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PAPAL ENCYCLICAL "IN MULTICIBUS", 23 OCTOBER 1948

[Encyclical letter with a focus on holy places with a concern for their destruction and violations. The letter also supports internationalization of Jerusalem and advocates free access to holy places]

Amidst the many worries which beset us in these days, so fraught with consequences decisive for the life of mankind and which make us feel all the more the burden of the Supreme Pontificate, that caused by the war now convulsing Palestine occupies a special place.

We can say with all truth, Venerable Brethren, that neither joyful nor sorrowful events can lessen the sorrow which sears our soul at the thought that the blood of men continues to flow freely on the soil on which our Saviour Jesus Christ shed his blood to bring to all humanity without distinction redemption and salvation; that under those skies through which echoed, on that prophetic night, the evangelical message of peace, fighting continues, the misery of the poor and the fear of the affrighted are increasing, while thousands of refugees straying and driven from their homes wander from their country in search of shelter and food.

And what makes our grief even more intense are not only the reports which continually come in to us of the destruction and damage suffered by Holy Places, but also the anxiety which these reports arouse in us for the fate of the same Holy Places which, scattered through all of Palestine and especially on the soil of the Holy City, were sanctified by the birth, life and death of our Saviour.

It is not necessary to assure you, Venerable Brothers, that surrounded by the spectacle of so many evils and envisaging even greater evils, we did not close ourselves up in our grief, but we have done everything in our power to find a remedy for them.

Speaking even before the armed conflict began to a delegation of distinguished Arabs come to render us homage, we manifested our lively solicitude for peace in Palestine and condemning every recourse to acts of violence, we declared that this peace could not be brought about expect in truth and justice, that is, in respect of everybody's right of the acquired tradition, especially in the religious field, as also in the strict fulfillment of the duties and obligations of each group of the inhabitants.

Once war was declared, without abandoning the attitude of impartiality imposed on us by our apostolic mission, which places us above the conflicts which agitate human society, we did not fail to bend our effort in so far as seems feasible to us and according as the occasion offered for the triumph of justice and peace in Palestine and for the respecting and safeguarding of the Holy Places.

At the same time, although beset by the numerous and pressing appeals which daily reached this apostolic see, we have endeavored to come to the aid of the unhappy victims of the war and we have sent to our representatives in Palestine, in the Lebanon and in Egypt, the means at our disposal. We have also encouraged the launching and extension by the Catholics of various countries, of charitable enterprises for the same purpose.

Convinced too, that human means will not suffice to find an adequate solution to a problem, the exceptional complexity of which is apparent to everybody, we have had above all recourse to the great means of prayer. In our recent encyclical letter "Auspicia Quaedam" (certain tokens) we invited you, Venerable Brothers, to pray and to get the faithful entrusted to your pastoral care to pray so that, under the auspices of the Most Holy Virgin, differences may be settled with justice and peace and concord return to Palestine.

We know that our appeal was not addressed to you in vain. Nor are we unmindful that while we in union with the whole Catholic world were exerting ourselves for peace in Palestine by our prayers and efforts, men of good will, to whom we gladly pay a tribute of praise, were multiplying their noble efforts for the same purpose without regard for the dangers and sacrifices which they incurred.

Nevertheless, the continuance of the conflict and the increasing growth of the moral and material losses which inexorably accompany it, induce us to renew our appeal to you with still greater insistence, in the hope that it may be hearkened to by the whole Christian world.

As we stated to the members of the Sacred College of Cardinals on June 2nd last, in acquainting them of our anxiety for Palestine, we do not believe that the Christian world could look on with indifference or with barren indignation, while the Holy Land, to which all approached with the greatest reverence and kissed with the most ardent love, is still being trodden by troops at war and subject to air bombardments. We do not believe that it could allow the devastation of the Holy Places to become complete, the great Sepulchre of Christ to be destroyed.

We are confident that the fervent appeals arising to the omnipotent and all-merciful God from the Christians scattered throughout the world, together with the hopes of so many noble hearts ardently solicitous for what is true and good, will serve to render less arduous for the men who governed the destinies of peoples the task of giving to Palestine the real benefit of justice.

We are convinced that these supplications and hopes, indicative of the value that such a large number of people attribute to the Holy Places, will deepen the conviction in the high assemblies in which the problem of peace is being discussed that it would be expedient, as a better guarantee for the safety of the sanctuaries under the present circumstances, to give an international character to Jerusalem and its vicinity where so many and so precious reminders of the life and death of our Saviour are to be found. It is also necessary to assure the international guarantees both the right of free access to the Holy Places scattered throughout Palestine and the freedom of religion and the respect for customs and religious traditions.

And may the day soon come when men will again have the possibility of going in pious pilgrimages to the Holy Places to find there again revealed, in those living monuments of the love which exalts itself in the sacrifice of life for others, the great secret of the peaceful co-existence of all peoples.

With this hope we impart from our heart to you, Venerable Brothers, to your faithful and to all those who will take our appeal to their hearts, our apostolic blessing as a pledge of divine favours and in token of our benevolence.



POPE PIUS XII, 'REDEMPTORIS NOSTRI CRUCIATUS,' ENCYCLICAL ON THE HOLY PLACES IN PALESTINE, 15 APRIL 1949 [EXCERPTS]

[Encyclical imploring for the cessation of hostilities and asking for due immunity and protection to be guaranteed to all the Holy Places of Palestine, not only in Jerusalem]

To the Venerable Brethren the Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, Bishops, and other Ordinaries in Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See.

1. The passion of Our Redeemer, rendered present, as it were to us during these days of Holy Week, makes the minds of Christians turn with deepest reverence to that land which Divine Providence willed to be the cherished home-country of the Word Incarnate, and in which Christ Jesus lived His earthly life, shed His blood and died.
2. Yet at the present time, as We recall the memory of those Holy Places with more ardent devotion, Our heart is full to overflowing with keenest anxiety because of the difficulty and uncertainty of the situation which there prevails.
3. During this past year, We have urged you insistently, Venerable Brethren, in successive letters, that all should join in public prayer to implore the cessation of hostilities which have brought destruction and death in that land, and settlement of the dispute on principles of justice, which would fully safeguard the freedom of Catholics and at the same time provide guarantees for the safety of those most Holy Places.
4. And now that hostilities have ended, or at least have been suspended after the recent truce, We offer Our most sincere and heartfelt thanks to God and voice Our emphatic approval of the labor of those whose noble efforts have contributed towards the re-establishment of peace.
5. But although the actual fighting is over, tranquility or order in Palestine is still very far from having been restored. For We are still receiving complaints from those who have every right to deplore the profanation of sacred buildings, images, charitable institutions, as well as the destruction of peaceful homes of religious communities. Piteous appeals still reach Us from numerous refugees, of every age and condition, who have been forced by the disastrous war to emigrate and even live in exile in concentration camps, the prey to destitution, contagious disease and perils of every sort.
6. We are not unmindful of the considerable aid contributed by public and private agencies for relief of these suffering thousands; and We Ourselves, continuing the work of charity, organized from the beginning of Our Pontificate, have left nothing undone, within Our means, to meet the more urgent needs of this same unhappy multitude.
7. But the condition of these exiles is so critical and unstable that it cannot longer be permitted to continue. While, therefore, We encourage all generous and noble souls to put forth their best effort to aid these homeless people in their sorrow and destitution, We make an earnest appeal to those responsible that justice may be rendered to all who have been driven far from their homes by the turmoil of war and whose most ardent desire now is to lead peaceful lives once more.

8. During these holy days this is Our fondest hope, and likewise that of all Christian peoples: that peace may finally shed its light over the land where He, Who is called by the Sacred Prophets, "the Prince of Peace" (*Is. 9: 6*) and by the Apostle of the Gentiles Peace Itself (*Eph. 2: 14*), lived His life and shed His blood.
9. We have never ceased to pray repeatedly for this enduring and genuine peace. And to the end that it might be brought to fruition and permanence at the earliest possible moment, We have already insisted in Our Encyclical letter *In Multiplicibus*, that the time has come when Jerusalem and its vicinity, where the previous memorials of the Life and Death of the Divine Redeemer are preserved, should be accorded and legally guaranteed an "international" status, which in the present circumstances seems to offer the best and most satisfactory protection for these sacred monuments.
10. We cannot help repeating here the same declaration, encouraged by the thought that it may also serve as an inspiration to Our children. Let them, wherever they are living, use every legitimate means to persuade the rulers of nations, and those whose duty it is to settle this important question, to accord to Jerusalem and its surroundings a juridical status whose stability under the present circumstances can only be adequately assured by a united effort of nations that love peace and respect the right of others.
11. Besides, it is of the utmost importance that due immunity and protection be guaranteed to all the Holy Places of Palestine not only in Jerusalem but also in the other cities and villages as well.
12. Not a few of these places have suffered serious loss and damage owing to the upheaval and devastation of the war. Since they are religious memorials of such moment - objects of veneration to the whole world and an incentive and support to Christian piety - these places should also be suitably protected by definite statute guaranteed by an "international" agreement.
13. We are well aware of the intense desire of Our children, following the ancient tradition, to go on pilgrimage once more to these places from which they were barred by the general disturbed conditions. The Year of Atonement which is at hand increases all the more these desires; it is only natural that during this period the faithful should be more eager than ever to visit that land which was the scene of our Divine Redemption. God grant that these longings be satisfied as soon as possible.
14. To bring about this happy result, it will be necessary, of course, to make such arrangements as will allow pilgrims to approach freely those sacred edifices; enabling each to profess his devotion openly and without hindrance, and to remain there free from fear and danger. It must also be considered objectionable that pilgrims should see these places profaned by sinful and worldly entertainments, which are assuredly an offense to the Divine Redeemer and to the Christian conscience.
15. Moreover, We very much desire that the many Catholic institutions which have been erected in Palestine to help the poor, to educate youth and give hospitality to visitors, may be enabled, as is fitting, to carry on unimpeded the work they did so laudably in the past.
16. Nor can We omit to point out that all rights to the Holy Places, which Catholics during many centuries have acquired and time and again defended valiantly, and which Our predecessors have solemnly and effectively vindicated, should be preserved inviolate. These, Venerable Brethren, are the considerations We wished to put before you.
17. Encourage the faithful committed to your charge to be ever more concerned about the conditions in Palestine and have them make their lawful requests known, positively and unequivocally, to the rulers of nations. But let them especially implore unceasingly the help of Him, Who is the Ruler of Men and Nations. May God look down with mercy on the whole world, but particularly on that land which was bedewed with the Blood of the Incarnate Word, so that the charity of Jesus Christ, which alone can bring tranquility and peace, may conquer all hatred and strife.
18. Meantime, may the Apostolic Blessing, which We lovingly impart to you, Venerable Brethren, and to all your flock, be a pledge of heavenly gifts and a token of our affection.





