



The Hebrew Catholic

"And so all Israel shall be saved" (Romans 11:26)

Our new web site
<http://hebrewcatholic.org>

Association of Hebrew Catholics ~ International

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Contributions above our costs provide the funds needed for our work.

(All remittances must be in U.S. funds)

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Send a copy of the publication with the reprinted article to the AHC at its U.S. address.

The views expressed in the published articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the AHC.

The Association of Hebrew Catholics aims at ending the alienation of Catholics of Jewish origin and background from their historical heritage, by the formation of a Hebrew Catholic Community juridically approved by the Holy See.

The *kerygma* of the AHC announces that the divine plan of salvation has entered the phase of the *Apostasy of the Gentiles*, prophesied by Our Lord and St. Paul, and of which the *Return of the Jews to the Holy Land* is a corollary.

*“Consider the primary aim of the group to be,
not the conversion of the Jews
but the creation of
a new Hebrew Catholic community life and spirit,
an alternative society to the old.”*
A counsel from Elias Friedman, O.C.D.

The Association of Hebrew Catholics is under the patronage of
Our Lady of the Miracle

(who in the Church of St. Andrea della Fratte in Rome,
on 20 January 1842, converted Alphonse Ratisbonne)

and

Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein)

Miriam, Our Lady of the Miracle, pray for us!

Saint Edith Stein, pray for us!

What They Have Said

“Judaism’s distinctive continuing light can add to the Church an orthopractic concern with the mitzvot, the divine precepts, whose actualization is a sign that makes present the Creator’s reign and a celebration of a total liturgy, referring the creation to the Creator and so consecrating it to God through human agency.

“Since Judaism is not in the fullest sense a different religion from Christianity, there can be and are such a thing as *Hebrew Catholics ...*”

Fr. Aidan Nichols, O.P., *Epiphany: A Theological Introduction to Catholicism*, in *The Hebrew Catholic*, #78, pg 16

ברוך הבא בשם יהוה

(*Baruch haba b'Shem Adonai*)

Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord

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News and Notes

About this issue

It has been more than six months since we mailed our last issue, #77. That is not how a quarterly journal is supposed to behave. So, once again, I must apologize for the long delay and thank you for your understanding and patience.

Our primary occupation during this period has been the effort to establish a web site and web store. We have also been busy with theater, meetings, and now the effort to find a new location. You will read about these things in the *President's Memo*.

Temporary New Address

Our previously anticipated address at 417 West Forest Avenue is no longer a reality. Therefore, the following will serve as our mailing address until we relocate to new quarters. Please change our street address and zip to:

PO Box 980280 • Ypsilanti MI 48198

Our new flyer

Enclosed with this issue you will find a flyer entitled *Are Jewish Converts Still Jewish?* This flyer reproduces a recent interview David had with our diocesan magazine, *Faith*.

Please feel free to reproduce this flyer and give them out. All three of our flyers are available on our web site. At your request, we will be happy to send you additional copies for distribution. Though not required, a small contribution to help us cover costs is always appreciated.

Novena to St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross

Our annual novena to our patron saint runs from August 1-9. (You are welcome to pray the *Novena* at any time.) Please write if you do not have a copy of the *Novena* (or order it from our web store). A suggested contribution of \$2.50 for a single copy includes shipping. In your *Novena*, please remember our need for new quarters.

Our cover - our new web site

This is a picture of the top half of the first page or screen that you see when visiting our web site. From there you can go to a section which describes our work and to our calendar. You can also go to a variety of areas containing copies of *The Hebrew Catholic*, biographies of Hebrew Catholics, and articles on a multitude of topics. Our store is also now operational.

We hope to soon have an active discussion forum, where people from all over the world can “meet” and exchange views. We invite you to visit and send us your critiques and suggestions.

Prayer Requests

- for a new location to “settle in” and from which our work can develop
 - for the people and funds needed to develop our work
 - that our web site will serve to edify and inspire others
 - that our web site will help us *gather the people* – i.e., *Hebrew Catholics* throughout the Church
 - that our web site will increase awareness of our work and encourage others to collaborate with us
 - that our meeting last May with Fr. Kennedy, Fr. Martin and Fr. Frizzell and Cardinal Keeler will yield good fruit
 - that Israelites within the Church will find ways to live out their irrevocable calling in service to the Church and its mission in the world.
 - that the work of *Towards Jerusalem Council II* will be used by God to promote true reconciliation among Christians and between Christians and Jews
-
- blessings upon those who support the AHC through their prayers and gifts
 - for development of AHC Havurot
 - for development of the AHC in other countries
 - that the Father’s Will be manifest in all of our efforts
-
- that the Holy See will take the actions necessary to preserve the People Israel within the Church
 - for the intentions and well-being of Pope John Paul II
 - for the blossoming of a new springtime of the Church
 - for the *peace of Jerusalem* and the well-being of the Jewish people, the Arab peoples, and all peoples.

Let others know about our new web site and store

Putting up a web site is like getting a telephone. You may have a new telephone and your number may be listed in some telephone book, but ... **who knows?**

So please consider the following opportunities to let others know about our web site and store

- in your emails and letters to others
- in your Catholic organization bulletins or publications
- in your parish bulletin or bulletin board
- in your diocesan paper
- by giving out copies of our new flyer

Our addresses

- web site: <http://hebrewcatholic.org>
- web store: <http://hebrewcatholic.org/ahcstore.html>
- information: info@hebrewcatholic.org

Letters

This is your column, your means to express your thoughts and to communicate with our readers. We invite your comments and views. We will attempt to publish all letters as received. However, we reserve the right to edit letters because of excessive length, personal comments, or inappropriate matter.

We honor all requests to not publish the letter writer's name. We will also withhold the writer's name if we feel the contents warrant it.

From the Secretary of the IMJA, Israel

I've been reading *The Hebrew Catholic* for many years during my service as Israel's Secretary of the International Messianic Jewish Alliance and the Messianic Alliance of Israel. I was also in contact with some of the Hebrew Catholics and enjoyed the friendship of Brother Daniel (Oswald) Rufeisen and Fr. Elias Friedman. I have been retired for several years and this past year restricted for health reasons. Thank you for sending me copies of *The Hebrew Catholic* during these years.

*Yours in Yeshua,
Menahem Benhayim, Israel*

Planting seeds and watering with patience

May this Holy Season which has given the world its Savior brighten your souls with joy and peace.

I hope all good blessings from Above are being showered upon you and your good work at this time. I am still having a hard time getting the brothers excited about our Jewish roots, but I'm planting seeds and watering them with patience. I continue to remember you very much in prayer. Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Br. (Anonymous), United States

Journey back to the source

Enclosed is ... for receiving the quarterly newsletter ... please use the extra for whatever.

So glad to make contact with the AHC, a sense of not being alone in what was once a strange and forbidden country. The interesting thing was that in the journey into the Catholic Church, in all issues of belief and practices, it took me back to the Jewish source more so than all the 26 yrs in the Protestant Churches. *Thank you.*

Carrie Grayson, United States

I aim to pray for the Association daily ...

Our conversation yesterday was more than a pleasure for me ...

I enclose my check for ... for a subscription to *The Hebrew Catholic* (issues after #77), for Fr. Friedman's *Jewish Identity* and with a bit more for the cause. I wish I had more to send. (I am a man of 81 years, in retirement. I

attach an old resume.) I aim to pray for the Association daily, as I pray also for vocations for a Benedictine Abbey of which I am Oblate (St. Anselm's in Washington, D.C.). Also, I attach a page on the martyrdom, in Palestine in the year 309, of five Egyptians to whom I shall commend your cause. ...

*Yours sincerely,
Jeremy Thomas More Blanchet, United States*

Enjoys "The Hebrew Catholic"

The newsletters are one of my greater pleasures – not to mention how much I am moved by many of the items included.

Francoise Morimoto, OCDS, United States

Organize groups of people ...

The main mission of the AHC should be to organize groups of people throughout the U.S. and internationally, especially in Latin America where there is great curiosity about Jewish roots, to pray for a just peace in the Holy Land and throughout the Middle East. There should also be much prayer about God's will toward His Chosen People and their relationship to the Catholic Church.

Raul Barrera, United States

Organize HC ministries ...

... My vision for AHC is that it literally is a unity of all the Hebrew Catholic organizations currently within the Church. As more & more organizations spring up within the Church ministering to Hebrew Catholics, I would like to see AHC be the umbrella parent or corporate head that each of these other organizations become a part of. Each of the other organizations would maintain their own autonomy & identity, but become part of AHC. For example, Remnant of Israel, Second Exodus, Torah of Christ, etc. keeps their own ministries & identity but unites under the AHC banner when dealing with recognition from the wider Church and secular world. ...

... Very little ministry is done regarding us mischling (a rather derogatory term but accurate nonetheless), meaning half-breed – We are literally both Jewish & Gentile. I think it is time this topic is dealt with in both communities. We mischling have been around a long time & very often although we are both, we don't really fit in either community. We do, however, fit in G-d's community ...

Michele Iaccino, United States

Continue to explain the work of the AHC

... I especially feel the thesis of Fr. Friedman, the purpose of the AHC continually needs to be explained. I personally can share with you that the more I read *The Hebrew Catholic* (and Fr. Friedman's book), the more I understand the mission of the AHC. May God continue to bless you both and the work of the AHC. A blessed Christmas and New Year, Shalom,

Michael Pennacchia, United States

Now I know why I had guilt ...

... 61 yrs. old, a Permanent Deacon at my parish ... My late mother was Jewish but raised Baptist, became Catholic in 1936. My Dad was Presbyterian. My cousin in Kentucky told me about 20 yrs. ago of our Jewish background. Now I know why I had heartburn and a GUILT feeling all those years. May Almighty God bless you all in your holy work, the Father the Son and Holy Spirit.

Deacon Jim Olinger, United States

Jewish people have a right to learn the truth

Thank you for last *Hebrew Catholic*. I sent a copy to our Bishop. I'm proud of you and all those who contributed in the name of the Truth that the Jewish people have a right to learn the truth of their own Messiah. Yeshua is the fulfillment of their covenant with God. Keep up the courage and fidelity.

*Yours in Yeshua & Miriam,
Sr. Mary of St. Joseph, OCD, New Zealand*

Contribute for subscriptions to hierarchy

Keep up the good work ... Suggestion – ask readers to make donations to cover subscriptions to members of the hierarchy.

Br. (Anonymous) OFM Conv, United States

Regarding our new web site

Stick to fundamentals

... Stick to the fundamentals: Fr. Friedman and AHC writings ... Don't include the calendar and Hebrew Catholic if they will distract readers from more important documents ... Don't distract readers with links or non-AHC Jewish themes. ... Don't inflame people with politics.

Are there approved Hebrew translations of the Mass and Liturgy of the Hours? Publish these.

William Ablondi, United States

Identify with state of Israel, fight antisemitism

... About Israel – to be identified with our State – Israel
... Not to be afraid to raise the subject of anti-semitism and how to fight against it.

... Not to be afraid of a bit (just a bit) of politics ...

*Christ is the King
Shlomit, Israel*

Provide material to retain customs and traditions

I would suggest more info on how Jewish believers can keep their customs and traditions while in the Catholic Church. Also, I would suggest having more info regarding people who were (once) proselytes to Judaism and how to help them avoid a wider scale of assimilation.

I was a proselyte to the Karaite Tradition of Judaism, and I really hope to see the AHC become the bridge to the missing link of Catholic Jewish believers. ...

Anonymous, United States

Some messages left at our new website

This web site is a blessing to so many people. You are in my prayers and Masses. Beautiful web site. Congratulations!

Fr. Sylvester Ajagbe

Former chaplain, Ave Maria College, Michigan

Very helpful – I'm glad I found you.

Peter

I was a Catholic that married a Jewish man and converted. I loved Judaism. One problem: I still believe that Jesus was the Son of God. Now I can't fit in either world totally. Maybe you will be good for my spirituality.

Kate

Praying with you.

Richard

Everything is looking great ... especially the calendar. Really wonderful. May our Lord multiply your time.

Rosalind

Great to know this is here. I pray that many of the House of Israel will believe because of this wonderful ministry. Peace, Pax, Shalom.

Rick

Can I join your Association even if I am not Jewish? I am Catholic.

Jose

I would like to join your Association, you are the answer to my prayers. God bless you.

Monique

I am a Hebrew Catholic. I converted 7 years ago. I am a lawyer and psychological counselor. In Christ's love.

Karen

I am a Jewish convert to Catholicism.

Bill

We want to say "Mazel Tov" for the new format of your web site. Our community has suffered a series of changes and reforms seeking the blessing to our loved Catholic Church and our Jewish brothers. Like all Catholics of Hebrew tradition, we want to work like a team with you. If we can help you from Latin America, please tell us! Can you share more about your apostolate? We need sharing experiences with you in Spanish language. Shalom.

Rabbi Richard Gamboa ben-Eleazar

When does the next Hebrew Catholic come out? I subscribed in the winter but haven't seen a recent issue yet.

Jonathan

I am so happy to have found your page. I'll make sure to visit it on a regular basis. Thanks be to God.

Miguel

WOW this is SO exciting - we are on the threshold of something special here, I know it

Sue

President's Memo

*"Blessed art thou, because thou hast made me glad.
It has not happened to me as I expected;
but thou hast treated us according to thy great mercy."
Tobit 8:16*

Shalom Chaverim (Friends):

Though we have missed getting this issue out on schedule, about 3 1/2 months ago, it seems like a lot more time has passed. The primary activity that has consumed most of my time has been the production of our web site and our web store. But, a lot else has happened and is happening. Let me review the period since issue #77..

Christmas 2002

We mailed the last issue (#77) during the last part of November, freeing us to get caught up with a lot of administrivia and prepare for the upcoming holy days.

This Christmas was a very special time for a number of reasons. Kathleen's mother had died the previous May and Kathleen's stepfather, Mac, had begun to study the Catholic faith in September, at age 78.

As January approached, I looked forward to the research and study needed to build our web sites. Around the end of January-early February was also the time we were supposed to move into our new facilities at 417 West Forest Avenue.

Wake-up Call

On January 9, I woke up and found that I had lost the fine muscle control of the left side of my body. What this meant, for instance, was that I could grasp a pen and bring it to the paper but I could not exercise the control needed for writing.

Kathleen took me to the hospital emergency room because of the possibility of a stroke. By the afternoon, most of the symptoms had disappeared and by evening I was feeling fine. Nonetheless, I remained in the hospital for four more days undergoing tests.

