

**From:** ICEJ USA <mail@icejusa.org>  
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## Vatican must refute Bishop's smear against Jews

ICEJ rejects Mid East Synod claims that Christ 'nullified' Abrahamic Covenant

**JERUSALEM, October 28, 2010**

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has joined with those Jewish leaders currently calling on the Vatican to issue a firm and unequivocal repudiation of the outrageous and undignified comments by Archbishop Cyril Salim Bustros at the close of the special Catholic Synod of Middle East bishops which just recently concluded in Rome.

“The Archbishop’s remarks reflect a perilous reversion to classical Replacement theology, which bore such horrific fruits over many centuries for Jews living in the heart of Christian Europe,” said ICEJ Executive Director Rev. Malcolm Hedding. “The Catholic Church renounced this teaching at the landmark Vatican II conclave, but that important reversal means nothing if they do not now censure senior clerics who so brazenly stray back into the poisonous mindset of contempt for the Jews.”



It is not enough to dismiss this smear as a mere “personal opinion,” Hedding insisted, since the comments were made while Bustros was introducing an official document in his capacity as secretary for the Synod. “He purported to speak for all the bishops present,” said Hedding. “The Vatican has had several days to respond properly, and cannot allow this calumny to stand.”

Hedding also noted that “rarely have I ever heard Israeli officials resort to the Bible to justify their actions, nor do they cite it as their title deed to the Land of Israel, even though they could rightfully do so. They do, however, point to the Jewish people’s deep historic bond to the land, and the indisputable fact that the Hebrew Patriarchs, prophets and kings all once walked these very hills and plains. It was this unassailable historic connection and claim which persuaded the international community last century to recognize the Jewish people’s right to be reconstituted as a nation in their ancient homeland.”

Hedding added that while he does not intend to give Bible lessons to Catholic Bishops, if there is anything that the New Testament makes clear, it is that the promises of the Abrahamic

covenant – including the promise of the land – are irrevocable and were indeed 'confirmed' by Christ, rather than nullified by him. (Romans 11:28-29, 15:8-9; Galatians 3:17; Hebrews 6:13-20).

*Scroll down for background analysis of the Synod Statement...*



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## Upcoming ICEJ Events

### Atlanta, GA

*Islam in America*  
Mt. Paran Church of God  
November 6 @ 9.00am

### Melbourne, FL

*Discerning the Times*  
Church on the Rock  
November 13 @ 9.00am

### Waxahachie, TX

*Understanding Israel*  
Covenant Life Church  
November 20 @ 9.00am

### Stoystown, PA

*Understanding Israel*  
Christian Community Church  
November 27th @ 9.00am

### Stoystown, PA

*Michael Hines*  
Christian Community Church  
November 28th @ 10.30am

### Onalaska, WI

*Understanding Israel*  
Connect Church  
January 29th & 30th

## Synod Concludes Vatican Conference with Call to End Occupation

By David Parsons (ICEJ Media Director)

On October 23, Catholic bishops from across the Middle East concluded a special two-week conference at the Vatican in Rome with a call for the international community, especially the United Nations, to work "to put an end to the occupation" of Palestinian territories.

According to numerous press reports, the final statement issued by the Synod barely mentioned other issues plaguing their congregations, such as the rise of radical Islam and official as well as societal constraints on religious freedoms throughout the region. Instead, the gathering largely placed the blame for the region's problems in general and its Christian population in particular squarely on Israel's shoulders.



Archbishop Cyril Salim Bustros, who leads the Greek Melkite Church in the United States, went even further in comments on Saturday when introducing the Synod's concluding "Message." He insisted that was it "unacceptable" for Israel to take "recourse to biblical positions which use the Word of God to wrongly justify injustices," a position taken directly from the Message itself. He also maintained that, "We Christians cannot speak of the 'Promised Land' as an exclusive right for a privileged Jewish people... This promise was nullified by Christ."

"...There is no longer a chosen people. All men and women of all countries have become the chosen people," Bustros continued, according to the Catholic News Service. "The concept of the promised land cannot be used as a base for the justification of the return of Jews to Israel and the displacement of Palestinians... [The] justification of Israel's occupation of the land of Palestine cannot be based on sacred scriptures."

A spokesman for the Vatican, Father Federico Lombardi, issued a statement on Monday that sought to down play the remarks by Bustros. While embracing the Synod's call for "an end to the occupation," Lombardi also suggested that the Arab bishop's statements belonged to the collection of "individual" contributions which did not express the Synod's official stance, thereby brushing aside Bustros's official capacity within the assemblage.

"If one wants a summary of the Synod's position, attention must currently be paid to the "Message," which is the only written text approved by the Synod in the last few days," Lombardi urged. "There is also a great richness and variety in the contributions made by the fathers, but which as such should not all be considered as the voice of the Synod as a whole."

A number of prominent Jewish leaders and organizations have since called on the Vatican to issue a more direct and decisive repudiation of the remarks by Bishop Bustros. Rabbi David Rosen, international director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee and the only Jewish representative to address the Synod, said it was "appalling that in their final statement ... the bishops did not have the courage to address challenges of intolerance and extremism in the Muslim countries in which they reside, and rather chose to make the Israeli-Palestinian conflict their first focus."

Rabbi Rosen, who addressed the gathering in his capacity as an adviser to the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, said Bishop Bustros' statement reflected "either shocking ignorance or insubordination in relation to the Catholic Church's teaching on Jews and Judaism flowing from the Vatican II declaration 'Nostra Aetate.'"



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