

# Jewish–Catholic Dialogue in the Shadow of the War in Gaza



by David Neuhaus, SJ

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On September 30, 2023, Pope Francis elevated the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Pierbattista Pizzaballa, to the dignity of cardinal together with twenty other prelates from around the world. This was the first time in the history of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, established in 1847, that an incumbent joined the consistory. Speaking to Andrea Tornielli, the editorial director of Vatican Media, the cardinal-elect had said in July 2023 that he interprets the decision to create him cardinal as “a sign of attention from the Church of Rome toward the Mother Church, the Church of Jerusalem.”<sup>[1]</sup> The choice of Italian Franciscan Pizzaballa to head the diocese of Jerusalem, first as Apostolic Administrator in 2017 and then as Patriarch in 2020 had come as a surprise. Since 1987, the Patriarch of Jerusalem had been an Arab. From 1987 to 2008, Palestinian Michel Sabbah had filled the role, the first Palestinian to be named to the position. His defense of justice and peace, daring to challenge Israeli policies, had occasionally created tensions with the Israeli authorities.

Pizzaballa is a Hebrew speaker and has long been engaged in Christian-Jewish dialogue. He has played an active role in the Holy See’s Commission for Dialogue with the Jews. His appointment was seen as a positive step by Israelis.<sup>[2]</sup> Speaking to the press on the day he was made a cardinal, Pizzaballa referred to the situation in Gaza, a place he has come to know well because of his visits to the Catholic Holy Family Parish in Gaza City. He said, “Gaza is a prison, an open prison. Two million people are packed inside there with very difficult economic and social prospects for the future.”<sup>[3]</sup> Little could he have known that day what was awaiting him when he returned from Rome on October 10, 2023, three days after the horrific attacks on southern Israel and the ensuing Israeli war against Hamas.

The day after the war began, at the Sunday Angelus on October 8, 2023, Pope Francis spoke, setting a tone that he would adhere to in the months to come: “I am following apprehensively and sorrowfully what is happening in Israel where violence has exploded yet more ferociously, causing hundreds of deaths and injuries. I express my closeness to the families of the victims. I am praying for them and for all who are living hours of terror and anguish. May the attacks and weapons stop. Please! And may it be understood that terrorism and war do not lead to any resolutions, but only to the death and suffering of many innocent people. War is a defeat! Every war is a defeat. Let us pray that there be peace in Israel and in Palestine.”<sup>[4]</sup>

The most important two points that the pope would repeat throughout the months to come, praying publicly at every opportunity, were: a) War is a defeat for everybody; and b) The violence, for which all parties are responsible, is resulting in the deaths of civilians. Throughout the months that followed the pope insisted on holding up both the Israeli victims, including the hostages taken by the Hamas militants, and the Palestinian victims of Israeli bombardment and the invasion of the Gaza Strip. The Holy Father’s continued engagement on these two points opened a crisis between him and the Israeli authorities, which extended to many Jews around the world.

This article seeks to document the crisis and analyze it, pointing to misunderstandings that have deepened as well as differences in perspective.

## ***War, Defeat for Everybody***

On October 11, 2023, four days after the Hamas attacks, at the general audience, Pope Francis endorsed the Israeli right to self-defense. He said, “It is the right of those who are attacked to defend themselves, but I am very concerned about the total siege under which the Palestinians are living in Gaza, where there have also been many innocent victims.”<sup>[5]</sup> The language he employed was that traditionally used regarding legitimate defense and its conditions. As Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, the Holy See’s Permanent Observer to the United Nations underlined once again to the UN Security Council on January 24, 2024, “Any action taken in self-defense must be guided by the principles of distinction and proportionality and comply with international humanitarian law.”<sup>[6]</sup>

However, Pope Francis repeated his insistence that war is defeat for everybody.<sup>[7]</sup> In this the Holy Father was taking up a theme that had begun to be formulated by his predecessors. Catholic teaching does allow for legitimate defense by military means under well-defined conditions,<sup>[8]</sup> but Pope John Paul II had already begun to cry out, “No to war! War is not always