The doctors found no damage and no evidence of any problem remaining. They strongly believe that one of the capillaries in my brain spasmed, momentarily affecting other areas in my brain, thereby causing the loss of muscle control. The reason for the spasm, the doctors agreed, was most likely my smoking habit. I had smoked cigarettes since I was 15 years of age.

How easily one takes for granted the gifts of God. For most of my 61 years, I have had pretty good health. Though I had come to understand that, statistically, smoking was not good for me, the struggle to quit was one I had continued putting off. That is, until January 9.

Surprise!

After returning from the hospital and attending to some business, my thoughts turned to our upcoming move. I called the people at Ave Maria College to get the latest info for our move into our new quarters.

As it turned out, the refurbishing had been suspended by the beginning of December, and this building was no longer available for us.

As you probably know, Ave Maria College in Michigan is planning to become Ave Maria University in Florida, surrounded by a new town also called Ave Maria. It is a very ambitious project, attempting to realize the educational vision of Tom Monaghan. It has drawn the support of many notable Catholics, including Fr. Fessio who serves as Chancellor of the new university-in-progress.

Ave Maria College in Michigan plans to remain operative for another few years. However, most of the resources not required for existing operations in Michigan are being redirected south to Florida. Hence, the fate of 417 West Forest Avenue.

And so once again, under God's providence, we knew we had to find another place to settle and establish a center for our work. But at the moment, we were preoccupied with ...

... Catholic theater and Edith Stein

The next few months would prove to be somewhat hectic. Plans and work were developing for an Edith Stein play at Ave Maria; an Edith Stein playwriting competition for Ave Maria students jointly sponsored by Ave Maria and the AHC; continued work on our web site; and Mac's home study of the Faith. And coming up was Passover, Lent and Easter.

As reported in the last issue (#77, News and Notes, pg 3), Kathleen had enlisted the support of two Catholic playwrights, Arthur Giron and Buzz McLaughlin, for an AHC playwriting competition amongst students at Ave Maria College.

The unexpected fruit of this effort was that the Ave Maria Drama department decided that their spring production would be the performance of Arthur Giron's highly-acclaimed play, *Edith Stein*. In 1988, his play broke the box-office record "*in the 13 year history of the Pittsburgh Public Theater.*"

The play was finally performed at Ave Maria College from April 9-12. It was directed by Britta Berlonghieri and produced by Ken Gaertner, both Adjunct Professors of Drama at Ave Maria College. It received an excellent review by Chris Potter of the Ann Arbor News.

At the opening of the first performance on April 9, I

announced that Ave Maria student Paul Bower had won the playwriting competition for his play, *A Search for Buried Treasure*, and presented him our award. Paul's play was publicly read in the Ave Maria auditorium on April 13 and may be read on our web site.

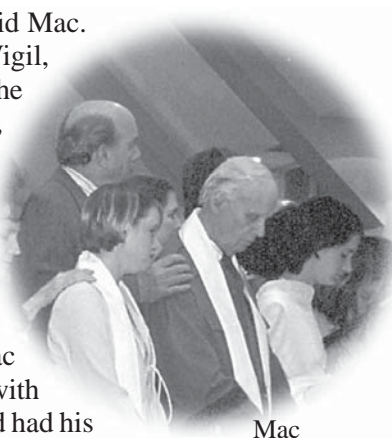
Our new website

On March 11, Fr. Friedman's 87th birthday, we launched our new website. While the store was not yet operational, we were able to include the contents of issue #77 (dealing with the *Reflections* document), the text of our flyers and a small variety of other material. The cover of this issue shows part of the first screen you see when you reach our site. If you are able, drop by and leave us a note on the "Contacts" page.

We wish to thank all who returned the survey and helped us decide on content and priorities.

Mac Embry comes home

Easter arrived and so did Mac. It was a glorious Easter Vigil, 3 1/2 hours long at Christ the King Parish in Ann Arbor, with Kathleen and me serving as Mac's sponsors. And so, at age 78, after 24 years of his wife, Jane, praying for him and now rooting for him from the gallery up above, Mac was baptized, confirmed with the name Christopher, and had his first Communion. *Hallelu Ya!*



Mac

May - a very special month

This month was special because it was dedicated to honoring Miriam, Mother of our Lord; because Kathleen and I shared the joy of celebrating the second anniversary of our marriage in Christ; and this year, because of three meetings that took place.

Meeting #1 - Dallas, Texas

The first was a conference that was held on May 12-13 at the Baruch HaShem Messianic Synagogue in Dallas, Texas. This was the North American Conference of the initiative called *Towards Jerusalem Council II* (TJCII).

In a previous issue (#76, pg 27), we wrote of this initiative whose purpose, is taken from their Vision statement:

"Toward Jerusalem Council II is an initiative of repentance and reconciliation between the Jewish and Gentile segments of the Church. The vision is that one day there will be a second Council of Jerusalem that will be, in an important respect, the inverse of the first council described in Acts 15. Whereas the first Council was made up of Jewish believers in Yeshua who decided not to impose on the Gentiles the requirements of the Jewish law, so the second Council would be made

up of the Gentile church leaders, who would recognize and welcome the Jewish believers in Yeshua without requiring them to abandon their Jewish identity and practice."

Peter Herbeck, Vice President of Ralph Martin's Renewal Ministries, and his wife Debbie, a Hebrew Catholic, both attended this conference. In fact, it was Peter's efforts and Renewal Ministries' generosity which provided the financial support that enabled us to attend. We are most grateful.

The conference was enjoyable and inspiring. Many of the Evangelical Christian and Messianic Jewish leaders and speakers there seemed to have developed very positive attitudes with regard to Catholics and the Catholic Church.

From the presentations, we learned about meetings taking place between the TJCII leaders and leaders of the various Christian churches.

We learned about the amazing growth of Messianic Synagogues in several countries of the former Soviet Union, including: Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus.

And we learned a little more about the theology and history behind TJCII from the presentations of the two Catholic members of their board, Johannes Fichtenbauer, Deacon to Cardinal Schonborn, and Fr. Peter Hocken.

Overall, I was greatly encouraged by this conference.

The Messianic Jewish movement, which exists outside of the Catholic Church, parallels some of the goals of the AHC within the Church. Not only does it seem to be an added confirmation of Fr. Elias' thesis, but through their unique situation, the Messianic Jewish movement brings a dynamic and visible witness to their goals, and ours as well.

These Jewish believers are full of the joy of knowing Jesus, zealous to share that joy with others, especially their Jewish brothers and sisters. How different is the attitude expressed by the Catholic scholars who, in the document *Reflections on Covenant and Mission*, argue that we should not invite Jews to the joy of knowing Jesus. This brings us to our next meeting.

Meeting #2 - Washington, DC

In March, Fr. Arthur Kennedy called to invite me and three other Hebrew Catholics to come to Washington to share our thoughts regarding *Reflections* and other matters and to meet Cardinal Keeler.

Fr. Kennedy is the new Executive Director of the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. It appears that the *Reflections* document appeared on the Bishops' web site while Fr. Kennedy was assuming his new position. Thankfully, it has since been removed.

Our meeting was scheduled for May 21 at the John Paul II Cultural Center. Attending with me was Ariela LeGendre, an Israeli now living with her husband in Texas,

my sister, Rosalind, from California, and Roy Schoeman from Massachusetts.

With Fr. Kennedy were Fr. Francis Martin and Fr. Lawrence Frizzell. Fr. Martin holds the Chair for Catholic-Jewish Theological Studies at the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center, Washington, DC. Fr. Frizzell is Director of Jewish-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ.

During the morning session, Ariela, Rosalind, Roy and I each spoke about our journey to Jesus and the Church. During the afternoon session, following Mass and lunch, the three priests each spoke a little about how they were engaged in the ongoing theological work of trying to address all that *Nostra Aetate* and the leadership of the Holy Father has inspired.

We would have needed much more time and perhaps better preparation to cover all that, in hindsight, we wished we had covered. What did become clear, and somewhat encouraging, was that the three priest-theologians all agreed that *Reflections* was a terrible document and that much theological work was needed. Fr. Kennedy reiterated that this meeting was an expression of the seriousness with which they took our concerns.

Cardinal Keeler arrived in the evening to join us for dinner. We had an interesting exchange during which we learned that the Cardinal hadn't read *Reflections* before it was posted on the Bishops' web site. In fact, he indicated that the document did not reflect his own views.

I am grateful for this meeting with Fr. Kennedy, Fr. Martin, Fr. Frizzell, and Cardinal Keeler. I am also grateful that Ariela, Rosalind, Roy and myself were given the opportunity to represent our Lord's love for His People Israel. May our ongoing prayers and efforts eventually bear fruit in an Israelite community within the Church, which will require no words and leave no doubt that Jesus-of-the-Jews is also Jesus-for-the-Jews.

Meeting #3 - Washington, DC

I arrived in Washington, DC on May 19 so that I could meet with Fr. John McCloskey on May 20. Fr. McCloskey is an Opus Dei priest who runs the Catholic Information Center in Washington. Father had previously indicated an interest in our work.

We discussed the work of the AHC, and Father made it clear that he thought our work was very important. He also thought that our work ought to be conducted in the greater New York metropolitan area, an area which has the largest Jewish, Catholic and Hebrew Catholic populations. Towards that end, Father strongly suggested that we see Bishop Myers of Newark.

In light of our new situation in Michigan, Father's thoughts and suggestion seemed very timely. I have written to Bishop Myers even while we continue to explore other possibilities here in Michigan. I must add that in the

Catholic community here, we have found a great amount of moral and spiritual support.

Our new web site store

Following the uplifting and energizing meetings during our Lady's month, I returned to the work of the moment which was to complete the tasks necessary to open our web store.

In addition to getting much of our inventory scanned in, along with the necessary commentary, we had to also provide the ability for people to pay for purchases. This ability would also serve those who wished to make online donations to the AHC.

What made this process somewhat complicated was the need to provide for international shipping and payment. My son, Matthew, a computer programmer, came to the rescue. He created the necessary software and dynamic interface with the United States Postal Service. I would like to publicly thank Matthew for his gift to the AHC.

Thus, in the first week of June, we were able to open our store as part of our web site.

We hope you will have the opportunity to review the web site and the store. It is only the beginning and we look forward to adding more material, as time allows.

Of course we always welcome your critiques and suggestions, whether they have to do with appearance, usability or content.

And finally ...

... #78, the Winter-Spring issue of 2003. Since you will have received this issue in July or August, then you already know that the summer issue is late. Please accept our apologies in advance.

I would like to tell you that now, since the work of learning and developing our web site is complete, *The Hebrew Catholic* would once again try to live up to its calling as a *quarterly*. Unfortunately, with another relocation coming up, as God wills, I am sure one of the upcoming issues will be delayed.

We are grateful for all that our Lord continues to bring to pass. We are grateful that the AHC stands as a harbinger of that Israelite community in the Church whose existence will be a witness to *Jesus, Israel's Messiah*, and to their *irrevocable calling* remaining operative within the Church.

Please continue to pray for our work, especially during our annual *Novena to St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein)* from August 1-9.

Wishing you a spiritually refreshing summer (or winter for the chaverim *down under*)

In the hearts of Yeshua, Miriam and St. Edith Stein

David

Stories From the Diaspora

Unsought and Undeserved

Roy Schoeman

Ed. The following account was first published in "Christ to the World". Roy has made some changes for this edition.

My parents were observant Jews in Europe who fled to the U.S. to escape the Holocaust. I was raised as a "conservative" Jew, and was rather pious by nature and very enthusiastic about the religious instruction I received and the religious activities I participated in. I went to my synagogue's after-school Jewish religious education program ("Hebrew School") all the way through grammar and high school. By high school it was the main focus of my identity and activities, even though by that point there were only about a half-dozen of us who had continued in the program. I was very close to my rabbi and to several of the seminarians who were my Hebrew school teachers. As Providence had it, my hometown rabbi was Arthur Hertzberg. One of the highest-profile rabbis in the U.S., he was president of the American Jewish Congress, advisor to several presidents, and wrote a number of best-selling books on Judaism and Jewish history. My favorite Hebrew school teacher, with whom I was particularly close, also became a very prominent rabbi who later headed the largest Jewish rabbinical seminary in the U.S..

Growing up I was unusually devout and passionate about God and Judaism, although the suburban conservative context I was in did not really support a life of piety, faith and prayer. In my senior year of high school I met a very charismatic "mystic" Hasidic Rabbi (Shlomo Carlebach) who used to go around the country giving "concerts" which were really prayer meetings over which he would preside, playing guitar and leading Hasidic worship songs, interspersed with religious story-telling and teaching. He had a large following among Jewish hippies and college students. I fell in with him, and spent the following summer traveling with him in Israel in his entourage. I wanted to live my life for God and with God, and while in Israel I considered abandoning my plans to go to M.I.T. in order to stay in Israel studying at one of the Jerusalem yeshivas (which are schools where young men devote their time to prayer and religious study, the closest thing Judaism has to religious life). But I was turned off by a certain sterility and coldness which I saw in them, and which did not speak of real intimacy with God.

So I returned to the U.S. and started at M.I.T. I felt very

lost, because anything which did not have God at its center seemed to have no point or meaning, yet there was nothing I could "do" which did have God at its center. The former Hebrew school teacher with whom I was close had also by then moved to Boston, where he started a kind of counter-culture, hippie-oriented Jewish seminary/commune. During my first few weeks at M.I.T. I considered dropping out, but he encouraged me to stay, and I did, spending much of my free time at his seminary/commune.

Although I tried to maintain my religious orientation, there was a fatal flaw in it which soon led me astray. I had no understanding of the relationship between religion and morality, particularly sexual morality. So my religiosity soon became mixed up in the drug and "free love" culture which was rampant, and soon degenerated into the immoral, vague hippie "spirituality" of the time. My thirst for God became, for a long while, sated by the false consolations and delusional spirituality of that environment.

For the next fifteen years, I lived my life in a tremendous inner tension. I had a yearning for transcendent meaning, and a refusal to let go of that yearning for more than short periods, but had no knowledge of what that yearning was truly for, and hence no sense of a direction to go in. Because a conventional engineer's life in the U.S. had no "meaning", I moved to Denmark, because I sensed, in the deeper relationship which Danes had with life and family, a greater spiritual meaning; once there, however, it was obviously not *my* real life so I returned.

