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Pilgrims of Hope

Jubilee Newsletter



The Hope in Christian Education

by Greg Coogan, Secretary of Catechetical Formation and Parish Life

Nostra Aetate (In Our Time), the Second Vatican Council's document on Catholicism's relationship with non-Christians, is the Second Vatican Council's shortest document, but one that has had tremendous impact. It pays special attention to Catholicism's relationship with the Jews especially and calls the Church to leave behind the mistaken notion that the Jews are solely responsible for the death of Jesus Christ.

You may find it hard to believe that the majority of those who espoused Catholicism actually held the following to be true:

- Not only are the Jews responsible for Jesus' death, but God will continually punish them for it.
- The Jews had lost the right to be called God's chosen people and the only reason that God kept them alive was to remind Christians of the New Covenant and to pray for their conversion.

Nostra Aetate changed all of that. In fact, Rabbi Daniel Polish, who lectured at the Catholic Jesuit-run Fordham University in 2016, noted, "The idea of a rabbi being invited to speak at a Catholic gathering about a document of the Catholic Church—such a thing would have been unimaginable (52) years ago!" Perhaps the same could be said in reverse? Would a Catholic have considered stepping into a Synagogue then either? Now, however, some 60 years since the document's earth-shattering invitation, I've been to the Bar and Bat Mitzvah's of all of my sister-in-law's children."

In this Jubilee Year of Hope, can we take a moment to just read *Nostra Aetate*, and as we look to try "to overcome the restlessness of the human heart" can we also note that there is far more that unites us than there is that divides us? Can we look at each other as children of the one God of Abraham and see all that is good. As the document reminds us of our Catholic teaching:

"The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims, and ever must proclaim Christ "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself.

The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men." (NA, 2)

And by means of this, may God save all of our souls.



Witnesses of Hope

St. Maria Goretti

Maria Goretti was born to a poor farming family in the Ancona Province of Italy in 1890. When Maria was eleven years old, her neighbor Alessandro grabbed her while she was sewing and attempted to rape her; Maria cried that he would go to hell if he committed this mortal sin. She then said she would rather die than submit to his wishes. Upon hearing this, Alessandro stabbed her fourteen times and fled. When her family found her, they immediately took her to the nearest hospital for surgery. Despite the surgeon's efforts, Maria's death was imminent, and she forgave Alessandro for his sin and proclaimed that she wanted to see him in heaven with her. She died on July 6, 1902.

While serving his prison sentence, Alessandro had a dream in which Maria gave him lilies that burned his hands. When he awoke, he immediately repented of his crime and strived to live a reformed life. After his release, he attended Maria's canonization in St. Peter's Square and became a lay Capuchin brother. Maria's witness to the Gospel and response to Christ's call for forgiveness should inspire us to forgive those who hurt us, as no soul is beyond the reach of Christ's compassion. May she intercede for us from her place in heaven and teach us to extend mercy to those most in need.

The Power of Self-control

In families, the Fruit of the Spirit, self-control, means parents and children choose to let the Holy Spirit guide their emotions, words, and actions to obey God's teachings, even when natural tendencies urge them to do otherwise. "For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control." [2 Timothy 1:7] It enables family members to respond to difficult situations with love, patience, and kindness, creating a more peaceful and faithful family environment.

- Establish routines and rituals such as family praying time, liturgical traditions at home, Mass every Sunday, blessing before bed, sign of the cross before going for a drive.
- Create a home *oratorium*, or family prayer corner, to promote positive habits of coming to God in prayer.
- Model self-control, in times of difficulty or anger ask God for calm and peace.
- Find ways to avoid extremes, replace too much phone time with family dinner, replace too many video games with a board games as a family.



**"WE OUGHT 'TO LIVE SOBER, UPRIGHT,
AND GODLY LIVES IN THIS WORLD.'" (TITUS 2:12)**

Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1809

Upcoming Events

60th Anniversary of Nostra Aetate

Oct 4 | St. Joseph, Avon Lake

Oct 12 | St. Vincent de Paul, Akron

Pilgrimage of Hope for Creation

Oct 4 | St. Joseph, Avon Lake

Oct 12 | St. Vincent de Paul, Akron

Register at ccdacle.org/pilgrimageofhope

How does being a Pilgrim of Hope lead to Self-control?

The Jubilee Year of Hope reminds us that our lives are not always easy, but we walk with courage and trust in Christ. To be a Pilgrim of Hope means choosing each day to move forward in faith, even when trials or temptations arise. This is where the Holy Spirit's fruits of self-control and fortitude become vital. Self-control helps us resist distractions and harmful choices that pull us away from God's path. Fortitude strengthens us to persevere in prayer, in love, and in doing what is right, even when it is difficult. Together, they keep us steady in hope, reminding us that Christ walks beside us every step of the way. As Pilgrims of Hope, we continue to trust in the care of the Holy Spirit to encourage us through the fruit of self-control. In this way, our steady witness of faith becomes a beacon of hope for all who journey with us.



Catholic Diocese
of Cleveland

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