inevitable. It is always a defeat for humanity.”<sup>[9]</sup> Pope Francis has developed a more analytical critique of just war theory. On January 29, 2024, in an interview with Domenico Agasso, a journalist for the Italian newspaper, *La Stampa*, the pope explained his opposition to defining any war as “just”: “It is right and legitimate to defend oneself, yes. But please let’s talk about self-defense, so as to avoid justifying wars, which are always wrong.”<sup>[10]</sup> Pope Francis’ repeated refrain that “war is a defeat for everybody” aroused the consternation not only of the Israeli authorities and Jewish figures around the world but also of the Ukrainians in the context of the ongoing war with Russia. On November 22, 2023, as the numbers of dead in Gaza were increasing daily, after meeting separately with Israeli family members of the hostages in Gaza and with Palestinian family members of those killed in Gaza, the pope’s words were even stronger, “This is not waging war; this is terrorism.”<sup>[11]</sup> In his *Urbi et Orbi* message for Easter 2024, he repeated this refrain once again: “War is always absurd; war is always a defeat!”<sup>[12]</sup>

The Israeli authorities expressed anger at what they saw as a parallel between Hamas violence and that of the Israeli army, supposedly implicit in the pope’s discourse. At the Angelus on October 15, 2023, the pope exclaimed, “I renew my appeal for the release of the hostages, and I ask urgently that children, the sick, the elderly, women, and all civilians not be made victims of the conflict. May humanitarian law be respected, especially in Gaza, where it is urgent and necessary to ensure humanitarian corridors and to come to the aid of the entire population.”<sup>[13]</sup> Cardinal Parolin explained what this meant for the Holy See’s position, “The release of Israeli hostages and the protection of innocent lives in Gaza are at the heart of the problem created by Hamas’ attack and the response of the Israeli army. They are at the center of all of our concerns.”<sup>[14]</sup> The parallel the Holy See was suggesting was clearly between the suffering of civilians on both sides.

The Israeli Foreign Minister, Eli Cohen, after a phone call with Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the Holy See’s Secretary for Relations with States, published a statement in which he voiced Israel’s rejection of any parallel between Israel and Hamas. “There is no room for unfounded comparisons. Hamas, a terrorist organization worse than ISIS, infiltrated Israel with the intent of injuring innocent civilians, while Israel is a democracy trying to protect its citizens from Hamas. We expect the Holy See to issue an unequivocal and clear condemnation of the murderous terrorist acts perpetrated by Hamas terrorists that caused grievous harm to children, women and the elderly just because they are Jews and Israelis.”<sup>[15]</sup>

Furthermore, the minister said that it was inconceivable to express concern for the residents of Gaza “at the same time Israel is burying one thousand three hundred murdered citizens. Israel is fighting a war that was imposed upon it, and will continue to fight Hamas until it no longer poses a threat to the citizens of Israel. This is being done for the benefit of the entire world.”<sup>[16]</sup> In a statement to the press, Israel’s Ambassador to the Holy See, Raphael Schutz, reiterated this position after the pope’s separate meetings with Israelis and Palestinians on November 22, 2023. “There is a simple distinction; one side is murdering, raping, and does not care about those on their own side. The other side is engaged in a war of self-defense.”<sup>[17]</sup>

### ***Jewish Reactions around the World***

These developing tensions also strongly affected many Jews engaged in dialogue with Catholics. In a letter addressed to Pope Francis on November 12, 2023, by more than 400 Jews engaged in the decades’ long dialogue with the Catholic Church, the signatories called on the pope to understand what Jews were going through. Among other things they wrote, “We ask the Church to act as a beacon of moral and conceptual clarity amid an ocean of disinformation, distortion and deceit; to distinguish between legitimate political criticism of Israel’s policy in the past and in the present and between hateful negation of Israel and of Jews; to reaffirm Israel’s right to exist; to unequivocally condemn Hamas’ terrorist massacre aimed at killing as many civilians as possible, and to distinguish this massacre from the civilian casualties of Israel’s war of self-defense, as tragic and heartbreaking as they are.”<sup>[18]</sup> Some Jewish interlocutors in the dialogue with Catholics were clearly asking the Church to take sides.

A few days after the publication of the letter, on November 20, 2023, Tornielli published an editorial in *Vatican News*. “Is it possible to condemn the inhuman Hamas terrorist attack on Israeli civilians and at the same time raise doubts and questions about the armed response of Tel Aviv’s army on account of the high number of civilian casualties caused and the humanitarian tragedy in Gaza? There are conflicts in which cheering is extremely inappropriate, and the current conflict in the Middle East is certainly among them, brought about as it is by a very complex situation where both sides bear responsibility and neither side is justified.”<sup>[19]</sup> The Church was situating itself on the side of those who were suffering on both sides of the political divide.

