

Holy Week

Guidelines & Resources

Over the years, a number of Churches and dialogue groups have prepared guidelines for teaching and preaching during Holy Week. Their aim is to encourage accurate and faithful expression of current Church teaching concerning the Jewish-Christian relationship. Some links of interest follow.

Australian Catholic Bishops

- [*Guidelines for Catholic Jewish Relations, 1992.*](#)

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

- [*God's Mercy Endures Forever: Guidelines on the Presentation of Jews and Judaism in Catholic Preaching.*](#) September 1988.
- [*Criteria for Evaluating Passion Plays.*](#)

Questions & Answers about Catholic-Jewish Relations (U.S. Bishops). What does the Church say about:

- [*Christians celebrating a seder?*](#)
- [*The Jewish Covenant and the place of the Jewish people in the story of salvation?*](#)
- [*The Jewish people and the crucifixion?*](#)
- [*Groups mentioned in the Gospel e.g., 'the Jews', 'the Pharisees' and 'the Chief Priests, Scribes and Elders'?*](#)

The Seder

The following resources offer some guidance and perspective on Christian interest in the Jewish Seder.

[Ecumenical & Interfaith Commission, Catholic Archdiocese Melbourne *Note on Holding a Passover 'Seder'*](#)

[Commission for Ecumenism and Interfaith Relations, Brisbane Catholic Archdiocese - *The Passover Seder: a Jewish Celebration*](#)

U.S. Catholic Bishops. [*What does the Church say about Christians celebrating a Jewish Seder?*](#)

[Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, *Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations - "The Faithfulness of the Lord endures for ever: Guidelines for Catholic-Jewish Relations" - Appendix*](#)

For a recent scholarly article, see Marianne Moyaert, "Christianizing Judaism? On the Problem of Christian Seder Meals", *Jewish-Christian Relations*, 1 April 2021, accessed 10.4.21 at <https://www.jcrelations.net/articles/article/christianizing-judaism-on-the-problem-of-christian-seder-meals.html>.

Council of Christians & Jews

Council of Christians and Jews (Victoria). *“Rightly Explaining the Word of Truth.” Guidelines for Christian Clergy and Teachers in their use of the New Testament with reference to the New Testament’s presentation of Jews and Judaism.* Melbourne, 1995. [Available here.](#)

———. *Re-Reading Paul A fresh look at his attitude to Torah and to Judaism. Further Guidelines for Christian Clergy and Teachers in their use of the New Testament with reference to the New Testament’s presentation of Jews and Judaism.* Melbourne, 1999. [Available here.](#)

Further resources of interest

Donaldson, Terence L. *Jews and Anti-Judaism in the New Testament. Decision points and divergent interpretations.* London: SPCK/Baylor University Press, 2010.

Levine, Amy-Jill and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds. *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 2nd ed. Oxford University Press, 2011, 2017.

Salmon, Marilyn J. *Preaching without contempt: Overcoming Unintended Anti-Judaism.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006.

Tobias, Norman C. *Jewish Conscience of the Church. Jules Isaac and the Second Vatican Council.* Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. [[View a lecture by Tobias here.](#)]

“Preaching Without Unintended Prejudice” – downloadable leaflet available at [this website](#) of Broken Bay Catholic Schools (NSW Australia).

[Ecclesia & Synagoga](#). A one-page teaching aid. Available at Catholic Schools Broken Bay website.

Notable Ecclesial Texts

Second Vatican Council

“[W]hat happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. ... [T]he Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures. All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.

“Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel’s spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.

“Besides, as the Church has always held and holds now, Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of men and out of infinite love, in order that all may reach salvation. It is, therefore, the burden of the Church’s preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God’s all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows.”

Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate*, 28 October 1965, no. 4.

French Catholic Bishops’ Committee for Relations with Jews

“It is a theological, historical, and juridical error to hold the Jewish people without distinction guilty of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ. The Catechism of the Council of Trent already rejected this error (para 1, cap 5,11). . . . Contrary to what an ancient but contested catechesis has sustained, we must not

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deduce from the New Testament that the Jewish people were deprived of its election. Scripture as a whole asks us to recognise, on the contrary, that the fidelity of the Jewish people to the Law and Covenant is a sign of the fidelity of God toward His people.”

1973 Statement, IV. b.

Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews,

“With respect to liturgical readings, care will be taken to see that homilies based on them will not distort their meaning, especially when it is a question of passages which seem to show the Jewish people as such in an unfavorable light. . . .

“The Old Testament and the Jewish tradition must not be set against the New Testament in such a way that the former seems to constitute a religion of only justice, fear and legalism, with no appeal to the love of God and neighbor (cf: Dt. 6:5; Lv. 19:18; Mt. 22:34-40).”

“Guidelines” (1974), II, III.

[Guidelines and Suggestions](#) for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration “Nostra Aetate” (No.4). 1 December 1974.

Jesus shares, with the majority of Palestinian Jews of that time, some pharisaic doctrines: the resurrection of the body; forms of piety, like aims-giving, prayer, fasting (Mt. 6:1-18) and the liturgical practice of addressing God as Father; the priority of the commandment to love God and our neighbor (Mk. 12:28-34). This is so also with Paul (Acts 23:8), who always considered his membership of the Pharisees as a title of honor (Acts 23:6; 26:5).

Paul also, like Jesus himself, use methods of reading and interpreting Scripture and of teaching his disciples which were common to the Pharisees of their time.

“Notes”, 17, 18.

[Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism](#) in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church. 24 June 1985.

“Arising from the same soil, Judaism and Christianity in the centuries after their separation became involved in a theological antagonism which was only to be defused at the Second Vatican Council. . . . A replacement or supersession theology which sets against one another two separate entities, a Church of the Gentiles and the rejected Synagogue whose place it takes, is deprived of its foundations. From an originally close relationship between Judaism and Christianity a long-term state of tension had developed, which has been gradually transformed after the Second Vatican Council into a constructive dialogue relationship.”

“Gifts and Calling” (2015), 17.

[“The Gifts and the Calling of God Are Irrevocable”](#) (Rom 11:29). A Reflection on Theological Questions Pertaining to Catholic-Jewish Relations on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of “Nostra Aetate” (No.4). 10 December 2015.

Pope John Paul II

“In the Christian world ... erroneous and unjust interpretations of the New Testament relative to the Jewish people and their presumed guilt circulated for too long, engendering sentiments of hostility toward this people.”

Address to a Vatican conference on “The Roots of Anti-Judaism in the Christian Milieu”, 31 October 1997.

“Forgive us, Lord, we who have crucified the Jewish people so many times in the past.”

Stations of the Cross, Rome, 1999.