**STATEMENT RECEIVED FROM THE PERMANENT OBSERVER OF THE HOLY SEE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS, 3 DECEMBER 1979**

1. It is commonly felt that the failure to find a solution to the question of Jerusalem, or an inadequate solution, or even a resigned postponement of the problem could bring into question the settlement of the whole Middle East crisis. The Holy See also considers it important that in this matter there should not be created irreversible situations which would prejudice the desired solution.
2. In his speech of 21 December 1973, His Holiness Pope Paul VI expressed the confident hope that the Holy See would fittingly be able to make its voice heard when the problem of Jerusalem became the subject of concrete discussions in the context of the peace negotiations for the Middle East.
On his part, His Holiness Pope John Paul II, in his address to the General Assembly of the United Nations on 2 October 1979, stated: "I also hope for a special statute that, under international guarantees - as my predecessor Paul VI indicated - would respect the particular nature of Jerusalem, a heritage sacred to the veneration of millions of believers of the three great monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam."
It hardly seems necessary to emphasize that the Holy See's interest in this question has a spiritual, historical and juridical basis, that its nature is not political but religious and that its aims are conciliation and peace. The intention of the Holy See is to preserve and guarantee to the Holy City its identity as religious centre, unique and outstanding in the history of the world, in such a way that it may become a stable place of encounter and concord for the three great monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam).
Needless to say, on this subject, the Holy See endeavours to keep in contact not only with the religious authorities of the various Christian Churches but also with the principal leaders of Islam and Judaism.
3. The ideal and historical reality of the Holy City is manifested in the fact that Jerusalem has been and continues to be the most important centre of all three great monotheistic religions, inasmuch as the City is the seat of three religious communities that live together there and is the site of shrines and memorials venerated by the followers of these religions, who, numbering almost a billion and a half throughout the world, regard Jerusalem as a common sacred patrimony.
This composite presence in Jerusalem of various groups means that an equitable, stable and peaceful solution of the problem of Jerusalem implies, above all, the recognition of an historical and religious pluralism, to be put into practice by according all of the three religions, in their particular expression as communities, full enjoyment of their respective rights, excluding positions of predominance and, indeed, favouring the prospect of a useful human and religious dialogue.
4. The Holy See's view is that such considerations are of primary and determining importance with regard to the problem of political sovereignty itself. That is to say: whatever solution be found to the question of sovereignty over Jerusalem (not excluding the hypothesis of the "internationalization" of the City), the satisfying and safeguarding of the above-mentioned requirements must be ensured, and, at the same time, the international community ought to be the guarantor of interests that involve numerous and diverse peoples.
This does not mean, however, that any solution of the political problem of the sovereignty of Jerusalem can be considered irrelevant to the global settlement of the question. Rather, the Holy See, the more because of the particular character of Jerusalem, acknowledges the need for a solution that will be based on the principles of justice and attained by peaceful means.
5. This perspective gives rise to the need for a "special statute, internationally guaranteed" for Jerusalem, which the Holy See is earnestly hoping for. The content of this "statute" would include, among other things, two orders of guarantees:
 - (a) Parity, for three religious communities, of freedom of worship and of access to the Holy Places; of protection of rights of ownership and of other rights acquired by the individual communities; of the preservation and safeguarding of the historical and urban aspects proper to the City.
 - (b) Equal enjoyment of the rights of the three religious communities, with guarantees for the promotion of their spiritual, cultural, civil and social life, including adequate opportunities for economic progress, education, employment, etc.

It will be necessary, furthermore, to define the territory and list the Holy Places, as well as provide for the guarantees and for the supervision which the international community will have to give to the "statute" and for the juridical form of this commitment and of the accord of the interested parties.

6. In many localities of the Holy Land apart from Jerusalem there are important Shrines and Holy Places of one or other religious confession. Suitable guarantees, analogous to those for the city of Jerusalem and in some way linked to an international juridical protection, should be provided for these places also.



**LETTER FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT
OBSERVER MISSION OF THE HOLY SEE TO THE UN ADDRESSED TO THE
PRESIDENT OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL, 30 JUNE 1980**

[Letter with annexed article reflecting the Holy See's position on Jerusalem and the Holy Places]

On instructions from His Eminence the Cardinal Secretary of the State of His Holiness, I have the honour to request you to circulate as a Security Council document the attached text published in the 30 June issue of *Osservatore Romano*, which reflects the position of the Holy See concerning Jerusalem and all the Holy Places. The English translation, which was made from Italian, may be regarded as authorized.

(Signed) Monsignor Alain LEBEAUPIN
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

Annex II

Text on the Question of Jerusalem published by the *Osservatore Romano* (30 June 1980)

JERUSALEM

In his speech to the President of the United States of America, Mr. Jimmy Carter, on Saturday 21 June 1980, the Holy Father spoke of Jerusalem in these terms: "The question of Jerusalem, which during these very days attracts the attention of the world in a special way, is pivotal to a just peace in those parts of the world, since this Holy City embodies interests and aspirations that are shared by different peoples in different ways. It is my hope that a common monotheistic tradition of faith will help to promote harmony among all those who call upon God."

In His Holiness's words we find reference to permanent historical features (the "common monotheistic tradition of faith"), to present facts (the "interests and aspirations that are shared by different peoples"), and to a "hope" for Jerusalem (that "harmony among all those who call upon God" may be promoted in Jerusalem, in the Middle East and throughout the world).

History and contemporary reality

Throughout the centuries Jerusalem has been endowed with deep religious significance and spiritual value for Christians, Jews and Moslems.

The Holy City is the object of fervent love and has exercised a constant appeal for the Jewish people, ever since David chose it as his capital and Solomon built the temple there. Within it much of the history of Judaism took place, and the thoughts of the Jews were directed to it down the centuries, even when scattered in the "Diaspora" of the past and the present.

There is no ignoring either the deep attachment of the Moslems to Jerusalem "the Holy", as they call it. This attachment was already explicit in the life and thoughts of the found of Islam. It has been reinforced by an almost unbroken Islamic presence in Jerusalem since 638 A.D., and it is attested by outstanding monuments such as the Aqsa Mosque and the Mosque of Omar.

There is no need to point out that Jerusalem also belongs spiritually to all Christians. There the voice of Christ was heard many times. The great events of the redemption, the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord, took place there. It was there that the first Christian community sprang up, and there has been, even if at times with great difficulty, a continuous ecclesiastical presence. Numerous shrines indicate the places connected with Christ's life and, ever since the beginnings of Christianity, there has been a constant flow of pilgrims to them. Saint Jerome is one of the most illustrious witnesses to the Christian presence. In the picture of the world presented by Dante Alighieri in his *Divina Commedia* Jerusalem is seen as the centre of the earth.

At present all three communities, the Christian, the Jewish and the Moslem, are part of the Holy City's population and are closely linked with its life and sacred character. Each community is the "guardian" of its shrines and holy places. Jerusalem has a whole network of organizations, reception centres for pilgrims, educational and research institutes and welfare bodies. These organizations have great importance for the community they belong to and also for the followers of the same religion throughout the world.

In short, the history and contemporary reality of Jerusalem present a unique case of a city that is in itself deeply united by nature but is at the same time characterized by a closely intertwined religious plurality. Preservation of the treasures of the significance of Jerusalem requires that this plurality be recognized and safeguarded in a stable concrete manner and therefore publicly and juridically, so as to ensure for all three religions a level of parity, without any of them feeling subordinate with regard to the others.

The religious communities of Jerusalem and the international community

The three religious communities of Jerusalem, the Christian, the Jewish and the Moslem, are the primary subjects interested in the preservation of the sacred character of the city and should be partners in deciding their own future. No less than the monuments and holy places, the situation of these communities cannot fail to be a matter of concern for all. As regards the presence of the Christians, everyone is aware of the importance, both in the past and still today, not only of the Catholic community with its various rites, but also of the Greek Orthodox, the Armenian and the other eastern communities, not forgetting the Anglican groups and others springing from the Reformation.

