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October 2, 2009

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Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Thank you for your letter of August 18, 2009 that expresses your important concerns over points found in “A *Note on Ambiguities Contained in Reflections on Covenant and Mission*,” issued jointly this year by the Committee on Doctrine and the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. We are grateful for your letter, because it has given us an opportunity to develop more fully shared understandings even of our most critical differences.

To that end, we have composed a Statement of six points that explain briefly the teaching of the Catholic Church on our relationship to the Jewish people and what we as Catholics intend by interreligious dialogue. We hope that these six points can help to form the basis of future conversation with you and our other Jewish colleagues about the relationships that God has with his people, and also about the character of dialogue as an exchange between communities that respect and honor one another’s identities.

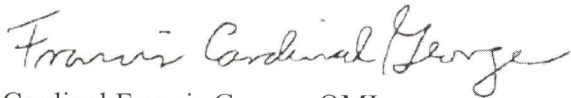
As you are well aware, Vatican II’s decree *Nostra aetate* raised a question that is central to our present discussion: “How does God’s covenant with the Jewish people—as lived today—relate to that of Jesus?” In his remarks on the occasion of the promulgation of *Dominus Iesus* (2000), Cardinal Walter Kasper urged that Christians and Jews make a close examination together of the mystery of God’s covenantal action throughout human history. While the teaching of the Council provides for Catholics clear parameters for this discussion, it leaves open and indeed demands further theological dialogue and deeper understanding of this issue, the kind of dialogue that we together have been having since the Council. It would be our hope that Cardinal

Kasper's suggestion could, in fact, become a central focus of our dialogue together, providing both of us as partners with a much needed way to gain a renewed understanding of our relationship in God.

After further discussion, our Committees have also decided to amend the *Note* by excising the last two sentences of paragraph seven in order to address the concerns you and others have raised about the relationship between dialogue and witness. We hope that this effort will result in a clearer statement of Catholic belief that also respects the special relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people. We anticipate that the process of amending the *Note* will be completed in the weeks ahead.

We hope that the attached Six Points and the revision of the *Note* make clear our intentions and hopes for future dialogue between committed Catholics and committed Jews. Be assured that it is our intention to match the sincerity and frankness of your own letter with a corresponding good will and clarity in our actions now and in the future. We remain deeply grateful for the testimony of friendship which this honest exchange of correspondence represents in the dialogue between us and look forward to the possibility of exploring with you the challenge that Cardinal Kasper has placed before us.

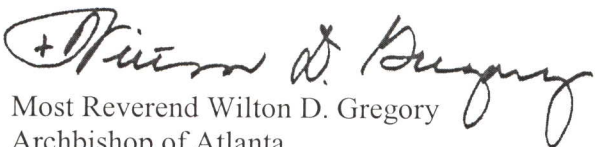
Sincerely yours,



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Archbishop of Chicago
President



Cardinal William H. Keeler
Archbishop Emeritus of Baltimore
USCCB Liaison to Jewish Community



Most Reverend Wilton D. Gregory
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cc: Father Thomas Weinandy, OFM, Cap.
Father James Massa