For a few years after my return, while working as a programmer, I lived for rock-climbing, with the excitement and sense of danger and accomplishment which it produced, providing an anesthetic for my thirst for meaning. In 1978 I went back to school, to Harvard Business School for an M.B.A., but the momentary feelings of success which that produced did not assuage my desperation for real meaning for long. Anything which I tried, whether a career switch or a romantic relationship, only produced a momentary illusion of purpose which soon faded, leaving me with the desperate sense that there must be something more. That is why I never settled in to a career, or married.

At Harvard Business School I did extraordinarily well, winning most of the available awards in my class, and graduating among the top few with "High Distinction." Shortly after graduation I was invited to join the faculty, and did so, teaching the core marketing course in the M.B.A. program. Yet even the success of being a Harvard



Business School professor, and a very popular one at that, at thirty years of age did not assuage my sense of pointlessness. I loved the teaching and the students but did not find much interest in the subject matter itself. After teaching, Harvard offered to support me (very generously) while I completed a doctorate so that I could qualify for tenure, but once into my dissertation, my lack of genuine interest caught up with me, and I went back to consulting.

It was around this time that I got involved with my last “false consolation”, my last false direction to provide meaning to my life. As a child I had been an enthusiastic downhill skier, but I gave it up when I went to college. I now took it up again with a vengeance, supporting myself with consulting while spending most of every winter skiing in the Alps. I became very good, and my skiing companions in the Alps were all professional skiers, “circuit” skiers, Olympic hopefuls, etc. For a few years I lived for skiing, finding enough consolation in the physical excitement, the speed, the aesthetics, the sense of accomplishment, the camaraderie, to dull the thirst for meaning in my life.

Of course God was using everything in my life to bring me to Him, and it would soon bear fruit. It was when I was in the spectacular natural beauty of the Alps that I became aware of the existence of God for the first time since college. I remember the scene – I was high up on the mountain, still well above tree line, shortly after sunset, with the sky glowing a soft red and the snow and granite glowing blue in the twilight. My heart opened with gratitude, and I knew that such beauty had been created by God. It is worth noting that the area of Austria which I was in was still deeply and piously Catholic, with beautiful crucifixes everywhere, both inside the houses, hotels and restaurants and also along the roads and even trails. Even in the ski town, the Church was packed for Sunday Mass. (In fact, in the bed-and-breakfast where I was staying a carved wooden crucifix, with *corpus*, hung over my bed. Every evening when I returned to the room I would remove it and place it in a drawer – I had no desire to sleep under a cross! – and the following day I would find it had been rehung over the bed, without comment, by the devout, elderly woman in whose home I was staying).

After a few years of living for skiing, that too began to pale, and I became more and more despondent. The only relief I could find was spending time alone in nature, trying to recapture a hint of the consolation which I had felt in the Alps. During the spring of 1987 I took a few days off from work and went to Cape Cod to spend time in nature there. I was walking in the early morning, in the woods just back from the beach, when God intervened, dramatically and distinctly, in my life to pull me back and put me onto the right path. As I was walking, lost in my thoughts, I found myself in the immediate presence of God. It is as though I “fell into Heaven.” Everything changed from one moment to the next, but in such a smooth and

subtle way that I was not aware of any discontinuity. I felt myself in the immediate presence of God. I was aware of His infinite exaltedness, and of His infinite and personal love for me. I saw my life as though I was looking back on it after death, in His presence, and could see everything which I would be happy about and everything which I would wish I had done differently. I saw that every action I had ever done mattered, for good or for evil. I saw that everything which had ever happened in my life had been perfectly designed for my own good from the infinitely wise and loving hand of God, not only including but especially those things which I at the time I thought had been the greatest catastrophes. I saw that my two greatest regrets when I died would be every moment which I had wasted not doing anything of value in the eyes of God, and all of the time and energy which I had wasted worrying about not being loved when every moment of my existence I was bathed in an infinite sea of love, although unaware of it. I saw that the meaning and purpose of my life was to worship and serve my Lord and Master, in whose presence I found myself. I wanted to know His name, so that I could worship Him properly, so that I could follow “His” religion. I remember silently praying “Tell me your name. I don’t mind if You’re Apollo, and I have to become a Roman pagan. I don’t mind if You’re Krishna, and I have to become a Hindu. I don’t mind if You’re Buddha, and I have to become a Buddhist. As long as You’re not Christ, and I have to become a Christian!” (Jewish readers might be able to identify with this deep-rooted aversion to Christianity, based on the mistaken belief that it was the “enemy” which lay behind two thousand years of persecution of the Jews.)

Not surprisingly, He did not tell me His name. Obviously, I wasn’t ready to hear it – my resistance at the time was still too great. But I knew, from that moment on, the meaning and purpose and goal of my life; and that sense has not faded or wavered, although the immediate state of perception did.

When I got back home, everything was different. I remember calling my mother and telling her “Mom, I have good news! It’s all true! You don’t ever die...” only to be met with a sort of stony silence. It had never occurred to me that she might not believe me – after all, I knew from my own direct experience! Although I went back to my consulting, everything was now different, and I set out on a focused search to find my Lord and Master and God whom I had met on the beach that day.

Because I interpreted the experience as a “mystical” one, I initially looked towards mysticism, which led me to a lot of blind alleys. Prior to my experience I had not had any interest at all in mysticism or any of the New Age religions or meditative practices or occultism, and those are what I first came across. I spent a number of months looking in that, essentially Hindu although disguised, direction.

Yet every night before going to sleep, I would say a short prayer to know the name of my Lord and Master and God whom I had met on the beach. A year to the day after the initial experience, I went to sleep after saying that prayer, and felt as though I was woken by a gentle hand on my shoulder, and escorted to a room where I was left alone with the most beautiful young woman I could imagine. I knew without being told that she was the Blessed Virgin Mary. I felt entirely awake (and my memory is as though I had been awake), although I was dreaming. I remember my first reaction, standing there awed by her presence and grandeur, was wishing I knew at least the Hail Mary so that I could honor her! She offered to answer any questions I had. I remember thinking about what to ask, asking the questions, and her answers. After speaking to me a while longer, the audience was ended. When I woke the next morning I was hopelessly in love with the Blessed Virgin Mary, and I knew that the God I had met on the beach was Christ, and that all I wanted was to be as much of, and as good a, Christian as possible. I still did not know anything about Christianity, nor the difference between the Catholic Church and any of the hundreds of Protestant denominations. It took me another two years or so to find my way to the Catholic Church, guided by my love and reverence for the Blessed Virgin Mary.

I will just touch briefly on some of the milestones which led me to the Catholic Church. After the dream of Mary, I started going to a local Protestant Church, but left when I asked the pastor about Mary and he made a disparaging remark. I started hanging around Marian shrines, particularly a shrine of Our Lady of La Salette which was in Ipswich, Mass., about 40 minutes from my house. On a winter ski trip to the Alps, I decided to visit the real La Salette apparition site (in the French Alps), and ended up spending the rest of the “ski” trip there, in deep prayer (more details on that stay can be found on my website, www.salvationisfromthejews.com). Someone I met there recommended that I make a visit to a Carthusian monastery, and I ended up doing so, spending a week there, on a kind of solitary “come and see” although I was still Jewish! There I became aware, for the first time, how the Catholic Church was itself an outgrowth of Judaism. It was unavoidably obvious, given how the monks spent many hours a day chanting the Old Testament psalms, with their continual references to Israel, Zion, Jerusalem, the Jewish Patriarchs, and the Jewish people, visibly identifying with the “Israel” of the psalms (that is, the Jews). A small illustration: One day when I was working alone in the fields, an elderly monk came out to speak with me. He approached and shyly asked, “Tell us, if you don’t mind – We couldn’t help noticing that you do not receive communion, so you must not be Catholic. What then are you?” When I replied “Jewish”, he grinned and with a deep sigh said “That’s a relief! We were afraid you were Protes-

tant!”. At the time I had no understanding at all of the difference between Protestants and Catholics – they were just meaningless words to me describing Christians – yet I was deeply struck by the fact that in some mysterious way this monk identified with Jews as opposed to Protestants. I later realized that in his eyes Jews were “elder brothers in the Faith” who had not yet received the grace to recognize the Messiahship of Jesus, whereas Protestants had once had, but then rejected, the fullness of the truth.

During that week I grew to feel Mary’s central, penetrating presence in the Catholic Church. I also started to be deeply distressed at being unable to receive communion. It was my desire to receive communion which, more than anything else, drew me to the Baptismal font. I had sought out a Jewish priest, Father Raphael Simon, (referred to me by the Carthusian Prior) for baptism. He was a former (Jewish) University of Chicago Philosophy professor and New York City psychiatrist, who became a Trappist monk (his conversion story is published under the title *The Glory of Thy People*.) When I first met with him he asked me why I wanted to be baptised. Since I knew that I couldn’t truthfully say (at the time) that it was because I believed in all of Catholic doctrine, I angrily blurted out “Because I want to receive communion and otherwise you won’t let me !” I thought he would throw me out on my ear, but instead he nodded sagely and said “Ah, that’s the Holy Spirit at work...”

So in early 1992 I was baptized and confirmed (by a different priest, as it turned out), just in time for another more extended stay at the Carthusian monastery, to discern whether that was my vocation. It wasn’t (although the Prior continued for many years to be my spiritual director), but the fanaticism which characterized my pre-conversion life has served me well, now that I have found the true direction for my life.

Although I have no religious or priestly vocation, there is (please God) nothing in my life which is not for Him and around Him. In a number of small ways I am active in the Church, with daily Mass and prayer being at the center of my life – writing, teaching or speaking whenever asked, producing and hosting a Catholic TV talk show. I have just completed a book on the role of Judaism in salvation history, *Salvation is from the Jews*, which is being published this year by Ignatius Press. It should give Christians a deeper understanding of Judaism as the religion which God created to bring about the incarnation of God as man, as well as the religion into which He incarnated. To Jews it should reveal the full glory and importance of Judaism, a glory which can *only* be recognized in the light of the truths of the Catholic Faith. My hope is that by illuminating Judaism with a deeper meaning and significance than Jews see from within their own faith, their pride in being Jewish will draw them towards, rather than away from, the Catholic Church. (More details on

that are given on my website www.salvationisfromthejews.com)

I will never know, this side of Heaven, whose prayers and sacrifices purchased the graces for my entirely unsought after and undeserved conversion, but I can only thank them profoundly, and exhort others, too, to pray for the conversion of the Jews; that the people to whom Jesus first made Himself known may come into the truth and into the fullness of their relationship to Him in the Catholic Church. How tragic that we to whom God first revealed Himself as Man should be among the last to recognize Him! In the words of the *Postulatum* from the First Vatican Council, signed by the Fathers of the Council and endorsed by Pope Pius IX (but never formally promulgated due to the Council's premature termination upon the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War):

"The undersigned Fathers of the Council humbly yet urgently beseechingly pray that the Holy Ecumenical Council of the Vatican deign to come to the aid of the unfortunate nation of Israel with an entirely paternal invitation; that is, that it express the wish that, finally exhausted by a wait no less futile than long, the Israelites hasten to recognize the Messiah, our Savior Jesus Christ, truly promised to Abraham and announced by Moses; thus completing and crowning, not changing, the Mosaic religion.

"... the undersigned Fathers have the very firm confidence that the holy Council will have compassion on the Israelites, because they are always very dear to God on account of their fathers, and because it is from them that the Christ was born according to the flesh ...

"Would that they then speedily acclaim the Christ, saying 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed be He who comes in the name of the Lord!

"Would that they hurl themselves into the arms of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, even now their sister according to the flesh, who wishes likewise to be their mother according to grace as she is ours!"

Our Lady of Zion, pray for us!

Ed. Roy can be reached at schoeman@catholic.org. He has also produced a web site to support his soon-to-be-published book "Salvation is From the Jews." Among many articles, the web site contains his account of our trip to Washington, DC The web site is at:

<http://www.salvationisfromthejews.com>

Notes for the Calendar

Due to limited space, we have not included memorials and optional memorials in the calendar.

** = name from Proper of Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem*

[...] = AHC date or name from the Roman Martyrology

AHC Calendar

August 2003		5763 Av
1	[AHC Novena to St. Edith Stein - day 1]	3
3	Sunday - 18th of Ordinary Time	5
	[The Seven Maccabees, martyrs]	
6	Transfiguration of the Lord (Feast)	8
9	[AHC Novena to St. Edith Stein - day 9]	11
10	Sunday - 19th of Ordinary Time	12
15	Assumption of the Virgin Mary	17
16	[Joachim, husband of Anna]	18
17	Sunday - 20th of Ordinary Time	19
20	[Samuel, prophet]	22
24	Sunday - 21st of Ordinary Time	26
28	Rosh Chodesh	30
	[Baptism of Hermann Cohen]	
		5763 Elul
29	Rosh Chodesh	1
31	Sunday - 22nd of Ordinary Time	3
	* Joseph of Arimathea & Nicodemus	
September		
1	[Joshua and Gideon]	4
4	[Moses, legislator]	7
6	[Zechariah and Haggai, prophets]	9
7	Sunday - 23rd of Ordinary Time	10
8	Birth of the Virgin Mary (Feast)	11
14	Sunday - Triumph of the Holy Cross (Feast)	17
21	Sunday - 25th of Ordinary Time	24
26	Erev Rosh Hashanah	29
		5764 Tishrei
27	Rosh Hashanah	1
28	Sunday - 26th of Ordinary Time	2
29	Michael, Gabriel and Raphael - archangels (Feast)	3
October		
5	Sunday - 27th of Ordinary Time	9
	Erev Yom Kippur	
6	Yom Kippur	10
9	* Abraham, the Patriarch	13
10	Erev Sukkot	14
11	Sukkot	15
	* Philip, the Deacon	
12	Sunday - 28th of Ordinary Time	16
18	Saint Luke, evangelist (Feast)	22
	Shmini Atzeret	
19	Sunday - 29th in Ordinary Time	23
	Simchat Torah	
22	[Mary Salome, mother of James and John]	26
26	Sunday - 30th of Ordinary Time	30
	Rosh Chodesh	
		Cheshvan
27	Rosh Chodesh	1
28	Ss. Simon and Jude, apostles (Feast)	2
November		
1	All Saints	6
2	Sunday - 31st Ord Time - All Souls	7

In the Wake of **“Reflections on Covenant and Mission”**

David Moss

The last issue of *The Hebrew Catholic* was sent to every bishop in the United States and to others in the hierarchy throughout the world. We were gratified to receive responses from several bishops and from Cardinal Kasper. We also received a response from Fr. Arthur Kennedy, the new Executive Director of the Bishops’ Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs Committee, who invited me and three other Hebrew Catholics to a meeting in Washington, D.C. (see *President’s Memo*).