The crisis between the Holy See and Israel about the situation in Gaza deepened when the violence engulfed the two major Christian churches in Gaza City. Since the beginning of the conflict, Pope Francis has been in almost daily contact by telephone with the Catholic parish in Gaza City.<sup>[20]</sup> On October 19, 2023, Israeli bombardment led to the collapse of a structure in the Greek Orthodox Saint Porphyrios Church, leading to the deaths of eighteen people, among them seventeen Christians. On November 13, 2023, Ilham Farah, a church organist, was shot and bled to death in the street. On December 16, 2023, an Israeli sniper shot two women, Naheda and Samar Anton, in the courtyard of the Holy Family Catholic Church. In addition, Israeli soldiers destroyed the Holy Rosary School and severely damaged the home of the Missionaries of Charity.

The condemnation of these actions by the Church led to angry rebuffs by the Israeli authorities. After the condemnation of the killings of Naheda and Samar appeared on December 16 on the website of the Latin Patriarchate,<sup>[21]</sup> the Israeli Ambassador to the Holy See accused the Latin Patriarchate of “blood libel,” a term referring to the medieval charge that Jews kidnapped Christian boys and used their blood to make Passover azyme (unleavened bread).<sup>[22]</sup>

More and more Jewish religious leaders, many feeling a strong solidarity with Israel, increasingly added their voices to the controversy. Chief Rabbi of Milan, Alfonso Pedatzur Arbib, criticized the fact that the pope met on the same day with Israeli families of hostages and Palestinians, asking why the Israelis were not entitled to “exclusive solidarity.”<sup>[23]</sup> He added, “What is happening right now is a return to spite and demonization of the Jews... There are stunning polls saying most Italian students think Israel can be compared to Nazis. Something big is happening ... all inhibitions are being forsaken. I’d expect an unambiguous action from the Church, which I have yet to see.”<sup>[24]</sup> In a video conference released on December 19, 2023, South African Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein demanded that the pope repent for his comparison between Israel and Hamas, warning the pope that he would be compared to Pope Pius XII, who, according to Goldstein, remained silent while the Jews were murdered by the Nazis.<sup>[25]</sup> British Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis took up the same theme: Pope Francis should repent to make up for the stand of the earlier pope.<sup>[26]</sup> Israeli Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi David Lau wrote in a similar vein.<sup>[27]</sup> Nevertheless, in a world as diverse as the Jewish one, there were also Orthodox rabbis and religious Jews who were more understanding of the pope’s position and more nuanced in their formulations, even if they constitute a minority.<sup>[28]</sup>

In a public conference at the Gregorian University on January 17, 2024, on the occasion of the 35th Day of Dialogue between Catholics and Jews, Chief Rabbi of Rome Riccardo Di Segni lamented the lack of Catholic solidarity with the Jewish people. In his presentation, he said that from the highest levels of the Church there have been claims “that we are all terrorists. Those who were the perpetrators of a terrible massacre and those who are trying to eliminate this thing and prevent its blatantly threatened repetition have been put on the same level.” Di Segni continued in a critique of the pope’s position: “we cannot accept the principle that war is a defeat for everyone, because someone has to be defeated, as Nazism was defeated in 1945. He who does evil must be defeated; This does not sanction any and all responses, but it must be clear that we must not equate those who are suffering from incredible abuse with those who have committed it. This is what has been lacking in sensitivity.”<sup>[29]</sup> Finally, Di Segni commented on the dialogue between Catholics and Jews, saying, “it is absolutely necessary to start again, not from scratch, to pick up the threads of the conversation. And let it not be said: we are against antisemitism, because when certain things are done and said, it is anti-Judaism. It is one thing to affirm principles and another to deny them in daily practice. I am sorry to have had to deal with the subject in this way, but I wanted to send a message of reflection to reconstitute a conversation, to see if and how it is possible to repair the rift that has been created.”<sup>[30]</sup>