In short, the Jerusalem question cannot be reduced to mere "free access for all to the holy places." Concretely it is also required: (1) that the overall character of Jerusalem as a sacred heritage shared by all three monotheistic religions be guaranteed by appropriate measures; (2) that the religious freedom in all its aspects be safeguarded for them; (3) that the complex of rights acquired by the various communities over the shrines and the centres for spirituality, study and welfare be protected; (4) that the continuance and development of religious, educational and social activity by each community be ensured; (5) that this be actuated with equality of treatment for all three religions; (6) that this be achieved through an "appropriate juridical safeguard" that does not derive from the will of only one of the parties interested.

This "juridical safeguard" corresponds, in substance, to the "special statute" that the Holy See desires for Jerusalem: "this Holy City embodies interest and aspirations that are shared by different people". The very universalism of the three monotheistic religions, which constitute the faith of many hundreds of millions of believers in every continent, calls for a responsibility that goes well beyond the limits of the States of the regions. The significance and value of Jerusalem are such as to surpass the interests of any single State or bilateral agreements between one State and others.

Furthermore, the international community has already dealt with the Jerusalem question; for instance, UNESCO very recently made an important intervention with the aim of safeguarding the artistic and religious riches represented by Jerusalem as a whole, as the "common heritage of humanity".

THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION AND JERUSALEM

As early as its second session, the General Assembly of the United Nations approved on 29 November 1947 a resolution on Palestine of which the third part was devoted to Jerusalem. The resolution was confirmed in the next two sessions, on 11 December 1948 and 9 December 1949 while on 14 April 1950 the Trusteeship Council approved a "special statute" for the city on the basis of the Assembly's decisions. The solution proposed by the United Nations envisaged the setting up of a "*corpus separatum*" for "Jerusalem and the surrounding area", administered by the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations.

This "territorial internationalization" of Jerusalem was not of course put into effect, because in the 1948 conflict the Arab side occupied the eastern zone of the city and the Israeli side, the western. The position of the United Nations does not appear at least as yet to have formally revoked. The General Assembly, as well as

the Security Council, has repeatedly, beginning with the resolution of 4 July 1967, insisted on the invalidity of any measure taken to change the status of the city.

The Holy See considers the safeguarding of the Sacred and Universal character of Jerusalem to be of such primary importance as to require any Power that comes to exercise sovereignty over the Holy Land to assume the obligation, to the three religious confessions spread throughout the world, to protect not only the special character of the City, but also the rights connected, on the basis of an appropriate juridical system guaranteed by a higher international body.

HOPES FOR JERUSALEM

In his address to President Carter, the Holy Father referred to the fact that the question of Jerusalem "during these very days attracts the attention of the world in a special way".

The positions of the two sides on the question of sovereignty over Jerusalem are known to be very far apart; any unilateral act tending to modify that status of the Holy City would be very serious. The Holy Father's hope is that the representatives of the nations will keep in mind the "common monotheistic tradition of faith" and succeed in finding the historical and present day reality of Jerusalem reasons for softening the bitterness of confrontation and for promoting "harmony among all those who call upon God". The aim will be to ensure that Jerusalem will no longer be an object of contention but a place of encounter and brotherhood between the peoples and believers of the three religions and a pledge of friendship between the peoples who see in Jerusalem something that is part of their very soul.





ADDRESS BY THE PERMANENT OBSERVER OF THE HOLY SEE TO THE UN, ARCHBISHOP RENATO R. MARTINO, CONCERNING JERUSALEM, NEW YORK, 10 APRIL 1989 [EXCERPTS]

[Archbishop Martino gave this address at Fordham University, proposing a special regime for the Old City that would guarantee the equality of rights of the three major religions.]

The City of Jerusalem

Allow me to be more specific on the question of Jerusalem, and by "Jerusalem" I mean to limit myself to the Old City. Religiously Jerusalem has a singularity and a primacy for the three monotheistic religions - and to the millions and millions of adherents of those religions who, although they may never see the city with their own eyes, consider it to be part of their spiritual heritage and will not give up that birthright under either military or political pressure.

In the eyes of the Holy See, Jerusalem must be preserved as a unified historical and cultural entity; its holy places, knitted as they are throughout the entire fabric of the Old City, cannot be separated from it.

Therefore, in the general spirit of the earliest United Nations' decisions in the late 1940s regarding the internationalization of Jerusalem - decisions which have never been officially rescinded - the Holy See maintain that the city must enjoy a special, a privileged statute, and that statute must be international guarantees. This statute must include two types of guarantees:

- 1) equality of rights and of treatment for the three monotheistic religious communities, including freedom of worship, and access to the Holy Places, protection of the rights and privileges already won by those communities, within the context of cultural and historical conservation of the Holy City.
- 2) guarantees that the three religious communities can continue to exist and live in peace, pursuing their religious, cultural, civil and economic activities.

It must be understood that the declaration in 1980 that Jerusalem is the "central and indivisible capital" of Israel is contrary to international law, based as it is on military occupation without the consent of the interested parties or the United Nations and condemned as it immediately was by the United Nations Security Council; the fact that almost no countries have moved their embassies to Jerusalem must be seen as further proof that the international community rejects the legitimacy of the unilateral declaration.

The Holy See is firmly convinced that the problem of Jerusalem cannot and must not be faced exclusively and primarily by answering the question of who should have sovereignty over it, as has been done up to this point by Israel, the Arab countries and the PLO in proclaiming the Palestinian State.

Such a way of coming to grips with and resolving the problem would always lead the excluded party to dispute the solution.

The Holy City would continue to be a reason for conflict and an obstacle to peace, rather than the foundation for and the "crossroads of peace."

The Holy See gives primary consideration to the sacred, universal and distinct character of the City, and from this, deduces that a "special statute, internationally guaranteed" is needed for it.

The problem of sovereignty, which is certainly an important and delicate one, will have to be a subordinate consideration. Whatever concrete solution might be found for that issue, it will have to be in conformity with principles of justice and brought about by a peaceful agreement which assures that the above-mentioned guarantees will be met and safeguarded.



**STATEMENT BY ARCHBISHOP JEAN-LOUIS TAURAN, HOLY SEE SECRETARY
FOR RELATIONS WITH STATES, 26 SEPTEMBER 1992 [EXCERPTS]**

[Request of the Holy See to grant a special status to Jerusalem]

Jerusalem - particularly the part enclosed within the walls - represents a good for humanity to be preserved in all its dimensions and characteristics. In order to preserve this value, the Holy See asks that the city be given a special status with international guarantees [...] there should be a supranational and international entity endowed with means adequate to insure the preservation of the special characteristics of the City, its Holy Places, the freedom to visit them, its religious and ethnic communities, a guarantee of their essential liberty and its city plan.



**STATEMENT BY THE HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE DIRECTOR JOAQUIN NAVARRO-VALLS,
VATICAN CITY, 30 DECEMBER 1993 [EXCERPTS]**

[...]

8. Questions relative to the city of Jerusalem and other Holy Places, which for so long have been the object of the Holy See's concern, are not directly or explicitly mentioned in the Agreement because of their international and multilateral references, which does not permit solving them with an Agreement which is, by definition, bilateral between the two signing Parties.

That does not mean that the position of the Holy See with regards to such questions has changed or that their importance has been, in any way, forgotten. The Holy See has noted that, in what concerns the territorial questions and the sovereignty linked to this, something has changed in the position of the Parties most directly interested.

After the Madrid Conference, after the negotiations in Washington (1992-1993) and after the historical agreement between Israel and the PLO (13 September 1993), the parties, whose claims are well known, now are sitting opposite one another for direct negotiations. The Holy See, coherent with the principles already recalled concerning its participation in the problems of international co-existence, does not intend to take the place of any of the Parties in treating the problems of territorial sovereignty.

The Holy See, on the other hand, feels the duty and the right to continue to claim, as it has always done, several guarantees in the international sphere. It asks that whoever exercises sovereignty, alone or with others, must adhere to an internationally guaranteed special statute for that which concerns the safekeeping of the highest religious and cultural values found in that area.

In this regard, one could recall the analysis made by Pope Paul VI which could be considered as the basis of all successive pronouncements of the Holy See*: 'The question, seen in its general terms, now offers, in our view, two aspects which are essential and cannot be omitted. The first regards the Holy Places properly called and considered as such by the three monotheistic religions having an interest, Hebrew, Christian and Muslim, and intends to safeguard the freedom of worship, the respect for, the preservation of an access to the same Holy Places, protected by special immunity through their own statute, whose observance is guaranteed by an institution of international character with particular regard for the historical and religious physiognomy of Jerusalem. The second aspect of the question refers to the free enjoyment of religious and civil rights which persons have a right to expect in the seats, in the activities of all communities present in the territory' of the Holy Land.

The Holy See maintains that its position is mirrored in the consensus of the international community, shown in a privileged way in resolution 181 (II), adopted by the United Nations [General Assembly] on 29 November 1947, even if today those ends could be equally reached with means and instruments different from those foreseen at the time.

The Holy See, in solidarity with the leaders of all three monotheistic religions and with so many other men of good will, hopes always for the day in which the Holy City of Jerusalem can truly become the crossroads city of peace, a privileged place for the meeting of peoples, cultures and civilizations.

In this context, the Holy See expresses its trust in the international community - and in the Parties more directly interested in the global future of the territory of Jerusalem, the State of Israel and the Palestinians - so that all commit themselves to consider this their position, which is also the expression of universal interest towards the particular religious and cultural values so intimately linked with the Holy City of Jerusalem and its neighbouring areas.





**ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II DURING THE EXCHANGE OF GREETINGS WITH THE
DIPLOMATIC CORPS ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE, 13 JANUARY 1996 [EXCERPTS]**

[Excerpts calling for a solution of the Question of Jerusalem]

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I thank you for your presence and for the good wishes formulated by your Dean with such refinement of sentiment and expression. Please accept in return my own fervent wish that God will bless you, your families and your nations; may he grant to everyone a year of happiness! [...]
2. Today we cannot but rejoice to see here, for the first time, the Representative of the Palestinian People. For more than a year, as you know, the Holy See has enjoyed diplomatic relations with the State of Israel. We had been looking forward to this happy state of affairs, because it is the eloquent sign that the Middle East has resolutely taken the path of peace proclaimed to mankind by the Child born in Bethlehem. May God assist the Israelis and Palestinians to live from now on side by side, with one another, in peace, mutual esteem and sincere cooperation! Future generations demand this and the whole region will benefit from it.

But allow me to confide that this hope could prove ephemeral if a just and adequate solution is not also found to the particular problem of Jerusalem. The religious and universal dimension of the Holy City demands a commitment on the part of the whole international community, in order to ensure that the City preserves its uniqueness and retains its living character. The Holy Places, dear to the three monotheistic religions, are of course important for believers, but they would lose much of their significance if they were not permanently surrounded by active communities of Jews, Christians and Muslims, enjoying true freedom of conscience and religion, and developing their own religious, educational and social activities. The year 1996 should see the beginning of negotiations on the definitive status of the territories under the administration of the National Palestinian Authority, and also on the sensitive issue of the City of Jerusalem. It is my hope that the international community will offer the political partners most directly involved the juridical and diplomatic instruments capable of ensuring that Jerusalem, one and holy, may truly be a "crossroads of peace" [...].





CONSIDERATIONS OF THE SECRETARIAT OF STATE OF THE VATICAN ON JERUSALEM,
MAY 1996

[Summary of the Holy See's relationship with Jerusalem].

1. The fundamental agreement between the Holy See and the state of Israel was signed on Dec. 30, 1993. In Article 11.2 of the agreement we find the same basic concept that appears in Article 24 of the Lateran Treaty, which was an agreement between the Holy See and the Italian state signed on Feb. 11, 1929 [ending a long controversy arising out of the occupation of Rome in 1870]. Paragraph 2 of Article 11 of the fundamental agreement says: "The Holy See ... is solemnly committed to remaining a stranger to all merely temporal conflicts, which principle applies specifically to disputed territories and unsettled borders." This statement has given rise to a number of critical observations, especially when reference is being made to the status of Jerusalem. In part these reservations may be due to the fact that few people have paid proper attention to the first part of the same Paragraph 2 of Article 11, where it says that the Holy See maintains "in every case the right to exercise its moral and spiritual teaching office."
2. On the same day that the agreement was signed, the Press Office of the Holy See publicly presented a detailed official statement which included, among other things, an explanation of the meaning of Article 11.2. The statement said that the Holy See would not get involved in territorial problems as far as strictly technical aspects were concerned, but it would not renounce its mission or its right to express its judgment on the moral dimensions that each of these questions necessarily entails.
3. The same statement made a specific reference to the question of Jerusalem and affirmed:
 - That questions relative to the city of Jerusalem have been a cause of concern for the Holy See for a long time.
 - That these questions are not mentioned in the agreement because of their international and multilateral character, which prevents their being resolved by the fundamental agreement, which by its nature is bilateral, binding only the two parties which signed it.
 - That these questions remain important for the Holy See, which has not changed its position on them (a position which the statement then proceeds to illustrate).

I. Analysis of the Question

1. There exists a territorial problem relative to Jerusalem. Since 1967, when a part of the city was militarily occupied and then annexed, this problem has become more obvious and more difficult. The part of the city that was occupied and annexed is where most of the holy places of the three monotheistic religions are situated. The Holy See has always insisted that this territorial question should be resolved equitably and by negotiation. The Holy See, as the previously mentioned Article 11 of the fundamental agreement indicates, is not concerned with the question of how many square meters or kilometers constitute the disputed territory, but it does have the right—a right which it exercises—to express a moral judgment on the situation. It is obvious that every territorial dispute involves ethical considerations such as the right of national communities to self-determination, the right of communities to preserve their own identity, the right of all people to equality before the law and in the distribution of resources, the right not to be discriminated against by reason of ethnic origin or religious affiliation, etc. The Holy See's attitude with regard to the territorial situation of Jerusalem is necessarily the same as that of the international community. The latter could be summarized as follows: The part of the city militarily occupied in 1967 and subsequently annexed and declared the capital of the state of Israel is occupied territory, and all Israeli measures which exceed the power of a belligerent occupant under international law are therefore null and void. In particular, this same position was expressed and is still expressed by Resolution

478 of the UN Security Council, adopted on Aug. 20, 1980, which declared the Israeli "basic law" concerning Jerusalem to be "null and void," and which invited countries with embassies in Jerusalem to move them elsewhere. As is well known, when the Holy See entered into diplomatic relations with the state of Israel, it opened its nunciature (embassy) in Tel Aviv, where indeed the overwhelming majority of the embassies are situated. It is also well known that the apostolic delegation for Jerusalem and Palestine (opened on Feb. 11, 1948, before the state of Israel was established) continues to function.

2. There is, however, a further aspect of Jerusalem which in the Holy See's view goes well beyond the simple territorial aspect: This is the "religious dimension" of the city, the particular value which it has for the Jewish, Christian and Muslim believers who live there, and for Jewish, Christian and Muslim believers throughout the world.

It is a question here of a value which must be considered as having a worldwide and universal character: Jerusalem is a "treasure of the whole of humanity."

For decades and long before the 1967 occupation, the Holy See has always been very attentive to this aspect and has not failed to intervene when necessary, insisting on the need for adequate measures to protect the singular identity of the holy city. An explanation of what this protection consists of and what characteristics it must have in order to meet its objectives can be outlined as follows in II, 2.

- a) With a view to safeguarding the universal character of a city already claimed by two peoples (Arab and Jewish) and held sacred by three religions, the Holy See supported the proposal for the internationalization of the territory, the *corpus separatum* called for by UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (II) of Nov. 29, 1947. The Holy See at the time considered the *corpus separatum* as an adequate means, a useful juridical instrument, for preventing Jerusalem from becoming a cause and arena of conflict, with the resulting loss of an important aspect of its identity (as in fact subsequently happened and continues to happen).
- b) In the years that followed, although the objective of internationalization was shown to be unattainable, the Holy See- especially, but not only through public statements of the popes- continued to call for the protection of the holy city's identity. It consistently drew attention to the need for an international commitment in this regard. To this end, the Holy See has consistently called for an international juridical instrument: which is what is meant by the phrase *an internationally guaranteed special statute*.
- c) Following the well-known events of 1967 and their aftermath, the Holy See's concern has not waned, but has become ever more insistent. Documented proof of this concern can be found in Archbishop Edmond Farhat's collection of documents titled Jerusalem in Papal Documents from 1887 to 1984 published in Rome in 1987. This valuable work has also been translated into Arabic and published in Lebanon. Among these documents the following can be listed as examples for their comprehensiveness and clarity:
 - The address of Pope Paul VI to the cardinals and prelates of the Roman Curia on Dec. 22, 1967.
 - The statement distributed at the United Nations by the Holy See's Permanent Observer Mission on Dec. 3, 1979.
 - The article which appeared in the June 30-July 1, 1980, edition of L'Osservatore Romano.

II. Clarification of Some Concepts

1. It is important to note that in its interventions the Holy See has always insisted on yet another question which, given the particular situation of Jerusalem, is of fundamental importance precisely for safeguarding the identity of the Holy City: Jerusalem is equally regarded as sacred by the three great monotheistic religions- Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In other words, no unilateral claim made in the name of one or other of these religions or by reason of historical precedence or numerical preponderance is acceptable. Jerusalem is a unique reality, universal because of its sacredness as a whole and for the three religions. This was clearly underscored by His Holiness Pope John Paul II in his apostolic letter *Redemptionis Anno* of April 20, 1984. There he writes: "Jews ardently love [Jerusalem and in every age venerate her memory, abundant as she is in many remains and monuments from the time of David, who chose her as the capital, and of Solomon, who built the temple there. Therefore they turn their minds to her daily, one may say, and point to her as the sign of their nation...." "Christians honor her with a religious and intent concern because there the words of Christ so often resounded, there the great events of the redemption were accomplished: the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord. In the city of Jerusalem the first Christian community sprang up and remained throughout the centuries a continual ecclesial presence despite difficulties...." "Muslims also call Jerusalem 'holy,' with a profound attachment that goes back to the origins of Islam and spring from the fact that they have there many special places of pilgrimage and for more than a thousand years have dwelt there, almost without interruption."
2. It would also seem important and fundamental to explain what the Holy See means by *safeguarding the identity* of Jerusalem and what it means by *guarantees*. In the Holy See's view:
 - The historical and material characteristics of the city as well as its religious and cultural characteristics must be preserved, and perhaps today it is necessary to speak of restoring and safeguarding those still existing.

-There must be equality of rights and treatment for those belonging to the communities of the three religions found in the city, in the context of the freedom of spiritual, cultural, civic and economic activities.

