

# To Our Fathers in Faith: You Are Not alone!

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## Unofficial Translation

*Father Christophe Le Sourt, Brother Louis-Marie Coudray, and Father Patrick Desbois, all three of whom are committed to Jewish-Christian dialogue, say that the feast of Passover, which begins this Monday, April 22, must be an opportunity to renew the message of the fraternity of interreligious dialogue. They recall that Christian anti-Judaism remains an issue.*

Since October 7th, after the Hamas terrorist attacks and hostage-taking, followed by the military operations in Gaza, we have seen a chain of violence that has placed the entire Middle East in the midst of a devastating cyclone. The events of the last few days make this clear enough. It is essential that many voices be raised to call for peace. Who, moreover, is not upset by the fate of the people of Gaza? However, is it not necessary to take the time to explain everything? That is to say, to unfold the complexity of the situation, in order to get as close as possible to the truth? Indeed, as Psalm 84 indicates, for "*justice and peace to embrace*" it is also necessary that "*love and truth meet.*"

However, in the actual situation, it is unthinkable not to mention all the protagonists. For instance, if it is legitimate to talk about the responsibility of the current Israeli government, how can we talk about this deadly conflict without also mentioning the terrorist movement Hamas and the strategic choices of its armed branch, the Al-Qassam Brigades? It is impossible to forget the hostages held in Gaza for more than six months!

In the same way, it is all the suffering, all the distress, in this case Palestinian and Israeli, that must be considered and taken into account. It is our common humanity that is being bruised. The path of truth is demanding. It puts us all to the test, because it constantly forces us to deepen the nature of our view of the facts and of our relationship to the other in their absolute otherness. Behind the appreciation of the situation and the search for justice and truth, there are new theological and ethical questions. The question of the relationship between Judaism and Islam and the situation of Christians in the East lie beneath our analyses.

Contrary to what some might have us believe, it is a matter of becoming, not something "*accomplished.*" Not everything has been said with *Nostra Aetate*. The conciliar declaration was a paradigm shift, and in the almost sixty years since a great deal has been done. However, Christian anti-Judaism is not a "*closed case.*" It remains prevalent in the Western collective unconscious. Thus, "*deconstructing Christian anti-Judaism,*" remains, alas, an imperative that is still relevant today.

On the other hand, let us have the courage to see the *"tsunami of hatred"* that threatens to seriously fracture our societies. Among these hatreds is antisemitism. Today Jewish communities around the world, particularly in Europe and particularly in France, are suffering a wave of extremely violent attacks. Unmatched since World War II and the Holocaust.

This exponential increase is correlated with the tragic events in the Middle East. Given the magnitude of the numbers, there is great concern about the consequences for people. Is it necessary to remind you of this? Eleven of our fellow citizens, including three children, have been murdered since 2006, simply because of their Jewishness. Since antisemitism takes many forms, what appears today is an insidious *"virtuous hatred."* Namely, hating Jews in the name of compassion for another population. As if solidarity with one justifies hatred of the other. Let us appreciate how deadly is the implicit syllogism that says *"a Jew equals a colonizer, which equals a murderer."* Fellow citizens are insulted, others are beaten, because of such outrageous statements.

We are all witnessing it, new and heavy clouds that darken the horizon with unspeakable heaviness. Let us forcefully remember this: nothing – neither religion nor political considerations – can justify antisemitism, which remains a sin against God and humanity! To write these lines is not to overlook the importance, the beauty, and the urgency of interreligious dialogue, especially with our Muslim friends. To put it simply, because of the international and national context, we recognize the immense distress of those to whom we are bound by a *"unique spiritual bond"* and close in time to Passover, we address to them this message: *"You are not alone!"*

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