

ELEVENTH ACADEMIC CONSULTATION BETWEEN
JUDAISM AND ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY

“JEWISH-ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE: NAVIGATING OUR
RELATIONS TO THE WORLD AND TO EACH OTHER”

Vienna, December 4–6, 2022

Introductory Address of His Eminence
Elder Metropolitan Emmanuel of Chalcedon

Rabbi David Fox Sandmel, Chair of the International Jewish Committee
for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC),

Your Eminences, Your Grace, Reverend Fathers,

The Most Honorable Rabbis,

Esteemed Participants,

Honorable Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

[More than 40 years of Jewish-Orthodox Christian Relations]

Allow me to first recall that the Ecumenical Patriarchate and IJCIC have enjoyed, for more than 40 years, fruitful collaboration, understanding and dialogue in the framework of bilateral academic consultations between Judaism and Orthodox Christianity. As you are aware, the history of our relations within this framework began under the initiative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate at its Orthodox Centre in Chambésy-Geneva. However, we cannot ignore the longer history of our relations in that “Judaism and Christianity have been living in a state of dialogue for two thousand years.”¹

¹ His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I at the opening session of our Fifth Academic Consultation in Thessaloniki in 2003.

[Promise of the Ongoing and Reinvigorated Dialogue]

His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's inspiring message has indeed conveyed vividly the spirit and purpose of our dialogue. His All-Holiness continues to strongly endorse its ongoing efforts.

With respect to a commitment to inter-faith dialogue on a panorthodox level, The Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church in June 2016 in Crete affirmed that "The various local Orthodox Churches can contribute to inter-religious understanding and co-operation for the peaceful co-existence and harmonious living together in society, without this involving any religious syncretism."²

Our meetings indeed manifest our continued and joint commitment to our permanent relations and the organization of our academic consultations not only for the Ecumenical Patriarchate but also for other Orthodox Churches.

[Preparations for the Eleventh Academic Consultation]

It was in June 2019 that we had our first preparatory meeting in Paris with Rabbis Daniel F. Polish, Noam E Marans and David Fox Sandmel. I am grateful to them, as well as to Rabbis Richard Marker and Mark Dratch for having played a determining role in insisting on the launching of regular joint meetings. Due to the pandemic, many of those meetings were virtual, with the exception of just over a year ago in New York, when we were honored to meet together with HAH in New York last November 2021.

At one of our meetings in December 2020, Rabbi Noam remarked that he could not "think of a time in Jewish bilateral history where there has been greater confluence in movements, developments, and things where Jews worries were shared worries". The series of small meetings has allowed us to have a sincere exchange in view of elaborating a new structural conception that reinforces collaboration and develops and sustains relationships by raising the burning issues affecting our respective communities and relations with each other. The theme of our meeting,

² https://www.holycouncil.org/-/mission-orthodox-church-todays-world?_101_INSTANCE_VA0WE2pZ4Y0I_languageId=en_US

“Jewish-Orthodox Christian Dialogue: Navigating our Relations to the World and to Each Other », is the fruit of that sincere exchange.

[Our Relationship with Each Other]

Human beings constitute the most authentic image of God in the world, and that is why God has appointed them to be guardians and stewards of all of creation. The distinction of human beings as either male or female (Adam – Eve) determines, in a characteristic way, our relationship with each other and the necessity of the “other”, not only in terms of the individual human identity, but also in terms of the function of human beings in their communion with God, each other, and the world. God, humanity, and the world are intrinsically related by all forms of communion.

Let us therefore come to know each other better by sharing deeply with one another how it is that we determine our relationship with the world and with others. Let this be a growing and dynamic relationship based on trust and friendship. It is imperative that we, as religious leaders and faithful. Seek to contribute to this understanding during our consultation and to continue the fruits of our time together back into our respective places on a local, regional and global levels.

Thank you for your attention.