-The holy places situated in the city must be preserved, and the rights of freedom of religion and worship, and of access for residents and pilgrims alike, whether from the Holy Land itself or from other parts of the world, must be safeguarded.

At stake is the basic question of preserving and protecting the identity of the holy city in its entirety, in every aspect. For example, the simple "extraterritoriality" of the holy places, with the assurance that pilgrims would be able to visit them without hindrance, would not suffice. The identity of the city includes a sacred character which belongs not just to the individual sites or monuments, as if these could be separated from one another or isolated from the respective communities. The sacred character involves Jerusalem in its entirety, its holy places and its communities.

III. Situation After the Oslo Agreements

The Oslo agreements between the Israelis and the Palestinians called for a second stage, in which some particularly delicate and difficult problems would be dealt with. These include the whole question of Jerusalem. From this perspective the Holy See, firmly maintaining its position, together with the requirements that follow from it, believes that certain considerations can be formulated:

1. It is foreseen that negotiations will take place. The promise of negotiations and the presumption that they will take place are already in themselves a positive development, but only a beginning. The Holy See can only hope that the intentions expressed by the parties most directly involved will become a reality. The Holy See is ready to offer its support in this regard, in accordance with the possibilities open to it and its specific character.
2. As they are now prospected, the negotiations are expected to include the participation of the sponsors of the peace process and, in the light of statements made in the last few months, other parties also could be invited to contribute. The Holy See believes in the importance of extending representation at the negotiating table, precisely in order to ensure that the negotiations themselves are fair and that no aspect of the problem is overlooked.
3. It is essential that the parties to the negotiations take fair and appropriate account of the sacred and universal character of the city. This requires that any possible solution should have the support of the three religions, both at the local level and beyond, and that the international community should in some way be involved.
4. In effect, the territorial and religious dimensions of the problem, although often separated in order to facilitate proper and thorough discussions of the situation, are interrelated. They are such that a political solution will not be valid unless it takes into account in a profound and just manner the religious needs present in the city. This the Holy See has often stressed. These are needs stemming from history, but above all they are needs of today; they concern, before all else, the full observance of that most fundamental of human rights, the right to freedom of religion and conscience.

IV. Conclusions

The patriarchs and the other Christian religious leaders in Jerusalem on Nov. 14, 1994, issued a memorandum on the holy city. In the final part of their document they wrote: "It is necessary to accord Jerusalem a special statute which will allow Jerusalem not to be victimized by laws imposed as a result of hostilities or wars, but to be an open city which transcends local, regional and world political troubles. This statute, established in common by local political and religious authorities, should also be guaranteed by the international community."

This demand of the Christian religious leaders of Jerusalem substantially reflects what the Holy See has insisted on for years, and which was repeated, though in different terms, by His Holiness Pope John Paul II last Jan. 13, in his address to the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See:

1. His Holiness first invoked divine assistance: "May God assist the Israelis and the Palestinians to live from now on side by side with one another in peace, mutual esteem and sincere cooperation!" He added: "Allow me to confide that this hope could prove ephemeral if a just and adequate solution is not also found to the particular problem of Jerusalem." (Thus the question of Jerusalem, together with all that it involves -politically, territorially, religiously, demographically, etc.-exists and is a fundamental one.)
2. The pope continued: "The religious and universal dimension of the holy city demands a commitment on the part of the whole international community in order to ensure that the city preserves its uniqueness and retains its living character." (The pope thus calls for a commitment that is international in nature in order to preserve Jerusalem's identity, especially from the religious and cultural point of view, the very reason why the city constitutes an important part of the world's patrimony.) He goes on to say that: "The holy places, dear to the three monotheistic religions, are of course important for believers, but they would lose much of their significance if they were not permanently surrounded by active communities of Jews, Christians and

Muslims, enjoying true freedom of conscience and religion, and engaging in their own religious, educational and social activities."

3. And referring to the scheduled negotiations which should take into account the question of Jerusalem in its entirety, the pope said: "It is my hope that the international community will offer to the political partners most directly involved the juridical and diplomatic instruments capable of ensuring that Jerusalem, one and holy, may truly be a crossroads of peace." (Here His Holiness is asking for an international instrument and for international assistance to safeguard the true value that Jerusalem has for Israelis and Palestinians, for Jews, Christians and Muslims).

The pope addresses this call to the good will of the political leaders of that region and of the whole world, and to their sense of justice. It is a plea he makes to all believers and a prayer to the God of the three religions, who chose to bless that region with a special manifestation of his presence. God did so in order to call men and women to accept, understand and make their own contribution to his message of brotherhood and peace.

These are the concepts presented in two paragraphs of the already quoted apostolic letter *Redemptionis Anno*:

"Jerusalem contains communities of believers full of life, whose presence the peoples of the whole world regard as a sign and source of hope-especially those who consider the holy city to be in a certain way their spiritual heritage and a symbol of peace and harmony.

"Indeed, insofar as she is the homeland of the hearts of all the spiritual descendants of Abraham who hold her very dear, and the place where, according to faith, the created things of earth encounter the infinite transcendence of God, Jerusalem stands out as a symbol of coming together, of union and of universal peace for the human family."





**PERMANENT OBSERVER MISSION OF THE HOLY SEE TO THE UN,
NON-PAPER ON JERUSALEM, 20 JULY 1998**

[The "Non-Paper on Jerusalem" was published on 6 Aug. 1998 by the Holy See's observer mission to the UN, criticizing Israel for its decision to broaden Jerusalem's jurisdiction.]

The persistent lack of progress in the Middle East peace process is continuing to cause serious concern and is giving rise to a strong feeling of frustration among people in that region, as they see the hopes raised by agreements courageously reached in the past steadily diminishing.

The international community, through resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations, or through agreements supported and encouraged by it, has repeatedly sought, and continues to seek, to build a world in which the right of peoples to self-determination will be ever more respected and the peace and security of every citizen will be more effectively guaranteed. Unilaterally adopted decisions, while giving the impression of being acts of provocation, seem to challenge the validity and even the very force of international law.

"The decision by the Government of Israel on 21 June 1998 to take steps to broaden the jurisdiction and planning boundaries of Jerusalem (S/PRST/1998/21 of 13 July 1998) is causing great disquiet. It certainly does not favor dialogue aimed at a solution of the problem of the Holy City, which is universally recognized as a heritage of humanity and the cradle of the three great monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam).

In this context the Holy See recalls especially United Nations General Assembly Resolution ES-10/2 of 25 April 1997, which condemned the construction of new settlements in East Jerusalem, and in particular operative paragraph 11 thereof which reads: "Recommends that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of the City of Jerusalem, which should be reached in permanent status negotiations between the parties, should include internationally guaranteed provisions to insure the freedom of religion and of conscience of its inhabitants, as well as permanent, free and unhindered access to the Holy Places by the faithful of all religions and nationalities".

In consideration of the special identity of the Holy City, an outstanding religious and cultural center in the history of humanity, the Holy See appeals to the international community to ensure the avoidance of irreversible solutions which could prejudice the very future of Jerusalem and cause it to lose the universal character which makes it a heritage of humanity.

At the same time, realizing how important the political question is for the Holy City, the Holy See urges all parties concerned to continue along the path begun at the Madrid Conference and to respect the commitments already reached.

The Holy See likewise urges them not to spare the efforts needed for the attainment of a solution which, based on principles of justice and on respect for legitimate aspirations of the parties, will secure peaceful co-existence of the two peoples and include internationally guaranteed provisions to ensure the freedom of religion and of conscience of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as well as permanent and unhindered access to the Holy Places by the faithful of all religions and nationalities.



**VATICAN FOREIGN MINISTER ARCHBISHOP JEAN-LOUIS TAURAN, ADDRESS TO THE
WORLD CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS, JERUSALEM, 26 OCTOBER 1998 [EXCERPTS]**

[The Address, expressing the Holy See's view regarding Jerusalem, was made in the presence of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem and the delegates of the principal Catholic Bishops' Conferences.]

It is Jerusalem that has brought us together.
It is Jerusalem that urges us to look to the future.

And Jerusalem, yet again, wishes to impart its secret,
 the secret which the prophet Ezekiel disclosed for all time:
 "And the name of the city henceforth shall be, The Lord is there" (Ez 48:35).

On behalf of us all, I think it is right that I should thank His Beatitude Patriarch Michel Sabbah for the warm welcome extended to us, as well as for the spiritual joy he has brought us by gathering us together for the sake of the Holy City. This cause of the Holy City has long been at the center of the Holy See's concerns and one of its top priorities for international action, ever since the Jerusalem question existed.

I. THE JERUSALEM QUESTION

Indeed, there is a conflict, or rather there are conflicts, because of and within Jerusalem - all related to its universally accepted uniqueness. It is unique in itself, and consequently it is also unique in its conflicts. It is different from any other city. The introduction to a book published in 1994 by a number of important Israeli academics begins thus: "At least in three respects Jerusalem differs from most other places: the City is holy to the adherents of three religions, it is the subject of conflicting national claims by two peoples, and its population is heterogeneous to a considerable degree". Let us remember what Pope John Paul II wrote in his Apostolic Letter "Redemptionis Anno" of 20 April 1984: "...Jews ardently love (Jerusalem) and in every age venerate her memory, abundant as she is in many remains and monuments from the time of David who chose her as the capital, and of Solomon who built the Temple there. Therefore, they turn their minds to her daily, one may say, and point to her as the sign of their nation."

