



THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL  
FOR PROMOTING  
CHRISTIAN UNITY

ADDRESS OF POPE LEO XIV  
TO A DELEGATION OF  
THE UNITED JEWISH APPEAL FEDERATION OF NEW YORK

Monday, 15 June 2026

Distinguished Representatives of the United Jewish Appeal-Federation of New York,  
Dear friends,  
Peace be with you!

It is a joy to welcome you all to the Vatican this morning. Your organization serves as an instrument of global Jewish philanthropy, providing essential humanitarian aid and social services to vulnerable populations — for instance, those living in poverty, refugees, the elderly and people with disabilities — in New York, the State of Israel and more than seventy other countries. These efforts reflect a clear recognition of human dignity and fraternity, resonating with the Church's own commitment to integral human development and the call to love our neighbor.

This shared commitment carries special meaning in light of our common history. Sixty-six years ago, a delegation from your organization was received by Pope John XXIII. With the simple yet profound words "I am Joseph, your brother," (Gen 45:4) quoting the Book of Genesis he affirmed our common humanity as well as our shared spiritual ancestry in Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Later, a treatise was prepared describing a new relationship between the Catholic Church and Judaism. This treatise formed the foundation for what became "the heart and generative core" (Address on the Occasion of the 60th Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* "Walking Together In Hope" 28 October 2025) of *Nostra Aetate*, the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions.

That landmark document, whose sixtieth anniversary the Church celebrated last year, "opened up a new horizon of encounter, respect and spiritual hospitality" (General Audience, 29 October 2025). It affirmed, among other things, the truth that we belong to one human family. In this way, it planted a seed of hope that "has grown into a mighty tree... offering shelter and bearing the rich fruits of understanding, friendship, cooperation and peace" (Address on the Occasion of the 60th Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* "Walking Together In Hope", 28 October 2025). Recognizing the inherent dignity of all men and women, *Nostra Aetate* took a firm stand against antisemitism and declared that the Church rejects all forms of discrimination or harassment because of race, color, condition of life or religion (cf. *Nostra Aetate*, 4-5). In a world still wounded by division and conflict, it called us to move beyond past misunderstandings toward collaboration for the common good.

This same spirit of solidarity finds concrete expression in our shared concern for those in need. In my Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi Te*, I observed that "love is above all a way of looking at life and a way of living it" (120). Service of the poor, marginalized and powerless is a means of encountering the sacred; through them the Divine voice continues to speak to us (cf. *ibid.*, 5). As the prophet Isaiah reminds us, when we share our bread with the hungry and care for those in need, the Lord's "light shall break forth like the dawn" (cf. Is 58:7-8). That light invites us to see service to the vulnerable as a path that opens hearts and renews society.

Dear friends, I commend you for the dedication with which you assist the poor and needy, confront hatred and intolerance, and work to build a better world for all. May your mission strengthen dialogue, deepen mutual understanding and contribute to the peace so greatly needed in our world. Please be assured of my prayers for you, your loved ones and those whom you serve. Thank you.

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