“Nostra Aetate”: A Catholic and Jewish Peace Treaty or a Spiritual Breakthrough?

Presentation at the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life (Oct. 14, 2015)

I Introduction
1. Pope Francis on June 30, 2015
2. Pope Francis to Congress on Sept. 24, 2015 (D. Day & T. Merton)
3. My title

II Steps to “Nostra Aetate”
1. International Conference of Christians & Jews (Seelisberg, Switzerland, July-August 1947)
2. Good Friday, 1959: Pope John XXIII spontaneously eliminates the expression “perfidious Jews” in the liturgical prayer
3. April 24, 1960: Biblical Institute Petition “Avoiding Antisemitism” (April 26, Theology Faculty of Fribourg, Switzerland)
5. June 13, 1960: Meeting of John XXIII and Jules Isaac, author of The Teaching of Contempt: Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism (Diasporal as punishment; Judaism as degenerate at time of Jesus: Deicide)
6. Autumn, 1960: Meeting of Cardinal Bea with Nahum Goldmann (President, World Jewish Congress)
7. Nov. 26, 1960: Meeting between Cardinal Bea and Abraham Joshua Heschel (May 22 Memorandum from Heschel to Bea)

III Assorted Issues
1. The place of the Holocaust
2. The Ministry of Saint Pope John-Paul II
3. Role of Converts from Judaism (e.g., G. Baum, John Oesterreicher, Paul Démann) & the Righteous(?); (the ex-Protestant Karl Thiemer” was the first major Catholic thinker to grasp in St. Pau 1’s letter to the Romans that Jews remained beloved by God as Jews. They did not need conversion but the Catholic Church did.”
4. Jewish Response (see sheet “A Jewish Statement on Christianity…”)

IV Challenges
1. Who Are the Jews?
2. Religious Fundamentalisms
3. Reform of Seminary Education & Catholic Liturgy