"Christians honor her with a religious and intent concern because there the words of Christ so often resounded, there the great events of the Redemption were accomplished: the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord. In the City of Jerusalem the first Christian community sprang up and remained throughout the centuries a continual ecclesial presence despite difficulties."

"Muslims also call Jerusalem "holy", with a profound attachment that goes back to the origins of Islam and springs from the fact that they have there many special places of pilgrimage and for more than a thousand years have dwelt there, almost without interruption."

II.

I think it is important to clarify from the very start that when we speak of Jerusalem the distinction often made between "the question of the Holy Places and the question of Jerusalem" is unacceptable to the Holy See. It is obvious that the Holy Places derive their meaning and their cultic and cultural uses from their intimate connection with the surrounding environment, to be understood not merely in terms of geography but also and most especially in its urban, architectural and above all human community and institutional dimensions.

In papal documents there certainly exist emphases and nuances, and they are seen more clearly the greater the span of time under consideration, for example, in a book edited by Archbishop Edmond Farhat in which he gathers papal documents from 1887 to 1986 (one hundred years), dividing this span of time into three periods:

1. from 1887 to 1947 (the first war between Arabs and Israelis), when the Popes spoke of the Holy Land in general and of Jerusalem, insisting primarily on the need to protect the physical integrity of the Holy Places and on the needs of the local Catholics;
2. from 1947 to 1964 (Pope Paul VI's pilgrimage): here the stress is on safeguarding the Holy Places, on freedom of access for all the faithful of the three religions and the right of each of the three religions to have control of its own holy sites;
3. from 1964 to the present day, a period during which the emphasis moves to Jerusalem in a global context and to the preservation of its identity and vocation: the Holy Places; the areas surrounding them; guarantees for everybody of their own cultural and religious identity; freedom of religion and conscience for the inhabitants and the pilgrims; the cultural dimension.

III.

From the references to historical events, particularly those of the last fifty years, there emerges what is commonly referred to as the "political dimension" of Jerusalem in a complex of situations which have arisen regarding territorial control and the actions carried out to gain such control. The concern expressed in the interventions of the Popes and in other documents of the Holy See could not and cannot overlook this aspect. It is ever present, first, in order to prevent the Holy City becoming a battlefield and later to ensure that it does not become, as is the situation today, a case of manifest international injustice. *The situation today has been brought about and is maintained by force. The Holy See has spoken out on this and will continue to speak out*

clearly, without mincing words and consistently adhering to the position of the majority within the international community, as expressed above all in the pertinent United Nations Resolutions. Since 1967, a part of the City has been occupied militarily and subsequently annexed. In that part of the City are to be found most of the Holy Places of the three monotheistic Religions. *East Jerusalem is illegally occupied.* It is therefore wrong to claim that the Holy See is only interested in the religious aspect or aspects of the City and overlooks the political and territorial aspect. The Holy See is indeed interested in this aspect and has the right and duty to be, especially insofar as the matter remains unresolved and is the cause of conflict, injustice, human rights violations, restrictions of religious freedom and conscience, fear and personal insecurity. Obviously, the Holy See's immediate and practical concern is with religious questions, while in other matters - political, economic, etc. - it interests itself inasmuch as they have a moral dimension. If the Holy See has no competence to enter into territorial disputes between Nations, to take sides, to seek to impose detailed solutions, on the contrary it has the right and duty of reminding the Parties of the obligation to resolve controversies peacefully, in accordance with the principles of justice and equity within the international legal framework.

In the case of Jerusalem, both aspects, the religious and the political and territorial, are closely linked, even though they are different in their constitutive elements, in the proper means of dealing with them and in finding a solution to them.

IV. WHAT IS THE HOLY SEE REQUESTING FOR JERUSALEM?

1. First of all it asks that Jerusalem be respected for what it is in itself or rather what it should be, compared with what it actually is. That is what I defined a short while ago as the vocation or identity of the Holy City. Jerusalem is a treasure of the whole of humanity. In view of a situation of evident conflict and considering the rapid transformation of the Holy City, any unilateral solution or one brought about by force is not and cannot be a solution at all.

It is the view of the Holy See that every exclusive claim - be it religious or political - is contrary to the logic proper to the very City itself. I must insist: every citizen of Jerusalem and every person who visits Jerusalem should embody the message of dialogue, coexistence and respect evoked by the City. Exclusive claims cannot be backed up by numerical or historical criteria

Having said that, I must add that there is nothing to prevent Jerusalem, in its unity and uniqueness, becoming the symbol and the national center of both the Peoples that claim it as their Capital. But if Jerusalem is sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims, it is also sacred to many people from every part of the world who look to it as their spiritual capital or travel there on pilgrimage, to pray and to meet their brethren in faith. It is the cultural heritage of everybody, including those who visit it simply as tourists.

2. Consequently, the Holy See believes that there is an obligation to find a realistic solution to the problems of Jerusalem, to all of them, according to their particular characteristics.
 - a. There is a political problem concerning Jerusalem for Israelis and Palestinians first of all which is very practical. The Madrid Conference of 1991 and what followed gave birth to hopes of a peaceful future. Hopes founded on a willingness to talk, to negotiate and to seek to compromise. Hopes which appeared well-founded also by reason of the commitment and efforts of a large section of the international community, and in particular of the United States of America, as the events which took place at Wye Plantation in the last few days have demonstrated. Let us hope that the aspirations for dialogue and peace will contribute to the implementation of what has been agreed upon.

In this context, which is certainly both complex and delicate, the Jerusalem question has been placed at the bottom of the agenda. It is understandable that the difficulty and delicacy of the question of Jerusalem have meant that it has been left till last. But we all know, and the Israelis and the Palestinians are the first in this, that peace and coexistence in the Holy Land and Middle East have no future, unless an answer is found to the political question of Jerusalem. Allow me to quote once again from "Redemptionis Anno" of 1984, in which His Holiness Pope John Paul II wrote: "I am convinced that the failure to find an adequate solution to the question of Jerusalem, and the resigned postponement of the problem, only compromise further the longed-for peaceful and just settlement of the crisis of the whole Middle East."

What does the Holy See mean by an "adequate solution"? It means recognizing that the situation today is one of conflict. It means that Israelis and Palestinians, with the collaboration of all who can help them, have to reach an agreement which corresponds in some way to their particular legitimate and reasonable aspirations, and respects the principles of justice.

- b. As far as the Holy See is concerned, however, the solution of a territorial dispute alone is not enough for Jerusalem, precisely because Jerusalem is an unparalleled reality: it is part of the patrimony of the whole

world. And the whole world has shown that it is fully aware of this when, for example, through resolutions of the United Nations it has sought to defend that patrimony.

Looking to Jerusalem, the Holy See continues to ask that it be protected by "a special internationally guaranteed Statute". What is meant by this? In the Holy See's view:

- the historical and material characteristics of the City, as well as its religious and cultural characteristics, must be preserved, and perhaps today it is necessary to speak of restoring and safeguarding those still existing;
- there must be equality of rights and treatment for those belonging to the communities of the three religions found in the City, in the context of the freedom of spiritual, cultural, civic and economic activities;
- the Holy Places situated in the City must be preserved, and the rights of freedom of religion and worship, and of access, for residents and pilgrims alike, whether from the Holy Land itself or from other parts of the world, must be safeguarded.

At stake is the basic question of preserving and protecting the identity of the Holy City in its entirety, in every aspect. For example, the simple "extraterritoriality" of the Holy Places, with the assurance that pilgrims would be able to visit them without hindrance, would not suffice. The identity of the City includes a sacred character which belongs not just to the individual sites or monuments, as if these could be separated from one another or isolated from the respective communities. The sacred character involves Jerusalem in its entirety, its holy places and its communities with their schools, hospitals, cultural, social and economic activities.

Israelis and Palestinians, in the desired search for a political settlement of their conflict over Jerusalem, cannot overlook the fact that the City has aspects which go far beyond their legitimate national interests. They, therefore, have to take these aspects into consideration in looking for and in reaching a lasting political and territorial solution. In the same way, they will not be able to avoid giving due consideration to the efforts and demands of all legitimately interested parties. In this, Israelis and Palestinians must not feel in any way restricted, but rather honored and reassured.

V.

It is essential that the parties to the negotiations take fair and appropriate account of the sacred and universal character of the City. This requires that any possible solution should have the support of the three monotheistic Religions, both at the local level and at the international level. Besides, as they are being proposed, the negotiations are expected to include the participation of the sponsors of the Peace Process and other parties could also be invited to contribute. The Holy See believes in the importance of extending representation at the negotiating table: in order to be sure that no aspect of the problems is overlooked and to affirm that the whole International Community is responsible for the uniqueness and sacredness of this incomparable City.