There were also some significant responses in the media. The *National Catholic Register Symposium* was included in our last issue. Let us look at some others.

Response by Cardinal Avery Dulles

There was a response from Cardinal Avery Dulles, entitled *Covenant and Mission*, in the October 14, 2002 issue of *America*. The full response may be read at the following web address:

<http://www.sfarchdiocese.org/dulles.html>

For our purposes here, I will only relate some of the Cardinal’s points about *Reflections*.

“The statement is ambiguous, if not erroneous, in its treatment of topics such as evangelization, mission, covenant and dialogue.”

Cardinal Dulles explores *Reflections*’ treatment of evangelization and concludes that:

“[The Holy Father] writes: ‘The vital core of the new evangelization must be a clear and unequivocal proclamation of the person of Jesus Christ’ (No. 66). Covenant and Mission presents a concept of evangelization in which this vital core is dispensable.”

The Cardinal continues to examine *Reflections*’ treatment of mission and quotes the Holy Father:

“... ‘missionary evangelization is the primary service that the Church can render to every individual and all humanity in the modern world’ (Redemptoris Missio, No. 2). The call to conversion, says the pope, must not be dismissed as ‘proselytization’ in the pejorative sense of that word, since it corresponds to the right of every person to hear the good news of the God who gives himself in Christ.”

Cardinal Dulles then examines *Reflections*’ treatment of covenant and, looking at Hebrews, notes:

“The most formal statement on the status of the Sinai covenant under Christianity appears in the Letter to the Hebrews, which points out that in view of the new covenant promised by God through the prophet Jeremiah, the first covenant is ‘obsolete’ and ‘ready to vanish away’ (Heb. 8:13). The priesthood and the law have changed (Heb. 7:12). Christ, we are told, ‘abolishes the

first [covenant] in order to establish the second’ (Heb. 10:9).”

Cardinal Dulles also recognizes that:

“the promises of God to Israel remain valid. The Hebrew Scriptures, containing God’s promises, have enduring value, but are to be interpreted in the light of Christ to whom they point forward.”

and

“Paul in fact looks forward to a day when all Israel will recognize Christ and be saved (11:26). He does not mean that Israel is already saved by adherence to the Sinai covenant. In view of his promises to them, God has a special providence over Israel. The Jews have a status distinct from the Gentiles.”

Finally, Cardinal Dulles reviews *Reflections*’ discussion of dialogue, and finding it wanting, concludes that:

“The document Covenant and Mission does not forthrightly present what I take to be the Christian position on the meaning of Christ for Judaism.”

The Scholars Respond to Cardinal Dulles

In the October 21, 2002 issue of *America*, Mary C. Boys, Philip A. Cunningham, and John T. Pawlikowski, members of the Christian Scholars Group on Christian Jewish Relations, responded to Cardinal Dulles’ critique.

The full text of their response is available at

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/stpauls/pub/pdf/1.pdf>

The scholars remind us, as did *Reflections*, that Jews have at various times over the last two millennia been treated very poorly by Catholics. But instead of providing guidelines for sensitive, prudent, and respectful ways of witnessing to the Jewish people about their own Messiah, these scholars defend *Reflections* and critique Cardinal Dulles.

To illustrate their thinking, let me quote the first sentence in a few successive paragraphs of their response:

“Much of Cardinal Dulles’s critique of these concepts in Reflections flows from his reading of the New Testament. ...”

“Thus, we are troubled by Cardinal Dulles’s assertion that the Letter to the Hebrews offers “the most formal statement of the status of the Sinai Covenant under Christianity. ...”

“In contrast, we argue that official Catholic teaching today has, in the Biblical Commission’s 1993 formulation, ‘gone its own way’ and ‘set aside’ the opinion of the author of Hebrews about Israel’s covenant. ...”

“The magisterium can explicitly contradict an idea of an individual New Testament author because the Catholic tradition is one of commentary, not of sola scriptura (Scripture alone). ...”

What appears to have ‘gone its own way’ and been ‘set aside’ is the faith of these scholars.

Peter Herbeck

Inside the Vatican (October 2002) contained an article entitled, *Has the Teaching Changed?*, by Peter Herbeck, Vice President of Renewal Ministries. Peter writes:

“... it is troubling to think that those appointed by the American bishops to spearhead the interreligious dialogue with the Jewish community are coming up with conclusions that contradict the teaching of scripture and the Magisterium.”

Later in his article, Peter quotes Fr. David Maria Jaeger, an Israeli-born Hebrew Catholic priest, regarding ‘the Church’s obligation to seek to fulfill her mission even in Israel. He states,’

“In Hebrew-speaking Israel this solemn teaching of the Council, which in fact simply expands the great Commission given to the Church by Her Lord Himself (cf. Mt 28:18), is yet to be put into practice. This obedience is not optional, no one on earth has the power to forbid it, and no arguments can be adduced against it from contemporary developments in this or that field of thought or practice, for ‘the Church has the obligation, and also the sacred right to evangelize (Ad gentes, 7).”

Finally, Peter quotes Professor David Berger, an Orthodox Jewish scholar commenting on *Dominus Iesus*:

“The central theme of the entire declaration, underscored on virtually every page, is that salvation comes in only one essential fashion for all humanity, and that is through the triune God of Christianity and his embodied word; to suggest that Jews, who reject belief in both trinity and incarnation, attain salvation outside this otherwise universal system is to render the document virtually incoherent.”

Peter concludes

“I am afraid that Dr. Berger has a clearer understanding of what the Catholic Church teaches than the Catholic authors of ‘Reflections ...’”

Fr. Peter Hocken

Mishkan (Issue 36, 2002, Caspari Center for Biblical and Jewish Studies, Jerusalem), contained an article entitled, *Catholic Statements on the Church, the Jewish People and Mission to the Jews*, by Fr. Peter Hocken

In the first part of the article, Father reviews various Catholic statements relating to the Jewish people and some papal statements that provide guidance in interpretation. In particular, Father focuses on *Nostra Aetate*.

In the concluding paragraph of the section entitled, *The Irrevocable Covenant with Israel*, Father writes:

“There is here a teaching developing that does not see Israel’s instrumental-salvific role as limited to giving birth to the Messiah and to the Christian Church. Rather, through the irrevocable covenant, the Jewish people and Judaism are still bearers of divine revela-

tion in a mysterious way that is not easy to formulate. Such a formulation will not be possible, it would seem, until there is greater clarity about what was lost or weakened in the ancient Church through a wrong understanding of the Jewish people and God’s covenant with them.”

In the next section of the article, *Mission and the Jewish People*, Father notes:

“It is clear that the magisterium (teaching office) of the Catholic Church has in the last 40 years consistently taught that (1) Judaism is unique among non-Christian religions and (2) dialogue and evangelization are not to be seen as alternatives, but both are necessary in relation to non-Christian religions.

After quoting the Holy Father regarding these ideas, Father states:

“There are two issues here: first, the repudiation of all proselytism, of unworthy forms of evangelism that do not respect the human dignity and socio-cultural heritage of the recipients; secondly, there is the question of sensitivity to what the Jewish people have already received through their election and through divine revelation. The first concerns what forms of religious expansion are morally reprehensible; the second, how presentation of the gospel to the Jews should differ from its presentation to gentile peoples.”

In the final section of this article, entitled *Mission and the Identity of Judaism*, Father asks how are we to rightly understand the relationship between the covenants if, simultaneously, we “accept the irrevocability of the covenant with Israel” and “also believe in the uniqueness of the incarnation of the Son of God and in the saving mystery of his death and resurrection?”

Father’s response to this question:

“It is characteristic of Catholic magisterial teaching to hold open such challenging questions, allowing and hopefully encouraging further research, and only to act authoritatively to close out unacceptable solutions that shortchange some aspect of the mystery. One ‘solution’ advocated by some theologians is to emphasize the salvific character of the covenant with Israel, establishing a real relationship with the living God, and thereby suggesting that evangelization of the Jewish people is denying the validity of the first covenant. In some, this view finds expression in a theory of each faith having its own covenant by which its adherents are saved.

“A major figure in the Vatican, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the prefect of the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, responsible for doctrinal orthodoxy in the Catholic Church, clearly does not share such views. In a collection of essays entitled *Many Religions—One Covenant* (San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1999), Ratzinger emphasizes the inherent connectedness of all

the biblical covenants, insisting on the inner continuity of salvation history, and the fulfillment of the Torah through the Law of the Gospel. 'The Law is read prophetically, in the inner tension of the promise' (Many Religions-One Covenant, p.37). He sees their connectedness in relation to the heart of the Father: their unity is rooted in the unity of their author. 'The Gospel thus brings the Law to its fullness through imitation of the perfection of the heavenly Father.' (Op. cit., p.33, citing CCC, para. 19680) "Though Ratzinger does not treat dialogue as recognizing the 'integrity' of Judaism, his position on the inter-connectedness of the covenants excludes recognition of Judaism as an integrally valid way of salvation. The rightful insistence on approaching Judaism 'in its own identity' means that we listen to them seeking to recognize all that is true and worthy, refusing to judge them on the basis of who we are. In particular, I suggest that it means being alert for elements of divine revelation and wisdom, expressed in the Old Testament and maybe also in the New, that never found a place in Christian life because of our rejection of the Jews, yet found a continuing expression in the Jewish community.

Roy Schoeman

Ed. The following appeared as a 'Letter to the Editor' of Inside the Vatican magazine. In this critique, Roy focuses on how Reflections deprives Catholics of the full truth and beauty of their faith and deprives Jews of the true honor and glory of their identity and heritage.

As a Jew who has gratefully entered the Catholic Church, I thank you for your thoughtful coverage of the recent USCCB *Reflections* document (*Inside the Vatican*, "A Troubling Document," January 2003). An intelligent response to it could fill a book – in fact, the book I just wrote, *Salvation is From the Jews* (forthcoming later this year from Ignatius Press), is in many ways such a response. Yet I would nonetheless like to make a few comments.

The 'dual covenant' theory which has emerged from the U.S. Bishops-sponsored Jewish/Catholic dialogue portrays Christianity as a modified version of Judaism, one appropriate for the Gentiles (non-Jews), enabling them to worship the one true God and share the moral and ethical truths of Judaism without being part of the special covenant which God made with the 'seed of Abraham'.

Since this both confirms the objective validity of Judaism and establishes the inappropriateness of Jewish conversion to Christianity, it is naturally very appealing to the Jewish side of the dialogue, which is willing, in return, to acknowledge the value and virtue of the Christian religion and of its founder, the Jew Jesus. It is an ideal solution to eliminate any tension between the two sides and enable them to be mutually supportive of each others' faiths.

It is, unfortunately, entirely incompatible with the truths of Christianity. For the Gospel makes abundantly clear that Jesus came first for the Jews, for instance, Matthew 15:24 – "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." It was to Jews that He said "unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 2:5) and to Jews that He said: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53). Jesus spent his entire life and ministry evangelizing Jews, not Gentiles; He was crucified for evangelizing Jews, not Gentiles (cf. Luke 20:14, John 11:47-53). If God did not intend the new covenant for the Jews, then Jesus got it wrong; St. Peter, the first Pope and the 'apostle to the Jews' got it wrong; St. Paul, the premier theologian for all of Christianity got it wrong, not only in his epistles but in his own conversion and in his repeated sufferings for evangelizing Jews; St. Stephen, the very first Christian martyr, stoned for evangelizing the Jews, got it wrong (cf. Acts 6-7); all twelve Apostles, all 'converted' Jews, got it wrong; and on and on and on.

The theology presented by *Reflections* is a tragedy for both Catholics and for Jews. It is a tragedy for Catholics because it not only sells out the fundamentals of the faith, but it deprives them of seeing the incomparable beauty of God's plan for salvation over its entire span; a plan that begins mysteriously at the fall of Adam; which develops through the preparation of the Jewish people culminating in the only perfect human being ever (the Jewish Virgin Mary), and which is fulfilled in the Jewish Messiah, Jesus, and the Church, the Catholic Church, which He left behind.

It also does a disservice to God, for it denies the words of His son Jesus; it denies the truths He revealed, and it denies Him the joy He has in receiving His especially beloved Jewish people in the intimacy available only through His Church and its sacraments.

But it is most of all a tragedy for the Jews, for it deprives them of the opportunity of knowing the fullness of the truth of revelation; it deprives them of the incomparable joy and consolation of the intimacy with God achieved only through the sacraments; it deprives them of the eternal salvific benefits which flow from the Church and the sacraments. And most ironically, it deprives them of the true honor and glory of their own religion, of their own identity – of being part of the people and the religion which brought about the salvation of all mankind, the people through whom God became man, the people related to God in the flesh.

Reflections was presumably motivated by charity, however misplaced. I beg the Bishops and all other Catholics to prayerfully consider where true charity to their Jewish 'elder brethren' (in the words of John Paul II) lies and to reach out to them with the truth, the full truth, of the glory, the beauty, the importance of being Jewish – a glory which is found in the truths of the Catholic Faith.

Vocation of Israel ... remains intact

Fr. Aidan Nichols, O.P.

Ed. The following selection is taken from *Chapter 14: Catholicism and Other Religions* in the book *Epiphany: A Theological Introduction to Catholicism* by Fr. Aidan Nichols, O.P. It is reprinted here with permission of the publisher, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN.

Epiphany is now out of print. However, the complete book may be read at the Christendom Awake web site, developed and maintained by Mark Alder, a Hebrew Catholic. The url is:

<http://www.christendom-awake.org/pages/anichols/epiphany/epiphany.htm>

How, then, does the Catholic Church see other religions? We must begin with Judaism, the Church's own root and mother. Not only does our New Testament still contain a letter to the Hebrews - Hebrew Christians, Jewish Christians - but its whole canon bears witness to the pangs of birth as the Church emerges from Judaism. We may be tempted to think of this as the butterfly emerging from the chrysalis, but this would be to ignore the tragic sense of loss, breathed by so many pages of the New Testament, at Israel's failure to recognize the Christ. There is nothing tragic about the metamorphosis of a caterpillar.