### ***The Heart of the Crisis***

Di Segni’s impassioned words point to the heart of the crisis. Many Jews engaged in dialogue with the Church insist that their allegiance to the state of Israel is part and parcel of their identity as Jews. What is the Church to make of this in the dialogue with the Jewish people that has developed since the Second Vatican Council? These questions have been repeatedly raised by Jews since the publication of the Second Vatican Council’s declaration *Nostra Aetate*. In 2015, when the document *The Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable*, celebrating fifty years since Vatican II, was published, Rabbi David Rosen, then the American Jewish Congress’ International Director of Interreligious Affairs,<sup>[30]</sup> invited to respond to the document at its official presentation in the Vatican, brought up the subject: “Perhaps then I may be permitted [...] to point out that to fully respect Jewish self-understanding, it is also necessary to appreciate the centrality that the land of Israel plays in the historic and contemporary religious life of the Jewish people and that appears to be missing.”<sup>[31]</sup> This sentiment, true of many Jews, had already been expressed in a document from the year 2000 entitled *Dabru Emet* (Speak the Truth), signed by hundreds of Jews engaged in dialogue, which presented eight points on the dialogue with Christians. The third point stated: “The most important event for Jews since the Holocaust has been the re-establishment of a Jewish state in

the Promised Land. As members of a biblically based religion, Christians appreciate that Israel was promised – and given – to Jews as the physical center of the covenant between them and God. Many Christians support the state of Israel for reasons far more profound than mere politics.”<sup>[32]</sup>

However, it is important to recall that this land is also home to the Palestinians. Massive Jewish migration to Palestine began in waves at the end of the nineteenth century. Most Jews who arrived were fleeing European anti-Semitism. In 1917, when the British promised a homeland to the Jews in Palestine, the Jews made up 10 percent of the population. When the UN decided to partition the land into two states, one for Jews and one for Arabs in 1947, the Jews were less than 35 percent of the population. Today in Israel/Palestine there are seven million Jewish Israelis and seven million Palestinian Arabs.

The Holy See, in line with the international community, is committed to a two-state solution to the conflict, a state for Israelis and a state for Palestinians. This has been repeated regularly in the past months by the Holy See’s Secretary of State. Cardinal Parolin, in an interview in October 2023, said, “It seems to me that the greatest possible justice in the Holy Land is the two-state solution, which would allow Palestinians and Israelis to live side by side in peace and security, meeting the aspirations of the majority. This solution, which is supported by the international community, has recently seemed to some, on both sides, to be no longer feasible. For others, it never was. The Holy See is convinced of the opposite and continues to support it.”<sup>[33]</sup> The two-state solution would certainly facilitate easier relations between Israel and the international community, the Holy See included. This is a political and diplomatic issue to be resolved through the appropriate channels.

However, the Church’s dialogue with the Jewish people is neither political nor diplomatic. Fully engaged in this dialogue, seeking to repent of a past stained by anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism as well as engaging in a profound religious-theological-spiritual dialogue based on common roots in the Scriptures of Israel, sharing concerns and working together to repair a broken world, the Church has been hesitant about formulating any religious opinion about a modern state. The Church has been grappling with the issue of the nature of the state of Israel in the dialogue with the Jews for decades. In 1985, the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews said, “Christians are invited to understand this (Jewish) religious attachment (to the land of Israel) which finds its roots in Biblical tradition, without however making their own any particular religious interpretation of this relationship (cf. Declaration of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 20, 1975). The existence of the State of Israel and its political options should be envisaged, not from a perspective which is in itself religious, but in their reference to the common principles of international law.”<sup>[34]</sup> This was repeated in the 2015 document marking the anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*.<sup>[35]</sup> It is clear in the light of the ongoing devastating war in Gaza that the Church is committed to this position.

### ***In Search of ‘Equi-closeness’***

Pope Francis is introducing a new perspective on the dialogue with the Jewish people. For the first time in centuries, the Roman pontiff hails from outside of Europe, a Europe haunted by its treatment of its Jews. Known for having enjoyed close relations with the Jewish community in his native Argentina, he has continued and deepened the Church’s commitment to the dialogue with Jews. However, in multicultural South America, Cardinal Bergoglio also enjoyed close relations with Muslims in Argentina. As pope, he has renewed the dialogue with Muslims and Islam and in this dialogue, the Palestinian question is a visceral issue. Furthermore, the pope also brings with him a consciousness forged in the Latin American context of struggles against oppression and solidarity with the poor. Whereas the dialogue with the Jews held pride of place in Eurocentric thinking, Pope Francis has begun to challenge that, not by decentering the important relationship with the Jewish people but by bringing other concerns to the center too. These concerns he seeks to bring into the dialogue with Jews and this includes dialogue with Islam, poverty and migration, and the burning question of equality, freedom and justice for the Palestinian people.