CONCLUSION

In these coming days we shall listen to various other presentations and reflections. I would like to end my own intervention by expressing two feelings which I have experienced with great intensity:

- a. Sometimes I have felt great sadness and almost a sense of helplessness: the way forward to peace for the Holy Land and Jerusalem appears very precarious, alternating between progress and hesitation or failure. One has the impression that anything could happen: be it good or bad. Thinking also about the Year 2000, I wish to quote a few words which Pope John Paul II addressed to the Diplomatic Corps on 11 January 1992: "What a blessing it would be if this Holy Land, where God spoke and Jesus walked, could become a special place of encounter and prayer for peoples, if this Holy City of Jerusalem could be a sign and instrument of peace and reconciliation! It is here that believers have a mission of primary importance to accomplish. Forgetting the past and looking to the future, they are called to repentance, to re-examine their behavior and to realize once again that they are brothers and sisters by reason of the one God who loves them and invites them to cooperate in his plan for humanity".
- b. And the second of my feelings: Episcopates of important Nations of the world are represented here. The Bishops are in communion and solidarity with each other, and the initiative of His Beatitude Patriarch Michel Sabbah is founded on this certainty. In the name of the Holy Father and together with the Patriarch I say to you all: let us remember Jerusalem, let us recall its essential nature, its vocation and the love which people have for it, let us help the world and those who wield power in it to remember Jerusalem and to understand that for its sake it should not be impossible to make it definitively a place of meeting, of harmony and of peace. It is my earnest hope that the Episcopates of the world will become Jerusalem's "Ambassadors" within the local Churches, to your respective Nations and societies and to the institutions and Authorities thereof. "Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy!" (Ps. 137:6)



**ADDRESS BY THE MOST REVEREND SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE VATICAN,
JEAN-LOUIS TAURAN, TO THE US CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS,
WASHINGTON, DC, 10 MARCH 1999 [EXCERPTS]**

The Catholic Church's interest in the Middle East goes back to the very first years of the Church's existence. Christians have always revered this region of the world, where God has drawn close to mankind: there the Jewish people had its founding experience of the Covenant; there Jesus lived, died and rose; it was there that the Prophet Mohammed developed his religious and juridical thought. So it is a region where for centuries faith and culture, faith and politics have met, sometimes fruitfully, often in confrontation.

[...] On two occasions the Holy See has demonstrated its fidelity to this philosophy of international relations.

The first instance is in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Each and every intervention by the Popes and their collaborators has consisted in stating that every people has the right to dignity, peace and security. And yet these cannot be secured by trampling on those of others. That is why the Popes, as also the international community, have never accepted, and this still remains true today, the annexation of territory by force. They have never ceased to invite the parties in conflict to meet, engage in dialogue and negotiate. Thus it is easy to appreciate that without the least hesitation Pope John Paul II encouraged the Middle East Peace Process, and in particular the Madrid Conference (his letters to Presidents Bush and Gorbachev eloquently witness to this). Moreover, the Madrid context has enabled the Holy See to reach a "Fundamental Agreement" and to establish diplomatic relations with the State of Israel. The political dialogue between Israelis and Arabs which was going on at the time allowed the Holy See to draw closer to one of the main actors in the crisis, that is to say the State of Israel, without having to sacrifice the principles it seeks to defend and which are adequately reflected in the pertinent UN Resolutions. If the Palestinian partners, supported by the Arab world, were seated around the negotiating table, who could blame the Holy See for pursuing a more formal dialogue with the Israeli authorities in order to contribute more effectively to the cause of peace? It has become clear, as a reading of the 30 December 1993 Fundamental Agreement and the authorized interpretative declarations show, that the Holy See has absolutely not abandoned its principles: the peaceful resolution of differences, rejection of the forcible occupation by one of the parties of an area of the City of Jerusalem and the request for an internationally guaranteed statute for the most religious parts of this unique city.

[...] The Holy Land, as the Popes love to call the Middle East, should be a sort of workshop for inter-religious dialogue, with Jerusalem, the Holy City par excellence, as its symbol. This explains why, and with what perseverance and intensity, since 1947, the Popes have made themselves the defenders of the preservation of the unique and sacred character of that City.

Still today two peoples claim sovereignty over Jerusalem, and the faithful of three religions, both on the spot and throughout the world, look to it as their spiritual home. A political solution has certainly to be found within the framework of bilateral negotiations, but without forgetting, for all that, the sacred reality which the City enshrines. So it is that the Holy See, which has no direct technical competence or ambition whatsoever to intervene in the territorial dispute dividing the two peoples, certainly cannot fail to concern itself with the safeguarding of the sacred and cultural dimension of the Holy Places of the three religions. In its view, this is a universal cause which therefore requires that the entire international community should act as guarantor. The Holy See therefore strictly favors "a special internationally guaranteed statute" for the most sacred areas of the City, in order in the future to preserve and protect the identity of the Holy City in its entirety and in every aspect:

- the historical, material, religious and cultural characteristics;
- the equality of rights and treatment for those belonging to the three religious communities, in the context of the freedom of their spiritual, cultural, civic and economic activities;
- the rights of freedom, of religion and worship for all, and of access to the shrines for residents and pilgrims alike, whether from the Holy Land itself or from other parts of the world.

All this supposes also that these shrines might always remain at the centre of living and active religious communities, where these communities and their individual members have the possibility of fully enjoying their basic human rights and of maintaining their cultural identity.

This request of the Holy See regards, first and foremost, the most religiously significant part of the City, namely the Old City. But such a formula would have to be extended to other shrines outside the Old City and beyond Greater Jerusalem, in Israel as well as in the West Bank.

Perhaps you now have a better understanding of the sense of the words of Pope John Paul II, when in his Apostolic Letter "*Redemptiois Anno*" of April 20, 1984 he wrote: "Jerusalem stands out as a symbol of coming together, of union, and of universal peace for the human family". Or yet again his words addressed to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See on 11 January 1992: "What a blessing it would be if this Holy Land, where God spoke and Jesus walked, could become a special place for encounter and prayer for peoples, if this Holy City of Jerusalem could be a sign and instrument of peace and reconciliation"!

[...]

It must also be recognized that relations between the Holy See and the Jewish world - above all with the State of Israel - have hardly been helped by the failure to resolve the Palestinian problem, the lack of respect for certain UN Security Council Resolutions and duly concluded international Agreements, without forgetting the annexation by force of a part of the City of Jerusalem. [...]

**SPEECH ON "THE VATICAN AND JERUSALEM" TO COMMEMORATE THE 50TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE PONTIFICAL MISSION FOR PALESTINE AT THE UN,
23 OCTOBER 1999 [EXCERPTS]**

[In his remarks, Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran, clearly and concisely defined the Vatican's official position and views on the Holy City of Jerusalem]

"... With regard to the question of Jerusalem, the Holy See has always maintained that this question cannot and should not be reduced simply to one of unimpeded access to the Holy Places. The living dimension of these places requires also

- (1) that the global character of Jerusalem as a sacred heritage common to the three monotheistic religions be guaranteed;
- (2) that religious freedom in all its aspects be defended;
- (3) that all the acquired rights of the various communities with regard to shrines, centers of spirituality and study, and charitable institutes be safeguarded;
- (4) that the maintenance and development of the respective religions be treated equally. In order that all of these may be guaranteed, the Holy See seeks a special internationally guaranteed statute for the most sacred part of the City of Jerusalem."





BASIC AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE HOLY SEE AND THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO), 15 FEBRUARY 2000 [EXCERPTS]

[The agreement covered all basic principles that regulate relations between the Palestinian government and the Catholic Church. It also calls for respect and maintenance of the legal code of the internationally recognized Holy Sites, mainly located in Jerusalem]

The Holy See, the Sovereign Authority of the Catholic Church, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (hereinafter: PLO), the Representative of the Palestinian People working for the benefit and on behalf of the Palestinian Authority:

[...]

Declaring that an equitable solution for the issue of Jerusalem, based on international resolutions, is fundamental for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and that unilateral decisions and actions altering the specific character and status of Jerusalem are morally and legally unacceptable;

Calling, therefore, for a special statute for Jerusalem, internationally guaranteed, which should safeguard the following:

- a. Freedom of religion and conscience for all
- b. The equality before the law of the three monotheistic religions and their institutions and followers in the City;
- c. The proper identity and sacred character of the City and its universally significant, religious and cultural heritage;
- d. The Holy Places, the freedom of access to them and of worship in them.
- e. The Regime of "Status Quo" in those Holy Places where it applies;

Recognizing that Palestinians irrespective of their religious affiliation are equal members of Palestinian society:

Concluding that the achievements of the aforementioned Bilateral Permanent Working Commission now amount to appropriate matter for a first and Basic Agreement, which should provide a solid and lasting foundation for the continued development of their present and future relations, and for the furtherance of the Commission's on-going task, Agree on the following Articles: [...]

Article 4: The regime of the "Status Quo" will be maintained and observed in those Christian Holy Places where it applies. [...]



**GREETING OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE GRAND MUFTI OF JERUSALEM AND THE HOLY
LAND, SHEIKH EKRIMA SABRI, 26 MARCH 2000**

[The note included the following brief remark on the status of Jerusalem]

*Eminence, Your Excellency,
Distinguished Muslim authorities,*

I wish to express my gratitude to you, in your capacity as Chairman of the Islamic Supreme Committee, for receiving me within the Haram al-Sharif which is connected with the memory of Abraham, who for all believers is a model of faith and submission to Almighty God.

This visit of mine, as you are aware, is essentially a religious and spiritual pilgrimage. Pilgrimage to holy places is a feature common to many religious traditions, especially to the three Abrahamic religions. I thank God revered by Jews, Christians and Muslims. Jerusalem is the Holy City par excellence. It forms part of the common patrimony of our religions and of the whole of humanity.

May the Almighty grant peace to the whole of this beloved region, so that all the people living in it may enjoy their rights, live in harmony and cooperation, and bear witness to the One God in acts of goodness and human solidarity. Thank you, all!



