

CRRJ and IJCIC, Representing World Jewry, Celebrate Nostra Aetate at 55

October 28, 2020 – Rome and New York – In a dramatic demonstration of Catholic-Jewish amity, the Vatican’s Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews (CRRJ) and the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) exchanged public messages in commemoration of the fifty-fifth anniversary of Nostra Aetate, the milestone document of the Catholic Church articulating a new and better era in Christian-Jewish relations.

Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of CRRJ since 2010, and Rabbi Noam Marans, Chair of IJCIC (2019-2021), issued statements affirming the reconciliatory themes of Nostra Aetate and praising the progress achieved during the past 55 years.

Cardinal Koch’s message states, “It is without doubt that ‘Nostra aetate’ (no.4) laid the foundation for relations between Catholics and Jews and can therefore rightly be considered to be the ‘Magna Carta’ of Catholic-Jewish relations.”

Rabbi Marans’s message notes that “Nostra aetate” (no.4) “has been dramatically amplified by papal visits to synagogues, to the horrific yet sacred sites of the crimes of the Holocaust, and to the State of Israel following the establishment of Vatican-Israel diplomatic relations in 1993.” IJCIC praised Pope Francis’s leadership in condemning rising antisemitism and expressed solidarity with Christians facing persecution.

CRRJ was founded in 1974 as the successor to the Office for Catholic-Jewish Relations in actualizing the mandate of “Nostra aetate” (no.4). Over the decades, the Commission has expanded its teachings and initiatives and co-convenes with IJCIC the biennial International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee to address ongoing issues of mutual concern.

For half a century IJCIC has served as the official partner of the Catholic Church, representing world Jewry in its vibrant dialogue with the Vatican. The eleven constituent organizations of IJCIC – American Jewish Committee, Anti-Defamation League, B’nai B’rith International, Central Conference of American Rabbis, Israeli Jewish Council for Interreligious Relations, Rabbinical Assembly, Rabbinical Council of America, Union for Reform Judaism, Union of Orthodox Congregations of America, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, World Jewish Congress – join together in their ideological and international diversity to advance Catholic-Jewish relations.

IJCIC’s officers are Rabbi Noam Marans, Chair, who represents American Jewish Committee; Rabbi David Sandmel, Vice-Chair, who represents Anti-Defamation League; and Rabbi Mark Dratch, Treasurer, who represents Rabbinical Council of America.

Cardinal Kurt Koch

President to the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews of the Holy See

Rabbi Noam Marans

Chair of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations