

Pope Francis Calls on Christians to Stand with Jews to Condemn Anti-Semitism

Another good move by the Pope reported in the [*Christian Times*](#):

Pope Francis called on Christians to stand united with Jews to defend themselves against discrimination and persecution.

The Pope made the call during a meeting with a 30-member delegation from the Conference of European Rabbis on Monday at the Vatican.

The highest leader of the Catholic Church cited the “troubling” anti-Semitic movements in Europe, in his address to rabbis who met with him in anticipation of the 50th anniversary in October of the “Nostra Aetate,” the Second Vatican Council’s declaration on relations with the Jews, Muslims and other religions.

“Anti-Semitic trends in Europe these days are troubling, as are certain acts of hatred and violence. Every Christian must be firm in deploring all forms of anti-Semitism, and in showing their solidarity with the Jewish people,” said the Pope.

He also said the Holocaust, also known as the Shoah, is a reminder that persecution against followers of religions should be denounced.

“Recently we marked the seventieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, the concentration camp which has come to be synonymous with the great tragedy of the Shoah. The memory of what took place there, in the heart of Europe, is a warning to present and future generations,” th

Pope said.

Pope Francis also maintained that Jews and Christians are bound by duty to “preserve the religious sense” amid an increasingly secular and atheist society.

“Today, in Europe, it is more important than ever to emphasize the spiritual and religious dimension of human life,” he said. “In a society increasingly marked by secularism and threatened by atheism, we run the risk of living as if God did not exist. People are often tempted to take the place of God, to consider themselves the criterion of all things, to control them, to use everything according to their own will.”

“It is so important to remember, however, that our life is a gift from God, and that we must depend on him, confide in him, and turn towards him always,” Pope Francis said. “Jews and Christians have the blessing but also the responsibility to help preserve the religious sense of the men and women of today, and that of our society, by our witness to the sanctity of God and human life. God is holy, and the life he has given is holy and inviolable.”

The Pope also condemned persecution against the faithful in other regions. “Acts of hatred and violence against Christians and the faithful of other religions must likewise be condemned everywhere,” he said.

The chief rabbi of Moscow and the president of the conference, Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, said: “We express our deepest sympathy, prayers and support for the Christians in the Middle East.”

The chief rabbi said the Jewish community values the Nostra Aetate’s “rejection of every persecution against any man,” its condemnation of “displays of anti-Semitism directed against Jews at any time and by anyone,” as well as its recognition of the spiritual patrimony that Jews and

Christians have.

Rabbi Goldschmidt expressed alarm at the rising secularism in Europe. "Who would have thought even 25 years ago that the East will become the defender of traditional religious values while the West has embraced a secularism which moves it away from its Judeo-Christian heritage," he said.