It is true that many Christians understand the Old Testament better than some Jews. It is also true that the Church's own understanding as the englobing subject of revealed faith, surpasses in range what Judaism can say of its own Scriptures. Nevertheless, it seems obvious that there must be a special inwardness or intimacy in the way that Jews live with the Hebrew Bible and the other literature that made, or reflects, the world of the Gospels. No Gentile can, for instance, feel the devotion to the Torah that a Jew feels. No Gentile Christian can grasp the implications of Jesus' identification of himself as the Torah in person in the way that a Jew might. In this perspective it is extremely unfortunate that the church of the Hebrew Christian failed to survive within the *Catholica*. Had it done so, the universal Church would have included within the unity of the same faith, sacraments, and governance communities especially devoted to the memory and observances of the Jewish ancestors of the Christian way - a living witness not only to non-Christian Jews but to Gentile Catholicism also.

The principal Jewish objection to the Church where doctrine is concerned is her affirmation of the divinity of Christ. However, it can be noted that in the first centuries of the Christian era, the same theological principle guided a process of internal clarification among both Jews and Christians: the infinite qualitative distinction between the uncreated and the created, ruling out as this does any suggestion of intermediate beings or conditions. Just as Judaism pruned away its more extravagant apocalyptic imagery, and a tendency to angelolatry, so the Church shunned the *homoiousion* ("like in being [to the Father]") of the

semi-Arians and clove to the view that either Christ is consubstantial with God or he is of no transcendent significance whatever. It is possible that it was an initial encounter with an implicitly heretical Christianity rather than direct confrontation with the orthodox tradition of the Nicene faith that accounts for the vehemence of rabbinic Judaism's rejection of patristic Christianity.

The main Jewish objection to Catholicism in the realm of practice must be the Church's mixed record of treatment of the Jews in her midst. There were indeed numerous verbal and physical attacks on Jews carried out more or less under Christian auspices. Yet on the whole, and this is not so often adverted to, higher ecclesiastical authority tended to moderate negative action towards the Jews either by the populace or by secular princes. It can be suggested that hatred for Jews on the part of European Christians was fundamentally a reaction of the residual pagan - the "old Adam" - against the originators of "bondage" to pure worship and high ethical norms. In this sense, violence against Jews was a rebellion against Christianity itself, under the figure of a less powerful proxy. By the time of the Holocaust in Nazi Germany, we are dealing not so much with a Christian civilization but with a European civilization which a century-and-a-half previously had embarked on a rapid process of de-Christianization.

Judaism's distinctive continuing light can add to the Church an orthopractic concern with the mitzvot, the divine precepts, whose actualization is a sign that makes present the Creator's reign and a celebration of a total liturgy, referring the creation to the Creator and so consecrating it to God through human agency.

Since Judaism is not in the fullest sense a different religion from Christianity, there can be and are such a thing as *Hebrew Catholics*, Jews who have entered the Church but with every intention of maintaining their Jewish heritage intact. They insist with Paul that "*God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew,*" for "*the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable*" (Rom 11:29). A Catholic Christian, contemplating the mystery of Israel, can be, accordingly, only a qualified supersessionist. Inasmuch as Israel's Messiah has come, and fashioned his new community, the call of Israel is indeed superseded. Yet the vocation of Israel, to witness that the One who has come is truly her long-expected Savior and that the salvation he wrought is the genuine fulfillment of the promises of the Hebrew Bible, remains intact. For the Paul of Romans, the prospect of this perduring election of Israel reaching full term is a cause of eschatological joy: "*If their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means*

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AHC E-mail Discussion Group

This group was formed to discuss the various themes and issues of Fr. Friedman's thesis, the various pastoral needs of Hebrew Catholics and any other matters of related interest. Dissent from the Magisterium, political discussions or attempts to challenge the faith of Catholics are not permitted.

Two ways to participate

1. Send a blank email message to:
AssocHebrewCatholics-help@yahoogroups.com
2. (a) Go to the group's site at:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AssocHebrewCatholics>
(b) There you must first join Yahoo (no cost or obligation) and then join the discussion group.
This option enables access to all past discussions.
To respect everyone's privacy, we include only the initial letter(s) of each writer's name.
Legend: < italics > indicates a quote from a previous message.

A Little Taste

Ed. The work of the AHC is directed to preserving the identity and heritage of Jews who have entered the Church. In part, that includes the effort to end assimilation. One of the mechanisms by which assimilation occurs is that of "forgetfulness" – the loss of memory that occurs when various aspects of a cultural heritage are no longer lived and experienced.

The following exchange is a little taste of how that process of assimilation begins.

Shalom. I was raised Orthodox and converted about three years ago. Since then I have faithfully been to Mass. During this time I have continued to wear a Kippah and Tallism.

Three weeks ago our priest spoke of the early Jewish Christians and how they needed to put away Jewish traditions. Father stared at me many times while teaching. I felt terrible and have not been to Mass since.

Have any of you had a similar experience? How do you deal with it. Does not wearing Kippot and Tallism make us better Christians? I will appreciate your feedback. Todah ... L.

Boy, did I !!! Several months ago, when I casually mentioned to my (new) pastor that my kids had given me a Hebrew dictionary for Christmas, he gave me a half-hour lecture about how Christians need to "move on" and "get beyond" the "Old Law." ... Our deacon ... on the other hand, is very agreeable to including Scripture readings in Hebrew at Pentecost Mass next year (among the various "multicultural" readings for that particular Sunday that have become popular in recent years). ...

So L., I guess the moral of the story is: find some allies in the parish, such as a deacon or DRE. You might

even make an anonymous call to the diocesan Office of Priest Personnel (just to ask whether such behavior by one of their priests is to be tolerated, not to "report" him...not yet, anyway). F.

L., that priest is ... very wrong. Where do you think our Bishops and the pope got their Kippot if not from the first three centuries of Christian custom. I am also convinced that the Chasuble is a late fourth century adaptation of the Tallis. At the Council of Nicaea, the Bishops from the east wanted to continue to observe Pascha on the 14th of Nisan, as did the Apostles John and Phillip, but they were overruled by the Emperor. The Apostle John continued to wear the priestly conical cap, erroneously called a miter by the Church historian Eusebius. Although still called Pascha, or Passover, in Greek and Latin; the Emperor wanted Easter divorced from Passover observance. Christians continued to observe the Jewish Feasts, except for Purim, until Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire and were gradually replaced by Roman feasts.

Shalom uVrakhah: Pax et Bonum. J.

That priest should be ashamed of himself. He deliberately chose to embarrass and alienate you publicly, when he ought to have spoken to you privately if he had any concerns with your retention of certain Orthodox Jewish customs.

In the past, the Church required Jewish converts to give up all outward signs of "Jewishness" and to start to dress and act like Gentiles, but — correct me if I'm wrong — that injustice and double-standard is thankfully a thing of the past. ...

It's like the argument of some fundamentalists that Christmas is pagan. Well, so are wedding rings — and so is wearing clothes. Gentiles need not give up all their customs when they convert, but Jews have to? Somebody explain that one to me — I don't get it.

The Bible shows the Apostle Paul and the early Church continuing to practice certain Jewish customs — St. Paul even took Nazirite vows, and claimed that he never violated the customs of the fathers. Maybe this priest should denounce St. Paul in his next homily. P.

Shalom L., I am sorry to hear about this priest as I am always sorry to hear about those in the Church who have so little appreciation for their Jewish heritage or who have so little tolerance for those whose customs differ from their own.

In response to your question - "What do 'you' do", some

immediate thoughts come to mind.

1. The response of others

Most Hebrew Catholics that I am aware of do not wear Kippot and Tallim to Mass. The reason most often given is that it is a distraction or that it sets the Jewish person apart. Focus is then on the person instead of Jesus and His sacrifice in the Mass.

On the other hand, if you go regularly to the same parish, then the distraction should lessen over time as people get used to you. In fact, some people will be edified to see a Jewish person who has entered the Church and is now receiving Our Lord. But there will always be those who will be suspicious of your motives.

Hopefully, as we develop a Community within the Church, the sight of Hebrew Catholics reflecting their heritage will become more edifying and less distracting.

2. Our response

L., the Church is attempting to change millennia old negative attitudes regarding the Jewish people - and much has already been accomplished. But there is still negativity regarding Judaism and the Jewish people. I still encounter antisemitism in the Church.

Our response must be to live and witness to the love and mercy of Jesus. It is through contact with us that those who remain negative or antisemitic can encounter a 'Jew', can learn more about their own heritage and about their Jewish Lord.

We have to dig deep and be fortified by the Holy Spirit, asking for the strength and wisdom for these encounters. One response that we should never accept is to stay away from Mass and the Eucharist, from our direct encounter with our Lord and the nourishment He provides. We should never let others separate us from our Lord. If this priest is too much of a burden for you now, then go to another parish, another Mass.

3. Finally, you ask:

> *Does not wearing Kippot and Tallim make us better Christians?>*

I would have to say unequivocally - NO, wearing K & T does NOT make us better Christians. There is a lot that can be said positively, I believe, about Hebrew Catholics wearing K & T. But the measure of being better Christians is how much we love, as understood in the terms that Jesus defined it and taught us by the Church.

Praying that our Lord will give you the strength to bear these types of encounters, the wisdom to stay close to our Lord, and the heart to love all who offend. **D.**

Quite a few of our members ... already wrote what they think you should do. I just wanted to welcome you to our group. Hope we can keep your spirit going.

The priest should turn on EWTN when Bob Fishman is on. He always wears kippa and tallit when he goes to Mass.

And you know what Mother Angelica thinks of any one who is a "progressive" Catholic... **A.**

D. & L.: Just to (respectfully!) add my own 2 cents to one of your observations, I would actually encourage **L.** to continue wearing the K&T to Mass if he feels strongly that it gives glory to God. **T**o my mind, such garb SHOULD BE no more distracting than the very colorful (and beautiful) ethnic African dresses that some of my fellow parishoners (in my inner city ... parish) wear every Sunday. Or the "kinte" cloth overshirts worn by their husbands! The Catholic Church is becoming more and more diverse, and **L.** seems to me to simply be on the "cutting edge" of that diversity. ...

... "Man looks on the externals, but God sees the heart." No, you go back, and go "humbly proud," proclaiming the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as the King of the Universe before whom it is only fitting to wear "holy attire." If this priest was really "progressive" (in the literal sense of the word), he would have had you up in the sanctuary last Sunday (Pentecost) alongside the Hispanic and Nigerian lectors giving their simul-readings of the Liturgy of the Word in Spanish & Ibo **FB**

As a priest, I would very much agree with what **D.** has said on the question of a tallit gadol and kippah in Mass. Needless to say, it would not present any problems for this priest if I were fortunate enough to have any Jewish converts in my rural ... parish. I would be delighted to see them at Mass.

I would, however, gently observe that we are called upon to exercise the virtue of charity especially to those who are not particularly charitable towards us. Anonymous denunciations are not exactly charitable and - quite rightly - are normally ignored anyway. They are normally put into the 'recycle' bin.

The simplest way to resolve the matter would be write to the Bishop, explain the situation charitably and also the religious significance of the kippah and tallit for a Hebrew Catholic. Ask him for his guidance.

One thing though - wearing a kippah or a tallit does not make one a better Christian, anymore than wearing a mitre or a chasuble.

Best wishes, **Fr. M.**

Thank you, everyone, for your responses. I needed them. Sincerely in Yeshua and Miriam, Li'hit. L.

<... when I casually mentioned to my (new) pastor that my kids had given me a Hebrew dictionary for Christmas, he gave me a half-hour lecture about how Christians need to "move on" and "get beyond" the "Old Law." >

Wow! Anti-Judaism dies hard. I am so thankful for JPPII who has done so much to try and reconcile the Church

with the Jewish people. I wish that more people would follow his lead, especially pastors. Being Jewish is more than a religion. It is an ethnic heritage and even more important an heritage specifically designed by both haShem and Man to glorify the Most High in every aspect of life, even the most minor things that we do.

I remember in the movie "Snow in August" (based on the book by Pete Hamill), the Rabbi is explaining to the altar boy why he cannot turn on his own lights during Shabbat and basically tells him it is "to honor God." Why is that so hard for people to understand? **AS**.

<... would actually encourage L. to continue wearing the K&T to Mass if he feels strongly that it gives glory to God.>

I would suggest that if it gives the impression, for instance that he is wearing some kind of religious vestment he consider not doing so. Jesus is not glorified by traditional manifestations of Jewish piety or even by maintaining aspects of the law, as interpreted by men, such as not turning lights on Saturday, but by worship of His Body, Blood Soul and Divinity present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar and by loving God before all else and our neighbor as ourselves.

Perhaps wearing a yarmulka and Tallis is more akin to the Pharisees who wanted to be noticed and a distraction, than concentrating on the incomprehensible miracle of Jesus present in Word and Sacrament. The Holy Father wanting to reconcile with Jews is not the same as wanting us to appear in Church as Jews whose worship was based on the Old Covenant which was subsumed into the New and Everlasting Covenant. Either you believe that or you don't. **Dc. W.**

Dc. W. wrote:

< I would suggest that if it gives the impression, for instance that he is wearing some kind of religious vestment he consider not doing so.>

Speaking of wearing 'religious vestments' at Mass, I was once at Sunday Mass at a parish near home in Florida. At the "Peace of Christ", when turning around to offer 'peace' to the people around me I became aware of this young oriental guy in the pew behind me. He was all dressed up in priestly robes, alb, chasuble in a piercingly bright liturgical green, the works. Never saw the guy before or since, but there he was in the pew with everyone else, going to Mass cool as a cucumber. The amazing thing was that nobody batted an eye. Catholics can sure be quirky at times, can't we? I often think that the Lord must have an amazing sense of humor. **FP**

The most important thing about dressing for Mass is to try and not distract anyone from their devotion and prayers. This goes for the underdressed almost naked young ladies, and the slovenly dressed "we stopped in on the way back from a picnic". And the overdressed and bejeweled

women. As long as we don't call attention to ourselves. Mass is Thanks Giving to God.

As **Fr. M.** suggested, the Bishop should be consulted. The priest then would have some directions and may even mention it from the pulpit with happiness rather than criticism. But as long as **L.** is going to church dressed in a magnificent and classic obviously Jewish prayer garb, the reason needs to be clear to all. I am sure **L.** does not want to look like he is saying "I am a Jew, and here for a visit, but while here, I'll go ahead and receive communion".