The Catholic Church sees the dialogue with the Jewish people today as essential to the Church’s own identity. Jews and Catholics share much of the same Sacred Scripture, Jesus is totally incomprehensible without his rootedness in the Jewish world and the Church today seeks to honor that Jewish world. Indeed, the Church is aware that many Jews tie their Jewish identity to the state of Israel, seeing in it a guarantee of their wellbeing in a world that has often been horrifically cruel to Jews. Some Jews see the state as a necessity for their being Jewish. In the dialogue, the Church is committed to listening closely and learning, but the Church is also intimately tied to the land the Jews name the land of Israel. In this land, venerated also by Christians and Muslims, there is a people that has been deprived of their rights, the Palestinians.

Pope Francis is not the first to bring the Palestinians into the dialogue with the Jews. It was Pope Paul VI who was the first pope to explicitly affirm the Palestinians as a people rather than simply as a group of refugees. In his Christmas message in 1975, he said: "Although we are conscious of the still very recent tragedies which led the Jewish people to search for safety and protection in a state of its own, sovereign and independent, and in fact precisely because we are aware of this, we would like to ask the sons of this people to recognize the rights and legitimate aspirations of another people, those who have also suffered for a long time, the Palestinian people."<sup>[36]</sup> The Church's position has been seen in action during the visits of the Roman Pontiffs to the Holy Land in 2000 (John Paul II), 2009 (Benedict XVI) and 2014 (Francis) when the relationships with both Israelis and Palestinians were reflected in the itinerary of the visits, taking the popes to both Israel and Palestine, to both Jewish and Muslim shrines as well as to Christian ones.

In an editorial for *Vatican News* on January 13, 2024, Andrea Tornielli stated that Pope Francis, invites us to an "equivicinanza," or "equi-closeness" of all who suffer in Israel/Palestine. "Closeness to those who suffer, to those who die, to those who are left with nothing. This closeness to the suffering on both sides is often interpreted as equidistance. We are not neutral in this war. We stand, with full conviction, on one side: that of the victims and those who suffer. We stand by the side of the 22,000 dead under the rubble of Gaza, the 10,000 children killed. We stand by the side of the innocents brutally killed in the kibbutzim on October 7. Because the loss of every life is an unhealable wound."<sup>[37]</sup> Months earlier, on October 24, 2023, Cardinal Pizzaballa had addressed a pastoral letter to the faithful in Jerusalem that expressed this same attitude.<sup>[38]</sup>

Pope Francis responded to the Jews who had written to him in mid-November by sending a personal letter to one of the initiators of the letter, Israeli theologian Karma Ben Johanan. In the letter, dated February 2, 2024, the pope wrote, "In times of desolation, we have great difficulty seeing a future horizon where light replaces darkness, in which friendship replaces hatred, in which cooperation replaces war. However, we, as Jews and Catholics, are witnesses to precisely such a horizon. And we must act, starting first and foremost from the Holy Land, where together we want to work for peace and justice, doing everything possible to create relationships capable of opening new horizons of light for everyone, Israelis and Palestinians."<sup>[39]</sup> Reiterating his and his predecessors' condemnation of anti-Semitism, his and their longstanding and profound commitment to friendship with Jews, the pope also characteristically expressed his warmth and concern. However, the letter carefully avoided any expression that might be interpreted as condoning the ongoing Israeli war in Gaza. Rather, the letter pointed to the "horizon" that Jews and Catholics share, the horizon opened up by the nurturing of an intimate dialogue of friendship after centuries of estrangement and rejection. Might not Israelis and Palestinians hope for a similar horizon,<sup>[40]</sup> an end to hostility and the construction of a shared future in a land called to be holy, in Israel/Palestine?

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[1]. B. Capelli, "Pizzaballa: Appointment as Cardinal shows Jerusalem's vocation to dialogue", in *Vatican News* ([www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2023-07/pope-francis-cardinal-elect-pizzaballa-holy-land-peace-appeal.html](http://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2023-07/pope-francis-cardinal-elect-pizzaballa-holy-land-peace-appeal.html)), July 9, 2023.

[2]. See comments by Rabbi David Rosen ([www.jpost.com/christianworld/article-761901](http://www.jpost.com/christianworld/article-761901)) and by the Israeli Ambassador to the Holy See, Raphael Schutz ([catholicherald.co.uk/israels-vatican-ambassador-says-popes-comments-on-right-to-self-defense-filled-a-vaccum/](http://catholicherald.co.uk/israels-vatican-ambassador-says-popes-comments-on-right-to-self-defense-filled-a-vaccum/)).

