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Audience with representatives of the Conference of European Rabbis, the Rabbinical Council of America and the Commission of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel

At 11.00 this morning, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the representatives of the Conference of European Rabbis, the Rabbinical Council of America and the Commission of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel in dialogue with the Holy See Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. After words of greeting from Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, the Pope gave the following address to those present:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I offer a cordial welcome to all of you, and in a special way to the representatives of the Conference of European Rabbis, the Rabbinical Council of America, and the Commission of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel in dialogue with the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. I thank Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt for his kind greeting in your name.

In our shared journey, by the graciousness of the Most High, we are presently experiencing a fruitful moment of dialogue. This is reflected in the Statement *Between Jerusalem and Rome* which you have issued and which you present to me today. This document pays particular tribute to the Second Vatican Council's Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, whose fourth chapter represents the "Magna Charta" of our dialogue with the Jewish world. Indeed, the ongoing implementation of the Council's Declaration has enabled our relations to become increasingly friendly and fraternal. *Nostra Aetate* noted that the origins of the Christian faith are to be found, in accordance with the divine mystery of salvation, in the Patriarchs, in Moses and in the Prophets. It also stated that, given the great spiritual heritage we hold in common, every effort must be made to foster reciprocal knowledge and respect, above all through biblical studies and fraternal discussions (cf. No. 4). Consequently, in recent decades, we have been able to draw closer to one another and to engage in an effective and fruitful dialogue. We have grown in mutual understanding and deepened our bonds of friendship.

The Statement *Between Jerusalem and Rome* does not hide, however, the theological differences that exist between our faith traditions. All the same, it expresses a firm resolve to collaborate more closely, now and in the future. Your document is addressed to Catholics, speaking of them as “partners, close allies, friends and brothers in our mutual quest for a better world blessed with peace, social justice and security”. It goes on to say that “despite profound theological differences, Catholics and Jews share common beliefs” and also “the affirmation that religions must use moral behaviour and religious education - not war, coercion or social pressure – to influence and inspire”. This is most important: may the Eternal One bless and enlighten our cooperation, so that together we can accept and carry out ever better his plans, “plans for welfare and not for evil”, for “a future and a hope” (*Jer 29:11*).

On the occasion of your welcome visit, I would like to express to you and to your communities beforehand my best wishes for the Jewish New Year which will begin in a few weeks. *Shanah tovah!* Once more I thank you for coming and I ask you to remember me in your prayers. Finally, I would invoke upon you, and upon all of us, the blessing of the Most High for the shared journey of friendship and trust that lies before us. In his mercy, may the Almighty bestow his peace upon us and upon the entire world. *Shalom alechem!*