Communication channels should be open. You never know if the priest was approached by some of the congregants who seem to be bothered (because of not knowing what's going on) and rather than consult with **L.** and then explain from the pulpit, he just "shot from the hip" at **L.** **AL**

So ... should I not wear green to church on St. Patty's Day? And should my Ibo friend stop wearing his kinte cloth to Mass? Should we drop the use of the terms Amen, Alleluia, and Hosanna from the liturgy? Stop having decorated Christmas (Yule) trees in church in December? Stop calling the Lord "Jesus Christ" and call Him "Salvatore Unctio" instead?

These are all "traditional manifestations of [ethnic] piety," are they not? Why should "Jewish" piety be singled out for exclusion? **FB.**

< I would suggest that if it gives the impression, for instance that he is wearing some kind of religious vestment he consider not doing so.>

A valid consideration however disagreeing ... on this matter I would point out Bob Fishman was received into the Church while wearing his Kippah & other "religious" vestments.

< Jesus is not glorified by traditional manifestations of Jewish piety or even by maintaining aspects of the law, as interpreted by men, such as not turning lights on Saturday, but by worship of his Body, Blood Soul and Divinity present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar and by loving God before all else and our neighbor as ourselves.>

I reply: I'm reminded here of the either/or mentality of the Protestants (Examples: the Protestants say: either you love Mary or you love Jesus; either you go to God through Mary or you go through Jesus, etc). It's not either/or it's both/and. Devotionals EVOLVE in the church and some are taken from pagan practices that have been baptized. Why is it wrong to baptize Jewish piety? The Divine Sacrament of the Altar makes all our personal piety and devotions possible and pleasing to God.

< Perhaps wearing a yarmulka and Tallis is more akin to the Pharisees who wanted to be noticed and a distraction, than concentrating on the incomprehensible miracle of Jesus present in Word and Sacrament.>

The Parushim got into trouble with Yeshua because of a

defect in their INTENT not their ACTIONS. Remember Yeshua being the God-Man knew their thoughts and motivations. We still commit the SAME sins in Catholicism and Judaism has no monopoly on it. I grew up Catholic, I know of what I speak. ... **J.**

I must agree with your opinion regarding the wearing of traditional “Jewish” items as a new sign of devotion within the Catholic Church. Not only would it be a unique witness to others, just like a Miraculous Medal causes attention to the wearer, thus creating new conversations and the opening of minds, but it also brings a new cohesiveness to the great question of which came first in Catholic history, the Jew or the Gentile. Integration of the traditional Jewish items has been a long standing history of the Catholic Church. HolyWater fonts, bread and wine, and so many other items within the Mass are so Jewish in origin, it amazes me that the others haven’t been preserved as well. Perhaps a reinitiation of Hebrew Catholic “sacramentals” would be a good idea, especially during an age where Traditional Catholics are fighting to keep other age old Traditions and sacramentals from disappearing from the inside of the Catholic Church. (Case in point, the Tabernacle and the Stations of the Cross.) Reintroducing something as simple as the Tallis as a new (old) devotional could bring about a desire of a reintroduction of many new (old) devotionals. And aren’t devotionals just a method of humans demonstrating a desire to love, worship and adore a Creator that Loves us beyond our own comprehension? Pax, **Ma.**

Last night I slept well for the first time in weeks. Before sleep though I had settled this problem in my mind, and now want to share it with you.....as you have all been very kind in your responses to my dilemma.

When I enter the Cathedral, I also enter ‘kavanah’, a deep concentration and acknowledgment that I am communing with G-d. I do not look around to compare manner or style of dress. That is not my nature. I was under the assumption that other worshippers were of the same character. That was a mistake on my part.

Until I read your responses, I was unaware that wearing of kippot and tzit-tzit may be a distraction to others around me. That in some way, I was causing a rift in THEIR kavanah.

Before my conversion, while davening, I found it useful (habitual) to move or sway back & forth. (“All my limbs shall declare, ‘O L-rd, who is like You?’” psalm 35) I no longer do that... There, you see, a successful change in personal ritual. I can adapt, I’ve proven that to myself, over and again.

I can imagine that davening would indeed cause a distraction in others. Therefore I should have realized the same might be true with a kippah and tallit-katan. Although

wearing this garb has always been for me a mitzvah, it would be against halacha to continue while knowing that I am causing a division of whatever sort in a house of G-d.

As I walk towards the Altar to take communion, I not only know that Yeshua is present and standing before me, but I FEEL it with my whole being, to the core of my soul. As I kneel to receive the Holy Eucharist on my tongue, I have always been aware that I am taking the body of our wonderful Messiah into my own, and felt some “safety” <?> in the fact that my head is covered in the presence of the L-rd my G-d.

I still get so terribly excited when thinking about Yeshua. Our Messiah has really come! And is present with us every day in the Mass! It’s so awesome ... oh, sorry I can get carried away at times.

Anyway, to make this short uummm, okay, too late to make this shorter, I have come to the conclusion that I will dress as every other Catholic. I will worship as every other Catholic. And I will find a secure frame of mind to do it (kneeling in the presence of our G-d with head uncovered) and I will not cause a division in my spiritual community.

Thank you all for your responses to my need. I thank G-d for this group. It is so good to be able to turn to other Hebrew Catholics for advice and fellowship.

*Today Rabah. Shalom. **L.***

L.: Shabbat Shalom. I am an Irish Catholic very familiar with and lovingly respectful of Judaism. My heart aches for you that you are made to feel it necessary to “strip naked” just because you have accepted Yeshua as your Meshiach and L-rd! I live in California and rejoice with the many who receive our L-rd at Communion as proud Vietnamese, Mexicanos, Philipinos, Eretraians, Hmong and others. Baruch HaShem vBaruch Hu. G-d Loves all of his Children just as they are, and has a special attachment for you because you have so far felt the need to dress as Yeshua did with the “Outer Garment” the Tallit!

Please, I beg of you, at home keep the Sabbath Candles lit as all Christians did for the first four centuries, and set a joyous (beginning is sorrow of course) Seder Table as Yeshua did for His Last Supper (and all of the other Passovers He and His family and disciples did all of their lives). Chanukah was very important to the first four centuries of Christians because it remembered the victory of the Maccabees and gave them hope during their suffering under the Romans. The Holy Maccabbes were some of the earliest Canonized Saints of the Catholic Church. (for some strange reason, their Feast is observed in August, and you can check this in any complete Book of the Saints.) From my research, I am convinced that the Apostolic Christians adopted the Havdalah as the paradigm for the first Eucharist. Just read the opening of the Gos-

pel of John and see if you can see the lighting of the Havdalah Candle. Naturally the first Eucharists were called HaMotzi in Hebrew as well as “The Breaking of Bread” in Greek because it was at the Hotzi-Matzah of the Last Supper the Yeshua gave us Himself and His Agape/Chesed Love.

Shalom uVrakhah:Pax et Bonum. **J.**

<Until I read your responses, I was unaware that wearing of kippot and tzit-tzit may be a distraction to others around me. That in some way, I was causing a rift in THEIR kavanah.>

Dear **L.**, I was moved by your update and, as a priest, I think you have done the right thing even though you were unfairly treated by another priest.

Perhaps as an English priest looking in from the outside, I might suggest that there are some tacit assumptions made by some of the group that condition some of the advice that you have received, springing from a specifically American approach and culture. I would stress that I write as some one who is very much an admirer of the USA, treasures the special relationship between Britain and the States, and is what we call over here an ‘Euro-sceptic.’

Belonging to a country with a written constitution and a Bill of Rights, an American tends to stress very much his or her rights. Obviously, this is perfectly correct but it can lead to an over-emphasis of the individual to a diminution of the sense of the common good. As well as rights, there are duties - the primary duty for all of us being the duty of charity. We have a right within the bounds of decency to wear whatever we wish but we also have a duty not to be a source of distraction to our fellow worshippers. As **AL** commented, we could unintentionally be sending the message that we were observant Jews who had wandered into Mass and then wandered up to Communion. We can exercise a right but what if the exercise of that right unnecessarily upsets our weaker brethren? Certainly, there is scope for education, but in the real world this is not always feasible or realistic in a concrete situation.

The duty of charity is paramount and the fulfilling of that duty does not compromise anything.

As I said, I personally would have no problem with a Hebrew Catholic in kippah and tallit but I can understand how this could cause ‘admiratio.’ It is also a little misleading to see this as simply another example of ethnic dress such as African robes - it is a religious dress similar in some ways to a Sikh’s turban and dagger, something that can appear as a badge of a specific religious allegiance. It is certainly permissible for a Hebrew Catholic to wear the kippah and tallit gadol but it is not obligatory, and until a Hebrew Catholic community and identity is fully established and recognized, it might well be counter-productive to insist on ‘rights.’

Your evident love of Our Lord and awareness of His

Presence is the primary thing. You have done the one thing necessary, and that is far better than simply insisting on one’s rights and making a ‘statement.’

God bless you, **Fr. M.**

Shalom **L.**, I was moved by your response of charity and agree that you did the right thing.

Hopefully the day will soon come when Catholics of Jewish origin will be welcomed to live their Catholic faith and worship God in accord with their irrevocable gifts and calling. **D.**

I just read **L.**’s message about his decision not to wear a tallis and kippah to Mass after all, and it was one of the most moving messages I’ve read in a long time. The whole discussion was fascinating, and I hope David will include most of it in the next issue of *The Hebrew Catholic*. Each of the different points of view was relevant to what the AHC is doing, and the difficulties we face, and the way we work together, and the culmination of it all in **L.**’s message was so clearly a work of the Holy Spirit...

L., maybe the priest who was so clumsy and uncharitable in his reaction might be interested in reading the exchange. He might even be converted about a few things.

Fr. M.’s comment about American Catholics and our emphasis on rights was right on target, too! **MP**

Dear **L.**, *Yasher koach* for your decision in putting the congregation above your own feelings.

J. said, “I think showing concern for the kavanah of his fellow parishioners and putting them before himself is a true Mitzvah. Also **L.** did so out of respect for halakhah ...” the mitzvah of *Kavod HaTzibur* (honour of the congregation).

L., you know you have our support and prayers. You can daven at home in addition, remember. **S.**

Shalom Chaverim,

Just a quick note to say I made it ! I was not struck by lightning when I knelt in HIS Presence to take Communion with my head uncovered. (another notch in my belt)

Again, Thank you all for your support and advice. I appreciate you all.

Shalom.

*(the train who thought he could) **L.***

Continued from page 17

riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!” (11:12). Hebrew Catholics, meanwhile, have a special place within the Church; their association enables them to experience a common identity as the prototype of the Israel of the end, and not merely a random collection of assimilated Jews.

In My Name

Part 2 – FrEd Fride

Ed. Fr. Fride is pastor of Christ the King Church in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

As we continue to explore the Jewish impact on Christian literature, begun in our discussion of the works of J.R.R. Tolkien in relation to the Jewish legend of the Tzohar, the next point of discussion is far more crucial than a possible relation to a fiction work—it concerns the heart of our belief, the Gospel itself. The essential relationship between Judaism and Christianity has been a topic of discussion since the first century. Much has been said in particular about the importance of Christians learning more about Judaism, especially as practiced during the time of the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Himself, so that they may more deeply penetrate the meaning of His words.

A classic case in point of this is the content of the Gospel of St. Matthew, 18:20. Frequently, when discussing the Divinity of the Lord Jesus as expressed in the four Gospels, the lion's share of attention is given to the Gospel of St. John. It is thought that that Gospel is the clearest in terms of expressing belief in the Divinity of Jesus, especially through the clear teaching of the Prologue of the Gospel itself, e.g.: "and the Word was God." However, I would maintain, that to those who familiarize themselves with the Jewish background of the times, the Gospel of St. Matthew is an even more ringing proclamation of the Divinity of the Lord. Though there are many aspects of St. Matthew's Gospel that could be explored to demonstrate this, I would like to take 18:20 as a classic example of a clear teaching that is very Jewish in its content, such that its clear statement of the divinity of the Lord Jesus might be missed by someone reading that verse without a clear understanding of what lies behind it.

The first issue has to do with the use by the Lord Jesus of the expression: "in My Name." For the person today, that is nothing particularly noteworthy. However, from the point of view of the Scriptures, especially the Old Testament it would be an extraordinary usage. In all the Scriptures, no human person ever calls his followers to do something in his name. For the Jew, when it comes to the things of God, there is only one Name, in which things may be done. It is the holy Name of God Himself. That Name is so holy that it is protected by a Commandment, and may not be spoken except with great reverence. The sacred character of the Name of God as understood by the Jewish people, even to today, is a well-documented reality. Jesus breaks with Jewish tradition in repeatedly using His Name in a way that had heretofore been reserved exclusively for the Divine Name.

However, in 18:20, there is another element that is a

clear assertion that the Lord Jesus is more than simply human. He states that if they gather in His Name, then He will be in their midst. This transcends human reality. We are limited in space and time; yet here the Lord simply says to His disciples if they gather in His Name, He will be with them. Some might argue that He is only speaking metaphorically or symbolically, and, if you simply take the verse at face value, that might be a reasonable contention. But this is a classic case in point in which knowing the Jewish background of the verse makes it clear what the Lord Jesus is asserting about Himself. Many scholars believe that verse 18:20 is actually a re-working of a previously existing rabbinic teaching from the Mishna. In a section from the Mishnah entitled Pirke Aboth, the following verse appears: "*If two sit together, and the Words of the Law (pass) between them, the Divine Presence abides on them.*" An analysis of this verse comparing it with St. Matthew 18:20 yields some interesting results. First, consider the parallels:

Pirke Aboth, 3:2 Gospel of St. Matthew, 18:20

two *two or more*

word of Torah *Name of the Word made flesh*

Divine Presence *Presence of the Lord Jesus Himself*

The Lord Jesus is the word made flesh. In this reworking of the rabbinic verse, the Lord Jesus is equating two gathering in His Name with two studying the Torah. The subsequent parallel result is what so strikingly affirms His Divinity. It equates the divine Presence with His own presence. In other words, just as studying the Torah results in the Divine Presence resting on those two, so too does the presence of the Lord Jesus rest on those who gather in His Name. Some scholars see this reworking of the rabbinic text as a deliberate assertion of the Divinity of the Lord Jesus, and not just an 'indiscriminant' divinity, but the very Divinity of the God of the Old Testament.

To hear those words from the lips of the Lord Jesus must have utterly shocked those Jews who heard Him, especially those more educated who were familiar with this passage from the Mishna. They would see it as a double declaration of Divinity. First, because He equates His Name with the Divine Name, gathering men to Himself. Second, because the consequence of that gathering is that His presence would be in their midst, even as the Divine Presence rests on those who study the Law. There would have been no confusion in their minds as to what He was asserting.

