

REMARKS  
ACCEPTANCE OF AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE'S  
LAWRENCE M. ADELMAN AWARD  
NORTH SHORE CONGREGATION ISRAEL  
AS PART OF THE ANNUAL DAVIS FAMILY FORUM  
CARDINAL BLASE J. CUPICH  
NOVEMBER 21, 2019

Heartfelt thanks to the American Jewish Committee for honoring me with the “Lawrence M. Adelman Award,” as I know its aim is to recognize someone committed to fight against antisemitism. I proudly receive it with the firm hope that we soon come to live in a world free from any trace of antisemitism in all its forms.

It is a special honor to receive this award from on an evening when you welcome Dr. Deborah Lipstadt. Dr. Lipstadt may not know this, but last year I was a panelist for an event hosted by the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center to discuss film *Denial* and the importance of “truth telling” in our time. Dr. Lipstadt, your sustained and courageous dedication to telling the truth about the Holocaust, portrayed in this film and pondered in our subsequent public conversation, is invaluable. Moreover, your reminder to us of the ongoing significance of accurately knowing our history is essential as

we undertake our ongoing work to never allow history to repeat itself in this regard.

Thank you to Rabbi Wendi Geffen and our hosts at North Shore Congregation Israel for their warm hospitality on this rainy night. May this congregation continue to be a place where community is formed, justice is promoted, and dialogue encouraged for the good of our world.

Let me acknowledge the important partnership that the Archdiocese of Chicago enjoys with the American Jewish Committee, particularly the Chicago Regional Office. Laurence Bolotin, Barbara Kantrow, David Inlander, Emily Soloff, and so many others at AJC Chicago have done much to collaborate with the Archdiocese and forge stronger Jewish-Catholic bonds. Either through the Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Jerusalem Lecture, events which raise awareness about the importance of combatting antisemitism, or various opportunities to build trust and friendship between Jews and Catholics, your collaboration on these endeavors is well known to me and greatly appreciated. Along with Catholics across the Archdiocese, I encourage you to continue to

build upon these strong relationships as we work together to establish a more just and peaceful society in Chicago.

As I mentioned, while I am proud to accept this award, I am even more fervent in my hope that the day will come when we are free from any trace of antisemitism in our world. Yet, knowing that hope is far from being fulfilled, we should take this occasion to highlight the ugly reality of antisemitism and its impact, surely on the Jewish community, but also on those who traffic in it and on the whole of society.

Antisemitism creates fear and division in society; it poisons the mind of youth; it invades the souls of people with contempt for others; it corrupts religion and one's relationship with God and as we have too often seen, it incites acts of violence. Antisemitism indeed is ugly for it defaces the beauty of humanity created in the image and likeness of God.

It is that very ugliness that Pope Francis warns people of the Christian faith to reject lest they lose their souls and identity as disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, whom his followers called rabbi. This is what the Holy Father said in his address to a delegation of Jewish leaders at the

Vatican in November 2018: “a Christian cannot be an anti-Semite; we share the same roots. It would be a contradiction of faith and life.

Rather, we are called to commit ourselves to ensure anti-Semitism is banned from the human community.”

Whenever I have felt the need to speak out against the harm brought upon Jews by antisemitic attitudes, my words have been grounded not in historical, social or political arguments, but the faith that centers my life. With Pope Francis I say again, a Christian simply cannot be a Christian and be antisemitic. But even more, a Christian must also outwardly and publicly oppose those who are antisemitic and those words and ideas that express and promote antisemitism. The Christian faith, rightly understood, compels Christians to combat antisemitism to be true to their faith.

At the Papal Audience last week, Pope Francis raised his voice again, warning Catholics not to become complacent, but to remain strong in the fight: “In the last century,” he stated, “we saw so many brutalities against the Jewish people, and we were all convinced that this

was over. But today the habit of persecuting the Jews, brothers and sisters, is here reborn. This is neither human nor Christian. The Jews are our brothers and sisters and should not be persecuted. Do you understand?”, he asked his audience.

I do understand and as I stand here among my Jewish friends, whom I consider brothers and sisters, I pledge once again my unrelenting commitment to stand by your side and walk with you. The deep resources of faith have much to offer us as we defend the truth, teach others, especially our children to love and respect others and yes, even willingly suffer if need be, to protect those that hatred and prejudice puts at risk. In the memory of Lawrence M. Adelman, let us take up that journey together. Thank you.