPERS." If you'd like to give a paper or short report or intervention, let me know so we can put you on the agenda. As in previous years, English, French and Italian are acceptable, but we will not provide simultaneously translation.

**ENCOUNTER AND THE RISK
OF CHANGE
RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND CHRISTIAN MUSLIM DIALOGUE**

Wilfried Dettling, S.J.

My mother's christian practices made me think more deeply about our islamic traditions. This is what was said by Jehan Sadat, a Muslim, and the wife of Egypt's President, Anwar as-Sadat. It could serve as a motto for any dialogue between Christians and Muslims: the process begins with discoveries about each other; one is surprised by both the similarities and the differences one finds; finally one discovers oneself and one's own tradition in a quite new way. This article explores the enrichments that can come from interreligious dialogue in general, and Christian-Muslim dialogue in particular. I shall try to say why interreligious dialogue is important for me and how it has influenced my own sense of religious identity. My aim is not simply to promote a better understanding across the religious borders, but also to help us come to appreciate our own traditions better, and thus grow in respect for each other.

Beginning with Religious Experience

Authentic encounter between religiously committed people sets a process in motion. This process takes a long time. It requires from all of us a willingness to be continually learning, and a readiness to respect the Other, warts and all. Once one has got beyond the beginning, one needs more than theoretical knowledge of another religion. Lived experiences of shared religious events begin to become more important. In my view, it is precisely religious experience that really brings human hearts together. In recent years, I have often had the experience that encounters on this level have had profound influence on people and on their convictions. The Jesuit pastoral centre in Ludwigshafen, the Heinrich Pesch Haus, deliberately set

itself a new priority two years ago, and began to specialize in interreligious dialogue. In particular, it has put on a study programme for all who are interested in Christian-Muslim dialogue, aiming to provide for both Christians and Muslims an opportunity to become more sensitive to each others' tradition and practice.

Dialogue and Fidelity

When I give talks about the significance of Christian-Muslim dialogue, I keep on coming up against an unease that arises in people well rooted in their faith: "you're on a slippery slope-be careful". These people are assuming that dialogue in fact means that we are putting into question the truths in which we firmly believe, or at least playing them down. Thus they think that, in dialogue, the truth of faith is being treated like a commercial object, a matter of bargaining. This is, however, quite false. Interreligious dialogue does not entail one's own faith becoming something for barter. Dialogue admittedly does require an option for open-mindedness, and an attitude of large-heartedness. People seeking dialogue must be ready to move beyond where they already are. They must be ready to move away from the safe places with which they are familiar, from the securities offered by their own tradition, and to approach something which is Other. But this openness is something quite distinct from putting my own faith up for negotiation. When I open myself up to interreligious conversation, I recognise a convergence with Jesus' own way of life. He too opened himself to the world around him, and gave himself up for all people. It is only through this kind of openness that a person can begin to understand, indeed can want to understand. It involves two things: the

attempt to understand what is different, and a fidelity to one's own faith.

The Attempt to understand

The attempt to understand what is different requires firstly that we not begin by confronting our conversation partners with a collection of accumulated prejudices. We should not load them down with stereotypical formulae and easy sentences learnt from a dictionary. We must listen to them, and obtain from them the most objective sense we can of how their religion works. This sense must begin from how the religion understands itself; it must constantly be trying to stress this living centre, so that we can meet our partners as they really are. This does not mean that we simply receive what we hear, nor that there is anything illegitimate about the critical search for truth. It is precisely critical openness that is required-or "critical sympathy", to use a favourite formulation of Adel Theodor Khoury, the doyen of Christian Muslim dialogue in Germany. Being critical is a sign of respect for the dialogue partner, a sign that one is taking them and their religion seriously. More is involved than the exchange of polite pleasantries; the conversation needs to get beyond the kind of syncretism that just ignores differences.

Fidelity to One's Own Faith

Christian-Muslim dialogue, however depends on more than mutual openness. The dynamism that comes from fidelity to one's own faith and religion is equally necessary. This does not mean that I must hold fast, blindly, to anything which comes from my own tradition. Neither, conversely, does it mean that I must casually give up the substance of my own faith, that which goes to shape my own identity. There is a form of fidelity which is open; and this is the basis of a genuine and fruitful interreligious dialogue. The deeper my convictions about the truth of my own religion and the richer my experience of it, the more open I can be to the convictions and experiences shared with me by people who believe differently. Moreover, this keen interest will in no way imply that I have begun to be a relativist. Dialogue does not depend on self-restraint, or on a polite

refraining from making truth claims. On the contrary: dialogue becomes true dialogue, as opposed to a vacuous exchange of nice thoughts, precisely when both my dialogue partner and I stay true to our own faiths. In the end, both partners are under an obligation, towards themselves and their faith-communities, to speak of what makes their faith live, and of what nourishes their religious life.

Different Religious Experiences

Faiths are held and lived out historically, and so faith-experiences must inevitably be different, at least to some extent. It follows that diversity does not necessarily signify contradiction: it can simply betoken otherness, another way of being human. I have often had this kind of experience in conversation with Muslims. It can happen that my dialogue partners are using the same words as I am, but giving them a quite different significance on the basis of their own experience and religious convictions. In such a situation, the task is not simply to know what the other person is saying, but also to understand why they are thinking and believing in the way they do. In other words, if I am really to understand the position put forward by a person of another faith, I have somehow to move with them through the very process by which they have come to their religious convictions and insights. What is at stake here is simply understanding, not necessarily agreement. In my experience, this kind of readiness is the most authentic attitude I can bring to my dialogue partners when I want to take their religious feelings seriously. The way is long and arduous, but Christian-Muslim dialogue-and inter-faith dialogue in general-has no alternative. We are still at the beginnings; a great deal of courage is still required if we are to attain the patience and the growth in mutual understanding that will allow this dialogue to flourish. It will not do simply for us to say that what is different in the other faith is irreconcilable with our own. We should rather say something like this:

I do not yet see how this is to be put together with my faith. But who knows? If we can get a broader view,

a deeper idea of what we have just come to know, then perhaps possibilities will open up. Perhaps we will discover a more expansive framework that will enable us to reconcile and bring together these different statements.