**POPE JOHN PAUL II, RECITATION OF THE ANGELUS, CASTEL GANDOLFO,
23 JULY 2000 [EXCERPTS]**

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

[...] For several days, at Camp David in the United States of America, negotiations have been under way to reach an agreement that could contribute to the definitive establishment of peace in the Middle East.

For my part, I wish to accompany these certainly difficult negotiations with my prayer and encouragement, inviting those responsible to continue their efforts and hoping that they will always be motivated by the sincere desire to respect law and justice for all and to achieve a just and lasting peace.

At the same time, I would like to invite the parties involved not to overlook the importance of the spiritual dimension of the city of Jerusalem, with its Holy Places and the communities of the three monotheistic religions surrounding them. The Holy See continues to maintain that only a special, internationally guaranteed statute can effectively preserve the most sacred parts of the Holy City and ensure freedom of belief and worship for all believers who, in the region and throughout the world, see Jerusalem as the crossroads of peace and coexistence.





**ADDRESS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II TO THE NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE
STATE OF ISRAEL TO THE HOLY SEE, 18 SEPTEMBER 2000 [EXCERPTS]**

[Remarks on the situation of Jerusalem and Christian perspective]

Mr Ambassador,

I am very pleased to welcome you to the Vatican and to accept the Letters accrediting you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Israel to the Holy See. My thoughts at this moment are of a deep and abiding gratitude: gratitude to God who in this year of the Great Jubilee led my pilgrim steps to the Holy Land and its peoples; gratitude to the civil and religious authorities for the welcome and attention they gave me during the intense days of my visit in March. [...]

Concerning the delicate question of Jerusalem, what is important is that the way forward be the path of dialogue and agreement, not force and imposition. And what is of special concern to the Holy See is that the unique religious character of the Holy City be preserved by a special, internationally guaranteed statute. The history and present reality of inter-religious relations in the Holy Land is such that no just and lasting peace is foreseeable without some form of support from the international community. The purpose of this international support would be the conservation of the cultural and religious patrimony of the Holy City, a patrimony which belongs to Jews, Christians and Muslims all over the world and to the entire international community. In fact, the Holy Places are not mere memorials of the past, but are and must continue to be the nerve-centre of vibrant, living and developing communities of believers, free in the exercise of their rights and duties, and living in harmony with one another. What is at stake is not just the preservation of and free access to the holy places of the three religions, but also the free exercise of the religious and civil rights pertaining to the members, places and activities of the various communities. The end result must be – as I said during my visit – a Jerusalem and a Holy Land in which the various religious communities succeed in living and working together in friendship and harmony, a Jerusalem that will truly be a City of Peace for all peoples. Then we shall all repeat the words of the Prophet: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, [...] that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths" (*Is* 2:3).

Mr Ambassador, my prayers are with you as you begin your mission as Israel's diplomatic representative to the Holy See, and I am certain that you will do everything in your power to increase understanding and friendship between us, in the spirit of the Fundamental Agreement and the other documents which are intended to guarantee its application. Likewise, the various offices of the Roman Curia will willingly cooperate with you as you discharge your high duties. May goodness and kindness follow you all the days of your life (cf. *Ps* 22:6).





**INTERVENTION BY THE HOLY SEE DELEGATION TO THE UN ON THE OCCASION OF THE
55TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON ITEM "UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND
WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST", 30 OCTOBER 2000
[EXCERPTS]**

[Remarks on the status of Jerusalem and the Catholic position on the city]

My Delegation notes with appreciation the valuable services rendered by UNRWA in bringing food, shelter and clothing as well as educational services and health care to Palestinian refugees since it was established in 1950. [...]

The humanitarian aid provided to the refugees by UNRWA, and the Pontifical Mission for Palestine, which was founded in 1949, will continue. However, they should not be understood as a substitute for just, stable and definitive solution to the problems of the region.

It is the hope of my Delegation that this solution will include the question of the city of Jerusalem.

In light of the recent violence the Holy See renews its consistent call for an internationally guaranteed statute to safeguard the sites sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims. The Holy See notes that for some time now the unique character of Jerusalem has resulted in a "de facto" situation which has given control of the sacred sites to the appropriate religious authorities regardless of who has had political control. The proper recognition of the spiritual patrimony of the three monotheistic religions, under international guarantees, must be a part of the negotiation process which will bring peace to the region. Because Jerusalem holds such spiritual importance to believers representing almost forty-five percent of the world's population, as recommended by the General Assembly, in its resolution of 25 April 1997 (A/RES/ES-10/2) and reaffirmed thereafter, "a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of the City of Jerusalem, which should be reached in permanent status negotiations between the parties, should include internationally guaranteed provisions to ensure the freedom of religion and of conscience of its inhabitants, as well as permanent, free and unhindered access to the Holy Places by the faithful of all religions and nationalities". Moreover, my Delegation believes that the Holy Places should receive protection from their use for political gain. [...]



**INTERVENTION BY THE HOLY SEE DELEGATION AT THE IV COMMITTEE OF THE 58TH
UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON 'UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR
PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST', STATEMENT OF H.E. MSGR. CELESTINO
MIGLIORE, 3 NOVEMBER 2003 [EXCERPTS]**

[Intervention expressing the need for a solution of the issue of Jerusalem]

Mr Chairman,

My Delegation, having carefully reviewed the Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, expresses its praise and appreciation for the work of the Agency during a time of crises and challenges. [...]

With the recent breakdown of the ceasefire the level of violence has increased sharply, and Palestinian and Israeli civilians continue to be killed. The Holy See is convinced that the present conflict in the Middle East will find a lasting solution only when there are two independent and sovereign States living side by side in peace and security. To this end, questions concerning Palestinian refugees and Israeli settlements, for example, or the problem of setting territorial boundaries and defining the status of the most sacred places of the City of Jerusalem, need to be the subject of open dialogue and sincere negotiation. [...]

Beyond addressing these significant humanitarian needs noted above, Mr Chairman, it is the hope of my Delegation that any solution found for the multifaceted problems of the region will include the question of the Holy City of Jerusalem. In light of the numerous incidents of violence and the rigors imposed by closures, the Holy See renews its consistent call for "...internationally guaranteed provisions to ensure the freedom of religion and of conscience for its inhabitants, as well as permanent, free and unhindered access to the holy places by the faithful of all religions and nationalities" (A/Res/ES 10-2, 5 May 1997). Current levels of violence have caused pilgrims to stay away from the Holy Land, thus imposing even more severe economic penalties on all the people of the region, besides hindering the right of people from all over the world to visit and pray at the religious sites. My Delegation also notes that the local population does not have free access to their shrines and holy places. [...]





INTERVENTION BY THE HOLY SEE AT THE 4TH COMMISSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON ITEM 75 – ‘UN RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST’, STATEMENT BY H.E. MSGR. CELESTINO MIGLIORE, 1 NOVEMBER 2004 [EXCERPTS]

[Statement renewing the call for a solution of the question of Jerusalem]

Mr. Chairman,

My Delegation would like to begin by expressing its appreciation of the Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and of the work of the Agency itself over the last year. [...]

Mr. Chairman, it is the hope of my Delegation that any solution found to resolve this multifaceted problem should include the question of the Holy City of Jerusalem. In light of the numerous incidents of violence and the challenge to free movement posed by the Wall, with checkpoints and curfews, the Holy See renews its call for "... internationally guaranteed provisions to ensure the freedom of religion and of conscience of its inhabitants, as well as permanent, free and unhindered access to the Holy Places by the faithful of all religions and nationalities" (A/RES/ES-10/2). Jerusalem, the Holy City, is the common patrimony of the believing world and whoever has custody of the Holy City is accountable for it to the international community. Its governance should not be considered solely a matter for one or other authority.

Current levels of violence have caused pilgrims to stay away from the Holy Land, imposing ever more severe economic penalties on all the people of the region, besides hindering the right of people from all over the world to visit and pray at the religious sites. My Delegation notes, in particular, that the local population does not always have free access to the shrines and holy places. [...]





**INTERVENTION BY THE HOLY SEE AT THE 4TH COMMISSION OF THE 60TH SESSION OF
THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON ITEM 30 – ‘UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS
AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST’, INTERVENTION OF H.E. MONS.
CELESTINO MIGLIORE, 1 NOVEMBER 2005 [EXCERPTS]**

*[Statement expressing hope for a quick solution of the Jerusalem problem and calling for mutual respects
among the different religions living in the city]*

Mr Chairman,

[...] In the hope that the many problems of the region will be resolved by negotiation and dialogue, my delegation underlines that a lasting solution will include the question of the Holy City of Jerusalem. In light of the numerous incidents of violence and the challenge to free movement posed by the security wall, the Holy See renews its support for "...internationally guaranteed provisions to ensure the freedom of religion and of conscience of its inhabitants, as well as permanent, free and unhindered access to the Holy Places by the faithful of all religions and nationalities" (A/RES/ES-10/2).

Jerusalem is the acknowledged home of the three Abrahamic faiths, and whoever has custody of the Holy City has a particular responsibility for it before the international community. Borrowing the recent words of Pope Benedict XVI, we hope that Jerusalem will one day be "a home of harmony and peace" for all believers.

The time is long overdue for fraternal, open dialogue in order to bring about the birth of two states, side by side, mutually respecting each other's right to exist and prosper. There have already been far too many innocent victims, be they Israeli or Palestinian, Jews, Christians and Moslems alike. Only with a just and lasting peace – not imposed, but secured through negotiation - will the legitimate aspirations of all the peoples of the Holy Land be fulfilled.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