[3]. E. A. Allen, "New Jerusalem cardinal calls Gaza under Israeli control an 'open prison'", in *Crux* ([cruxnow.com/2023-consistory-and-synod-for-synodality/2023/09/new-jersusalem-cardinal-calls-gaza-under-israeli-control-an-open-prison](http://cruxnow.com/2023-consistory-and-synod-for-synodality/2023/09/new-jersusalem-cardinal-calls-gaza-under-israeli-control-an-open-prison)), September 30, 2023.

[4]. Francis, *Angelus*, October 8, 2023 ([www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2023/documents/20231008-angelus.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2023/documents/20231008-angelus.html)).

[5]. Id., *General Audience*, October 11, 2023. The position of the Holy See according to the vision of Pope Francis was explained in greater detail in an interview with the Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin on October 13, 2023, the day he also visited the Israeli Embassy to the Vatican, cf. A. Tornielli – R. Cetera, "Parolin: Attack on Israel 'inhuman', legitimate defense should not harm civilians", in *Vatican News* ([www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2023-10/cardinal-parolin-holy-see-interview-israel-gaza-war-hostages.html](http://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2023-10/cardinal-parolin-holy-see-interview-israel-gaza-war-hostages.html)), October 13, 2023.

[6]. J. Tulloch, "Holy See: 'Unimaginable suffering' in Gaza must end", in *Vatican News* ([www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2024-01/holy-see-united-nations-palestine-israel-gaza-ceasefire.html](http://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2024-01/holy-see-united-nations-palestine-israel-gaza-ceasefire.html)), January 25, 2024.

[7]. See the *Angelus* on October 15 and 22, November 12, 2023, and January 28 2024, and the General Audiences on October 18, November 29 and December 6, 2023, and January 24, 2024.

[8]. Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nn. 2307-2309, 2312-2314.

[9]. John Paul II, *Address to the diplomatic corps*, January 13, 2003.

[10]. D. Agasso, "Papa Francesco: 'A Gaza vince solo la morte, non c'è pace senza i due Stati. Per le coppie gay mi attaccano ma non temo uno scisma'", in *La Stampa* ([www.lastampa.it/vatican-insider/it/2024/01/29/news/papa\\_francesco\\_guerra\\_israele\\_palestina\\_gaza\\_coppie\\_gay\\_intervista-14028375/](http://www.lastampa.it/vatican-insider/it/2024/01/29/news/papa_francesco_guerra_israele_palestina_gaza_coppie_gay_intervista-14028375/)), January 29, 2024.