Patience is needed; in Christian-Muslim dialogue, one must avoid trying to anticipate what can only happen as the culmination of a long process. Perhaps we can agree on one criterion for judging religions, which is biblical, and which Matthew's Gospel puts as follows: "you will know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:20). We need to assess the quality of our witness, both in our daily lives and in our histories; that will help us once again take more seriously the way individuals' religious practice affects their faith-community and society at large. In my experience, dialogue helps us firstly to recognise these fruits, then to evaluate them critically, and finally to learn to appreciate them. If we reach this point, then we will be able to see interreligious dialogue in general, and Christian-Muslim dialogue in particular, as something more than 'a polemic for scoring points over our adversaries or as primarily an exercise in apologetics, refuting various objections'. It will become "a conversation between people who are sharing and listening, giving themselves to the promotion of good communication and living witness".

The Challenges of Interreligious Dialogue

As I look back on the many experiences of Christian-Muslim dialogue that I have had in the past few years, one thing strikes me particularly. There are many religious elements in Islam, regarded by Muslims as true and holy, that do not have their origins in Christianity but are rather genuine fruits of a tradition that is not at all Christian. Despite this, however, I also notice that I as a Christian can often understand many of these. As we exchange our experiences and insights, I discover a kind of complementarity here with my own Christian faith-often in a way that is very enriching. I think, for example, of the prayer evenings I have experienced in various Sufi communities, for example

following the dreadful events of September 11 2001. The experience was always the same: an enormous sense of spiritual enrichment for myself, combined with a question as to how far I, as a Christian, could accept and integrate elements of Islamic piety into my own faith and religious practice. I have always fundamentally let myself be guided by the conviction expressed by Pope John Paul II following the World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi: 'every genuine prayer is called forth by the Holy Spirit, who is mysteriously present in the heart of every human person'. The Pope is alluding here to a 'mystery of unity', quite evident in Assisi 'despite the differences in religious confessions'. This expresses a basis on which positive values in other religions can be appreciated: all these true values are traces of God, the workings of God's Spirit in human lives. It follows that Christians and Muslims stand together in our search for God, and for the living, all-embracing truth. Moreover, we can practise the sensitivity to others which is a central virtue for both Islam and Christianity-not merely towards believers in each others' religion as persons, but also towards the values shaping each others' tradition. Perhaps in the future we will indeed discover God's working in each others' religions and in the world that it is our responsibility to form: the one God in different forms. After all, Vatican II had already taught us that other religions often allow a ray of that truth to be seen which enlightens everyone".

Dialogue and the Future

No one can accurately predict what the future of Christian-Muslim dialogue will be. One thing, however, seems to me certain: despite the problems with dialogue, there is much to be gained from it. Over the last thirty years, progress has been enormous. Thirty years ago, it would have been unthinkable that our mutual understanding and interest, and our work together, would have grown to the extent that they have. The effects on the Church-both of interreligious dialogue in general and of Christian-Muslim dialogue in particular-have been remarkable. Both sides have made moves; there have been notable

exchanges; believers in both religions have noticed. We need to continue along this path so that religion can remain a living presence in our world and continue to make a contribution—a contribution that will be reflected in human solidarity, and in engagement for justice, peace and love. Christian-Muslim dialogue has just begun—we need to make conscious efforts to keep it going.

A Truth to be Done

“Truth is not just the truth that one believes and formulates and tries to justify; truth, religious truth, is primarily the truth that one does.” To put it another way: in today's situation, we cannot be content with mere statements of intent; we cannot just live as strangers alongside each other, regarding each other as rivals. In interreligious dialogue today, we need to be convinced, and to keep on discovering, that we are inevitably united with each other. This conviction will give new impetus to interreligious dialogue: in the future, it must serve really to strengthen and encourage what we undertake together in practice. It follows that those who engage in it cannot any longer be content simply to sit opposite each other and talk about their relationships, what they have in common, and what divides them. They must be prepared to look at practical problems together, as things that affect us all, and affect us in our faiths.

We will need to be asking of our religion what it might contribute towards the resolution of the issues facing us in common. Christians and Muslims will need to strive together to make their contribution—or rather, to make their contribution together.

Moving Forward

Interreligious dialogue is still, in my view, in its infancy: It has hardly affected the population as a whole. Those who engage in it soon notice how profoundly it affects one's own faith. My own experiences with Christian-Muslim dialogue is that dialogue becomes fruitful when I see it as part of an experiential learning process. Anyone engaging in that kind of dialogue knows that no-one emerges from the process without having been enriched in their own faith. Nevertheless, dialogue is not an end in itself. Whenever we work together on the basis of our faith and conviction with people of good will, be they Jews, Muslims or believers in other religions, we build something in common with them, and this has its positive effects.

The way has been marked out: the way of encounter with all at the level of religious experience. It is inviting us: “Let's move towards each other! Let's visit each other where we celebrate liturgy, where we pray and meditate! There it is that we will see what sustains our faiths and our lives!”