However, to the casual reader today, unaware of either the significance of the use of the phrase "in My Name," or the background behind the reworking of the rabbinic text, the richness of the meaning of this verse and the magnitude of its proclamation of the Divinity of the Son might be lost—a clear argument for the wisdom of gaining greater familiarity with the 'Jewishness' of the Gospel!

The Holy Tongue

Canon Michael Lewis

Ed. Fr. Michael Lewis is pastor of St. Michael's, Brecon, United Kingdom.

'Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit.'

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 81

When we look at the sacred text of Scripture, we are indeed looking at the very words of God. When we read or listen to those words, God speaks to us in human words. Behind each word lies the God who loved us before ever we were made. Eternity is present in these holy words, infinity in these letters, and beyond the letters, we enter into the silence of God Himself, for Scripture itself is but a translation, albeit God's own, of that silence into speech.

The words of Sacred Scripture are the words of God. They are words within the Word who took our human nature to Himself from the womb of Miriam. The same Spirit who overshadowed Miriam overshadowed these words of men, and turned them into His words.

Just as the Word took our humanity from the Virgin's womb, so God takes our words in all their fragility and weakness to Himself, and makes them His own. That same Spirit who hovered over the face of the primeval deep hovered over the sea of human words, over the chaos of letters, and through the free collaboration of the human writers, transmuted them into the very speech of God. This is the divine alchemy by which base metal is transmuted into gold.

The creation of the universe is mirrored in the creation of Sacred Scripture. Just as God separated the light from the darkness on the first day, so He drove away all darkness of error from Sacred Scripture. All was done by the divine speech.

The Jewish sages call the words in Genesis by which the world was made 'the ten words of creation.' Rightly then was the first of the 'words' of creation, the triumphant word 'Let there be light', for God's word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. With Him is the fountain of life and in His light, we see light.

Those words of God are put down in human speech in the Hebrew language, the holy tongue, a language which in itself has so much to tell us about our faith. All words are contained in the one Word that the Father has spoken from all eternity. It was therefore most fitting that the first language into which that speech should be set down in writing was Hebrew for the outstanding feature of Hebrew is its shining quality of light and its radical directness.

In its fundamental structure, the holy tongue points to the Trinity whose signature is on all that is made. Most Hebrew words derive from a root form that consists of three consonants and thus Hebrew itself is a reminder of God who is Three in one.

Hebrew has an alphabet of twenty-two letters that originally denoted only consonants, although *w*, *y* and *h* are used to represent vowels in certain positions. The lack of true vowels raises questions as to how the text is to be vocalised for, although a system developed of representing vowels by adding points to the consonants, the points themselves are not part of the inspired text of Scripture.

Imagine an English sentence without vowels (mgn n nglsh sntnc wtht vwls) or a linguistic world where potentially 'bg' could be read as 'bag,' 'beg,' 'big,' 'bog' or 'bug.' This absence of true vowels is a reminder to us of a profound truth: we can only read God's word as set down in writing in the Hebrew Scriptures because of tradition. It is tradition that teaches us how to read the text, how to mark the vowels and so to vocalise the written word. As the Psalmist wrote: '*God has spoken once: twice I have heard him.*' (Ps. 62: 12) There is but one Word but we hear that Word in Scripture and in Tradition. The Protestant doctrine of 'sola scriptura' is profoundly unscriptural.

The Hebrew Scriptures were originally written in the form of continuous strings of letters, with no breaks between the words. The great achievement of the Masoretes (fifth to tenth century) was to set down the oral tradition on how the Bible was to be read. The Bible is always a book that has to be interpreted through tradition for without tradition, that which has been handed down, we would be unable even to read the Old Testament.

One of the main characteristics of Hebrew is that it is language of the concrete and of the physical. As a language, it reaches out to touch and to celebrate the world that God has made. Hebrew eschews the abstract and the intangible but delights in what can be seen, heard, touched, tasted and smelled. It is not the language of philosophers but of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: it was supremely fitting that Hebrew and its sister language, Aramaic, should have been the languages of the Incarnate Word, the Word made flesh when He dwelt among us.

As we know, some time in the second or third centuries after the birth of Our Lord, Hebrew ceased to be a vernacular language, a victim of the grim aftermath of the failure of the Second Jewish Revolt. Like Latin in the Dark Ages, it remained as a language of faith, scholarship, literature and learned discourse. In a miraculous way starting at the close of the nineteenth century, Hebrew has been revived as the language of ordinary people and is truly reborn as a vernacular language. How wondrous is the fact that once again Hebrew is spoken as a living tongue, vibrant and renewed, in the land of Yeshua and Miriam, the land of the Promise made to Abraham so long ago.

The Eucharist and the Jewish Mystical Tradition

Part 2 - Athol Bloomer

Ed. Athol is a lay missionary with the Missionary Society of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament. This series reflects talks that Athol gave in the early 1990's.

The Four Rabbis

A story is told about four Torah scholars (Rabbis) who entered into the mystical realm. One returned from the mystical ascent insane, one still orthodox (according to Rabbinic Judaism), one as a heretic, and another as a Christian. The rabbi that remained strictly Orthodox was Rabbi Akiva who proclaimed Simon bar Kokba as the Messiah in the 2nd century. Thus, as a Hebrew Catholic I must query whether Rabbi Akiva was deluded by Satan (as an angel of light) in his attempt at the mystical ascent. The rabbi that came back a Christian was the famous Rabbi Simeon ben Zoma who was a contemporary of Rabbi Akiva.

Eucharistic Centred

It is only through Yeshuah and his shed blood that one can safely attempt the mystical ascent, and such an ascent must be totally Eucharistic centred. St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross, both from Judaeo-Convert families, reveal the completion of the Jewish Kabbalah in the Revelation of Yeshuah as the Messiah. Avila was a centre of medieval Jewish Kabbalah – so it is quite possible that Teresa and John would have been familiar with the Jewish understanding of the mystical ascent. The seven castles of St. Teresa mirror the seven palaces (heikhalot) of the early Kabbalah tradition. The famous compiler of the *Zohar*, Rabbi Moses de Leon, was centred with his Kabbalistic school in Avila. That the Jewish Kabbalah is truly ancient can be seen in that St. Paul and St. John the Beloved seem to be familiar with its images and symbolism. The Egyptian theology of the Ennead is a corrupted version of this same mystical tradition. Later misuse of Kabbalah can be seen in Lurianic Kabbalah and its offspring Freemasonry. These both distort the Kabbalah into an occultic direction.

Wisdom and Understanding

Hokmah (Wisdom) is also called *Reshit* (Beginning) and is associated with the creation of the Universe in the first word of the Bible *Bereshit* (In the Beginning). Thus *Hokmah* is linked to *Dabar* (the Word) which brings forth all creation. St John in John 1 confirms this Jewish concept linking Wisdom, creation and the Word. *Binah* (Understanding), the third Sefirah of the Head Triad, is seen as the Divine Womb or Mother. She receives the seed, the point of *Hokmah* and conceives the lower Sefirot. *Binah* on one level can be associated with the Holy Spirit as the

Spirit of Understanding. In Catholic tradition the Holy Spirit and Mary are so united as to call Mary the Spouse of the Holy Spirit. Mary, like the Spirit, became a divine womb or Mother receiving the seed of divinity (the Divine Word or Wisdom) and conceiving the God-Man. The role and function of Mary is so united to the Holy Spirit that Mary (*Miriam ha Kadosha*) is the perfect mirror of the Holy Trinity.

On one level each Sefirah in each Triad can represent a person of the Holy Trinity. Also each of the three Triads can also represent one of the persons of the Trinity. The Head Triad with the Father, the middle Triad with the Son and the Lower Triad with the Holy Spirit. In the Head Triad *Keter* represents the Father, *Hokmah* the son and *Binah* the Holy Spirit. Within the Middle Triad *Din* represents the Father, *Hesed* the Holy Spirit and *Tif'eret* (*Rachamim*) with the Son. In the Lower triad *Hod* represents the Father, *Netzach* the Holy Spirit and *Yesod* the Son. The dynamic of reaction within the family of the Godhead is animated by *Hesed*. *Hesed* is the blood of the Divine Body.

In one sense then we can say that Mary is the daughter of *Keter*, the mother of *Hokmah* and the spouse of *Binah*. *Binah* is the mother of the seven lower sefirot that make up the Mystical Body (Adam), just as Mary is the Mother of the Body of Christ – the Church.

The Eucharistic Mystery

This heavenly or mystical understanding of the Sefirot opens up a fuller understanding of the unity of the Godhead with the Church and with each member of the Church. It is only through the Eucharist that this mystery of unity can be found. The Eucharist is the way to the mystical union or marriage of the soul with the Heavenly Bridegroom. It is Eucharistic Adoration that helps sanctify the soul in preparation for that mystical union. The outward appearance of the Eucharist is in time and space but within the veil it is beyond time and space and the whole mystery of the Heavens and the Trinity is encompassed within the Sacred Host, as a portal to the Divine realm. The Trinity dwells not so much in the heights but in the depths of the Sacred Host of the Altar – which is the Sacred Heart.

The Reapers of the Holy Field

The Jewish mystical tradition calls the masters of the mystical wisdom the Comrades or the Reapers of the Field. This field is of course the Apple Field mentioned above in connection with the Shekinah and the Song of Songs. The Apple Trees of this Holy Field or Orchard are the sefirot from *Hesed* to *Yesod*. The *Zohar* links this concept of the

Holy Apple Orchard with the Heavenly Bread similar to the Heavenly Manna. To understand the Heavenly mysteries and to make the mystical ascent one must feed on this Heavenly Food or Dew. This Bread is Jesus himself proclaims John 6. St. John the Beloved, as his name suggests, is a master of this mystical tradition of the Apple Trees of the Song of Songs of the Beloved. Thus John and Paul, both Jewish Rabbis, can be called Reapers of the Holy Field. Thus today the true Reapers of the Field are those who enter in to the Eucharistic Mystery and spend time feeding on the Eucharistic Lord through the Mass and Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration. The *Zohar* says:

“Come and see; Every single day, dew trickles down from the Holy Ancient one to the Impatient One, and the orchard of holy apple trees is blessed. Some of the dew flows to those below; holy angels are nourished by it, each according to his diet, as it is written: ‘A human ate angel bread’ (Psalm 78:25) Israel ate of that food in the desert. Rabbi Shimon said: ‘Some people are nourished by it even now! Who are they? The Comrades, who engage Torah day and night. Do you think they are nourished by that very food? No, by something like that very food...’.”

The Divine Body

The Divine Body of the Sefirot is not only Trinitarian but is the Divine Body of the Messiah/Word (the Primordial Adam) himself. The first Triad represents his role as King, the second triad his role as Priest and the Third Triad his role as Prophet. The Divine Body is the Son as the visible manifestation of the invisible Deity as stated by St. Paul. Man (Adam) is created in his image and likeness. Man also has the sefirot as the make up of his spiritual emotive being. The Sefirot in the Godhead are of one substance with the Deity. The Sefirot emanate from the Deity (Ein Sof/Father) in the sense of generation and procession. In man the Sefirot of his spiritual self (soul powers) are a created illumination made in the image and likeness of the Divine Sefirot. These sefirotic soul powers are reunited by the Holy Spirit with the Divine Sefirot (Attributes) in baptism and we regain the full likeness of God which was lost in the Fall and is relost each time we fall into mortal sin. In Eucharistic Adoration this likeness grows from glory to glory.

The *Zohar* proclaims that the Shekinah is also Kneset Yisrael, the mystical community of Israel and that all of Israel are her limbs (*Zohar* 3:231b). thus the Church, the New Israel, is the Shekinah seen as Bride of God. The shekinah as the Eucharistic Presence is so connected with the Church, that both are seen as Shekinah. It is the Church which possesses and brings forth through its priesthood the Presence of the Eucharistic Lord. Therefore the concept of the Sefirot shines a light of understanding on the unity between Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit: and the unity between Christ and the Church: and the unity of

the hearts of Jesus and Mary: and the unity of the soul with the Divinity. The Shekinah as Bride is seen as a daughter of Binah (Understanding) also called Moon, just as Mary is the Moon (or Understanding) of Israel and the Mother of the Church. As noted above Miriam ha Kadasha (Holy Mary) is the spouse of the Holy Spirit (or Binah) and Mother of the Eucharistic Lord (the Shekinah).

The Torah

What is the Torah? Jewish people call the first five books of Moses the Torah, they also use the word Torah for the whole of Scripture and the oral Tradition. Thus the word Torah is associated with the term Word of God (Dabar). The Jewish tradition claimed that the Patriarchs also kept ‘Torah’ so that Torah was not just the giving of the Torah on Mt Sinai. The giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai is seen as the earthly garments of the heavenly or Primordial Torah. In Kabbalah, as handed down by Rabbi Isaac the Blind of Provence, it states that:

“It is written ‘God by Wisdom founded the Earth’ (Proverbs 3:19). Wisdom (Hokmah) is nothing other than Torah due to the number of its commandments. Also its name was Amon before the world was created, as it is written ‘It was by Him, as an architect (Amon)’ (Proverbs 8:30).”

Thus Torah as Wisdom and word of God is part of the divinity itself – and the commandments of the Torah are only an earthly garment of this Primordial Torah. Thus it can logically be said that Jesus as Wisdom and Word of God is the Living and Primordial Torah who took on flesh in the Incarnation. The garment Torah cloaked itself in, in the Old Covenant, was only temporary whereas Jesus as Living Torah (as the early Jewish Christians called him) took on human nature for eternity – thus elevating man to level of Divinity. Rabbi Isaac the Blind of provence further reveals that from the Primordial Torah was drawn a single name – Hesed (Love/mercy/Lovingkindness). St John the Beloved also states that God is Love (Hesed). Rabbi Isaac explains that this power Hesed (which is the Divinity himself) is divided into three forces – from these three forces emanate the ten sefirot. Thus Kabbalah states that the Torah is based on Love (Hesed). Jesus sums up the Torah as Love of God and neighbour. God is Hesed and Jesus is Hesed incarnated. The angelic salutation of Mary as ‘full of Hesed’ (meleat ha Hesed) proclaims that Mary as Mother of God is full of Hesed or full of Jesus/God. Thus the way of the spiritual life must be the way of Hesed.