- [11]. Francis, *General Audience*, November 22, 2023. On November 30, 2023, the *Washington Post* revealed that in a conversation between Israeli President Isaac Herzog and Pope Francis, the pope had commented that it is “forbidden to respond to terror with terror” ([www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/30/pope-francis-israel-war-terrorism/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/30/pope-francis-israel-war-terrorism/)).
- [12]. On April 14, 2024, the morning after the Iranian missile attack against Israel, the Holy Father once more appealed, after the Regina Coeli: “No more war, no more attacks, no more violence! Yes to dialogue and yes to peace!” Cf. [www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2024/documents/20240414-regina-caeli.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2024/documents/20240414-regina-caeli.html)
- [13]. Id., *Angelus*, October 15, 2023.
- [14]. A. Tornielli – R. Cetera, “Parolin: l’attacco a Israele è stato disumano, la legittima difesa non colpisce i civili”, *op. cit.*
- [15]. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “MFA expects Holy See to be more attentive to Israeli suffering”, October 15, 2023 ([www.gov.il/en/departments/news/mfa-expects-holy-see-to-be-more-attentive-to-israeli-suffering-15-oct-2023](http://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/mfa-expects-holy-see-to-be-more-attentive-to-israeli-suffering-15-oct-2023)).
- [16]. *Ibid.*
- [17]. “Pope Francis says Israel-Palestine conflict has gone beyond war to terrorism”, in *Mem* ([www.middleeastmonitor.com/20231122-pope-francis-says-israel-palestine-conflict-has-gone-beyond-war-to-terrorism](http://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20231122-pope-francis-says-israel-palestine-conflict-has-gone-beyond-war-to-terrorism)), November 22, 2023.
- [18]. “An open letter to His Holiness, Pope Francis, and to the Faithful of the Catholic Church”, in *Jewish-Christian Relations* ([www.jcrelations.net/statements/statement/an-open-letter-to-his-holiness-pope-francis.html](http://www.jcrelations.net/statements/statement/an-open-letter-to-his-holiness-pope-francis.html)), December 1, 2023.
- [19]. A. Tornielli, “Saying ‘No’ to war, remaining close to victims”, in *Vatican News* ([www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2023-11/saying-no-to-war-remaining-close-to-victims.html](http://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2023-11/saying-no-to-war-remaining-close-to-victims.html)), November 20, 2023.
- [20]. Cf. R. Cetera – M. Raviart, “Padre Romanelli: a Gaza tutti pregano perché il mondo lavori per la pace”, in *Vatican News* ([www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2023-11/pope-parish-holy-family-gaza-fr-romanelli-appeal-prayers-peace.html](http://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2023-11/pope-parish-holy-family-gaza-fr-romanelli-appeal-prayers-peace.html)), November 7, 2023.
- [21]. Cf. Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, *Gaza*, December 16, 2023 (<https://www.lpj.org/en/gaza-16th-december-2023>).
- [22]. Cf. E. A. Allen, “Israeli envoy says Latin Patriarchate guilty of ‘blood libel’ for accusations on Gaza parish”, in *Crux* ([cruxnow.com/church-in-the-middle-east/2023/12/israeli-envoy-says-latin-patriarchate-guilty-of-blood-libel-for-accusations-on-gaza-parish](http://cruxnow.com/church-in-the-middle-east/2023/12/israeli-envoy-says-latin-patriarchate-guilty-of-blood-libel-for-accusations-on-gaza-parish)), December 22, 2023.
- [23]. On April 8, 2024, the pope again met privately with the families of the Israeli hostages.
- [24]. A. Faiola – S. Pitrelli – L. Loveluck, “In undisclosed call, Pope Francis warned Israel against committing ‘terror’”, in *The Washington Post* ([www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/30/pope-francis-israel-war-terrorism/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/30/pope-francis-israel-war-terrorism/)), November 30, 2023.
- [25]. Cf. Chief Rabbi Goldstein, “Repent for sins against Israel (Chief Rabbi tells Pope Francis)” ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVijgOsjLxo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVijgOsjLxo)).
- [26]. Cf. D. Efuno, “Chief Rabbis Rebuke Pope Francis Over Gaza Comments, Call for Holy Father To ‘Atone for Sins’”, in *The New York Sun* ([www.nysun.com/article/chief-rabbis-rebuke-pope-francis-over-gaza-comments-call-for-holy-father-to-atone-for-sins](http://www.nysun.com/article/chief-rabbis-rebuke-pope-francis-over-gaza-comments-call-for-holy-father-to-atone-for-sins)), December 28, 2023.
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- [34]. Cf. Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, *Notes on the correct way to present Jews and Judaism in preaching and catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church* (1985), VI, 1.
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- [36]. Paul VI, Address to the Sacred College and the Roman Prelature, December 22, 1975.
- [37]. A. Tornielli, “100 days of war in Gaza: Close to those who suffer”, in *Vatican News* ([www.vaticannews.va/en/world/news/2024-01/israel-palestine-gaza-war-editorial-100-days-war.html](http://www.vaticannews.va/en/world/news/2024-01/israel-palestine-gaza-war-editorial-100-days-war.html)), January 24, 2024.
- [38]. Cf. Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, *Letter to The Entire Diocese*, October 24, 2023 ([www.lpj.org/en/latin-patriarch-of-jerusalem/documents/statement/letter-to-the-entire-diocese](http://www.lpj.org/en/latin-patriarch-of-jerusalem/documents/statement/letter-to-the-entire-diocese)).
- [39]. Francis, *Letter to Jewish Brothers and Sisters in Israel*, February 2, 2024.
- [40]. This shared hope was expressed on March 27, 2023, when the pope received in private audience the Palestinian Bassam Aramin and the Israeli Rami Elhanan, both fathers in mourning, activists of the Parents’ Circle, an Israeli-Palestinian group of parents who have lost children in the Israel-Palestine conflict: cf. [www.timesofisrael.com/pope-hosts-israeli-palestinian-fathers-who-both-lost-daughters-in-conflict](http://www.timesofisrael.com/pope-hosts-israeli-palestinian-fathers-who-both-lost-daughters-in-conflict)