David Goldstein in his book *Jewish Mythology* (p.24) states that:

“... the Torah then became personalised as a kind of artisan, a medium by which the creation of the world was set in motion, and the whole creative process planned. In this sense it may be seen as Logos, or the divine word... Connected with the idea that the Torah was present at God’s side at the creation is the view

that the letters of the Hebrew alphabet were in themselves instrumental in the formation of the world. This view is most directly put at the beginning of the Sefer Yezirah (The Book of Formation), which was attributed to the Patriarch, Abraham... It states that the world was created by the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the ten numbers, which together form the 32 paths of understanding.”

This corresponds with the Christian idea founded in the New Testament that Jesus is the Alef and Tav (in Greek, Alpha and Omega), the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet which encompass all the letters, and are thus the Divine Word. The first line of the Bible states “*Bereshit bara elohim et*” (*In the Beginning created God the*). The ‘et’ is alef and tav. It is through this alef and tav which is the divine Word that the creation occurred. This teaching of Judaism is confirmed by the first chapter of John’s gospel. The *Zohar* tells us that this ‘et’ is the Shekinah and 3 Enoch tells us that the Shekinah dwelt with Adam and Eve in the Garden. The *Zohar* considers this as a great mystery or secret. The Hebrew word for mystery or secret is ‘sod’. The eastern Church refers to the Seven Sacraments as the Holy Mysteries and the early Church referred to the Eucharist as the Great Secret. Thus the Latin term ‘sacramentum’ corresponds with the Hebrew ‘sod’. *Zohar* teaches that the Shekinah is a great ‘sod’ and the Church refers to the Eucharist as one of the seven great Mysteries of the new covenant.

Dangers of Power

When one seeks the mystical way or kabbalah to gain more power rather than love as did many of the Lurianic Kabbalists, one enters into evil – Sitra Ahra (the Other Side) and encounters the Evil One (Satan) and his demons often as ‘angels of light’. The followers of Rabbi Isaac Luria (mid 16th century) took the authentic Jewish mystical tradition of Kabbalah centred on Love (Hesed) and used or misused it to gain power over spiritual entities not distinguishing between invoking angels or demons. The Scriptures forbid the occultic practice of summoning spirits – thus the Lurianic mystics generally follow occultic practices which seek power rather than love. Freemasonry and theosophy owe much to this perversion of Kabbalah. True Kabbalah (such as found in Zoharic Kabbalah) warns that to seek power (Gevurah) without Hesed is to enter in to evil – the Other Side. The rigid code of legalistic observance found in *Shulhan Arukh*, that seems to me to be lacking in love, was compiled by a Lurianic Kabbalist Rabbi Joseph Karo (1488-1575) of Safed. He was guided and instructed by a spirit guide – a ‘maggid’ or celestial teacher. Rabbi Morris Margolies in his book *A Gathering of Angels* states:

“Lurianic Kabbalists were also given to summoning angels and demons by using intricate combinations of the names of God, literally numbering in the hundreds.

They did not think of this as magic (though, in effect, it was), since God himself was the means by which they were seeking certain ends.”

Thus Lurianic Kabbalism has introduced occultism into Judaism and the Jewish tale of Joseph della Reina is a warning of this perversion of Kabbalah. The movement of the false messiah Sabbetai Zvi (1626-1676) also followed Lurianic Kabbalah and fell in to sexual as well as spiritual perversion. The only safe way to enter into the mystical realm is through Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament – the God of compassion. In the Eucharist we enter the mystical realm in and through and with the power of his Precious Blood which is the hesed of the Divine Body.

Apocalypse 19 and Kabbalah

Apocalypse 19 describes Jesus in kabbalist imagery. Jesus is seen in a mystical way crowned with many crowns. The Kabbalah equates the ten sefirot with crowns. So John is proclaiming that Jesus is crowned with the attributes of God himself – with the many crowns of the Divinity’s Attributes or Sefirot. Jesus’ title of ‘King of Kings and Lord of Lords’ is seen inscribed in his thigh or right side. Kabbalah states through the teaching of Rabbi Isaac the Blind:

“The world was created in the right side of the Holy One, blessed be He ... In the right side of the Holy One... was engraved all the inscriptions which were destined to change from potentiality to actuality, due to the emanations of all the crowns which are inscribed, pressed and formed in the degree of Loving kindness (Hesed).”

This majestic Divine King is described, in other parts of the Apocalypse of John, as the ‘Lamb that was slain’ as the Eucharistic Lord. Kabbalah only finds its true fulfillment in the Eucharistic mystery as proclaimed by the Kehilla of the Messiah. It is the mystery of humility. The eyes of pride cannot perceive this key to the divine mysteries. It is only given to the childlike and the humble. Jesus is the humble (Aniv) Righteous (Tzaddik) King of the Old Testament prophecy who is even more humble now, as a prisoner of Love in the tabernacles of the world, than when he walked Israel 2000 years ago. The whole of the Jewish tradition, culture and religion was a preparation for mankind to understand this divine mystery of the Paschal or eucharistic mystery – but only a minority of men have been able to comprehend this mystery. However during the Eucharistic reign of Jesus over the earth which is the triumph of Mary’s Royal and Immaculate Heart (i.e. her heart full of Hesed), all men will see the glory unveiled of the Eucharistic Lord.

The Blood of Jesus

The Kabbalah also sees the ten sefirot as the cloak or garment or Tallit (Prayer Shawl) of the Godhead. This Tallit is also seen as the Divine Light in which God encompasses Himself. Jesus is the Divine Light that has come into the

world according to the New Testament. Apocalypse 19 reveals this cloak or Tallit as soaked in blood. This blood is the Love (or Hesed) of God poured out for mankind. Love or Hesed is the principle of unity and life in the Godhead and in time and space manifests as the blood of Jesus. The Divine mercy devotion links Hesed with the Precious Blood. The Old Testament sees blood as the principle of life and thus sacred. Man was made in the image and likeness of God and this is why we can explain the heavenly mysteries as a Divine body in which the blood that animates its life is Hesed.

“And now I saw heaven open and a white horse appear; its rider was called Faithful and True; he is a judge with integrity, a warrior for justice. His eyes were flames of fire, and his head crowned with many crowns, the name written on him was known only to himself, his cloak was soaked in blood. He is known by the name, the Word of God. Behind him dressed in linen of dazzling white, rode the armies of heaven on white horses. From his mouth came a sharp sword to strike the pagans with; he is the one who will rule then with an iron sceptre, and tread out the wine of almighty God’s fierce anger. On his cloak and on his thigh there was a name inscribed; The King of Kings and the Lord of Lords”
(Apocalypse 19:11-16).

The symbolism of this whole passage is Kabbalistic and comes alive with hidden depth when seen in the light of Kabbalah. The glorious coming of the Lord with the clouds of Heaven is here seen as the God of Justice coming in Judgement (Din/Gevurah) but that Din covered with Hesed (the Precious Blood). The beings on white horses are the Heavenly company of the angels and saints (who the Epistle to the Hebrews calls a great cloud of witnesses), the white horses are the power of God. In apocalypse 11 and 12 the heavens are opened and this same Divine King is seen with Mary as the Ark of the Covenant as well as the divine child in the womb of the pregnant Queen-Mother (Givirah) – this imagery is completely Eucharistic. At other times such as in Apocalypse 5 and 6 the heavens open to reveal the Divine Liturgy (Mass). The whole Book of the Apocalypse is a Eucharistic exposition. It is the story of the lamb. That lamb is revealed as our Eucharistic Lord. It is the story of the battle between the Eucharistic Lord and the beast that would destroy the Eucharist. St. John is celebrating the Eucharist on the Lord’s Day when he is taken up into the Divine Liturgy in heaven. It is through the Eucharistic consecration that Jesus and his sacrifice become present on the altar – and a portal or vortex is opened up with heaven or eternity here on earth. By receiving the Eucharistic Lord in Communion we are already starting to enter into the Eternal life of God as explained in John’s Gospel. The true mystical life cannot be separated, since the coming of Christ, from the Eucharist as its central and supreme point. Any mystical movement that doesn’t have the Eucharist at its heart is not authentic. All the mystical

Catholic saints saw the Eucharist as essential and central to their mystical spiritual life.

The Immanent God

The Jewish tradition saw that the Divine Presence in the Temple above the Ark of the Covenant was the point at which the Immanent God entered his creation and maintained it. God’s presence is the Eucharist in today’s world and it is this way through the Eucharist that the Immanent God manifests His love and power into His creation. The more that perpetual Adoration is spread – the more love and power flows from these Eucharistic gateways from the heart of God. *Zohar* 1:7h states that the Shekinah (the Real Presence) is the gate to the Divine. It is adoration of this Divine Presence that opens this gateway and allows the Power (Din/Gevurah) and the Love and Mercy (Hesed) to flow from the heart of God (the Sacred Heart). 1 Kings 9:3 proclaims that the Shekinah is the eyes and the heart of God – and Catholic belief proclaims that the Real Presence of the Blessed Eucharist is the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

“The LORD said to him, ‘I grant your prayer and the entreaty you have made before me . I consecrate this House you have built; I place my name there forever; my eyes and my heart shall dwell there perpetually”
(1 Kings 9:3).

To Be Continued

A Light Touch From our Web Site

All in the Family

Four young novice nuns were about to take their vows. Dressed in their white gowns, they came into the chapel with the Mother Superior and were about to undergo the ceremony to marry them to Jesus, making them *Brides of Christ*.

Just as the ceremony was about to begin, four Hasidic Jews with yarmulkes, long sideburns and long beards came in and sat in the front row. The Mother Superior said to them, *“I am honored that you would want to share this experience with us, but do you mind if I ask you why you are here?”*

One of the Jews replied, *“We’re from the groom’s family.”*

“Cover your head so that reverence for G-d be upon you.” [*Shabbat 156b*]

A Dad asks his son if he would like to make *ha motzi* (blessing over bread) but the son has come to the table without head cover, so he asks the younger son to put his hand on the older son’s head while he says the blessing.

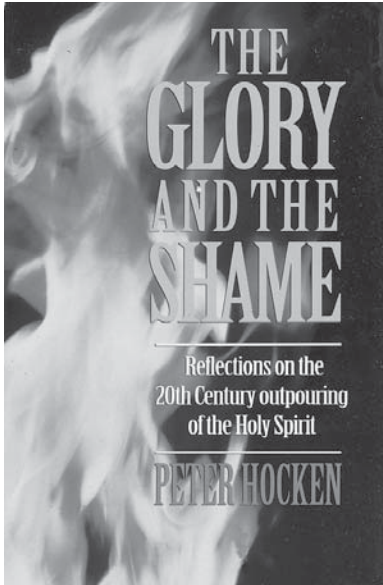
After a few seconds the younger son takes his hand away again. *“What are you doing?”* says Dad, *“He hasn’t finished the blessing!”* The younger son answers, *“Am I my brother’s kippah?”*

From our book shelves

In this column, we bring to your attention items that have recently been published or that have recently come to our attention. Most likely, we have not reviewed the items presented. We quickly examine each item to assess whether it is related to the themes of our work.

As always, your comments are welcome. We are always looking for people to review books that are related to our work. If you are willing to write a review, please let us know.

All items are available from us for the price indicated plus shipping.



The Glory and the Shame ***Reflections on the 20th Century Outpouring of the Holy Spirit***

Fr. Peter Hocken

“The Glory and the Shame is a comprehensive portrayal of the worldwide 20th-century charismatic movement in all its complexity. It is the work of a scholar, who has experienced most of what he writes, and sets the work of the Holy Spirit in the context of Christian unity and the second coming.

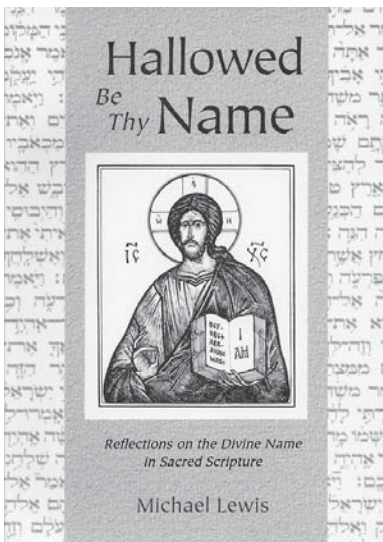
“Peter Hocken’s overview is exciting, demanding, fearless: God’s surprises are emphasized; the link between Pentecost and the Second Coming is dominant; the pivotal role of Israel is brought sharply into focus; the responsibilities of the worldwide contemporary church are highlighted.”

“Peter Hocken is thoroughly at home with the wide spread of theology to be found in Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Reformation and Pentecostal churches ... and well aware of the growing phenomenon of the New Churches.”

Canon Michael Green, Adviser in Evangelism for the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, from his Foreword.

(From the cover)

EGL, Soft cover, ©1994, 204 pages, import, \$12.50



Hallowed be Thy Name ***Reflections on the Divine Name in Sacred Scripture***

Fr. Michael Lewis

“The New Testament, just like the Old, is filled with the language of the Name: the Divine Name stands for the person and the power of God. Just as the Old Covenant is fulfilled in the New, so too is the reverence of the people of Israel for the ineffable Divine Name (‘YHWH’) transformed into Christian reverence for the name of God incarnate. The Name of Jesus is our interface with the Lord himself; the hallowing of his Holy Name is a way of prayer that is readily accessible to all – a simple way that is capable, with God’s grace, of utterly transforming our spiritual lives.

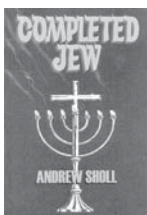
“In this new work, Fr. Michael Lewis explores, in the light of Scripture and Christian Tradition, the mystery and wonder of the Holy Name, and its cultural expressions in the Jesus Prayer of the East, and the devotion to the IHS monogram (spread by St. Bernardine of Siena) in the West. In his reflections upon Scripture, he illuminates the Jewish roots of the Christian spiritual tradition, and offers new insights on Creation, and the transforming effect that the Incarnation has upon the world.”

“This is a book to be read slowly and meditatively. I am very glad to be able to commend it as a source of profound spiritual nourishment.”

Rt. Rev. and Rt. Hon. Mgr. Graham Leonard.

(From the cover)

FAM, Soft cover, ©2001, 126 pages, import, \$11.00



From our last issue . . .

Completed Jew

Andrew Sholl

Softcover, ©2002, 148 pages, import, \$12.50

Andrew relates his journey from holocaust survivor to “completed Jew.” With Fr. Friedman, he helped launch the international Association of Hebrew Catholics and started the AHC newsletter in May 1980.