

For the Jewish people

Let us pray for the Jewish people, the first to hear the word of God, that they may continue to grow in the love of his name and in faithfulness to his covenant.

Good Friday, *Novus Ordo*, Mass.

This new prayer for the Jewish people calls for some comment. *The first to hear the word of God*, is a reference to Our Lord's ancestor, Abraham, to whom God said:

And the Lord said to Abram: Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and out of thy father's house and come into the land which I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and magnify thy name, and thou shalt be blessed. I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee, and IN THEE shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3).

Our Lord speaking of Abraham said to the Jews:

Amen, amen I say to you: If any man keep my word, he shall not see death forever. The Jews therefore said: Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest: If any man keep my word he shall not taste death forever. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? and the prophets are dead. Whom dost thou make thyself? Jesus answered: If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father that glorifieth me, of whom you say that he is your God. And you have not known him. And if I shall say to you that I know him not, I shall be like to you, a liar. But I do know him, and do keep his word. Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day: he saw it and was glad. The Jews therefore said to him: Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said to them: Amen, amen I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am. They took up stones therefore to cast at him (John 8:51-59).

The next phrase in the prayer: *that they may continue to grow in the love of his name and in faithfulness to his covenant*, refers to the New Covenant of Our Lord which is the fulfillment of the Old Covenant of Moses, as the continuation of this prayer from the New Mass of Good Friday makes clear:

Almighty and eternal God, long ago you gave your promise to Abraham and his posterity. Listen to your Church as we pray that the people you first made your own may arrive at the fullness of Redemption.

The Jews cannot be saved by remaining faithful to the Old Covenant given to Moses, but by entering the fulfillment of that Covenant, the Catholic Church. Our Lord made this abundantly clear to them, as we learn from the Gospel of St. John:

Think not that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one that accuseth you,

Moses, in whom you trust. For if you did believe Moses, you would perhaps believe me also; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words? (John 5:45-47).

St. Stephen made this prophecy of Moses the climax of his magnificent witness to the Sanhedrin:

And all that sat in the council, looking on him, saw his face as if it had been the face of an angel. Then the high priest said: Are these things so? Who said: Ye men, brethren and fathers hear...This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel: A prophet shall God raise up to you of your brethren, as myself: him you shall hear. This is he that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel who spoke to him on mount Sinai, and with our fathers; who received the words of life to give unto us. Whom our fathers would not obey; but thrust him away, and in their hearts turned back into Egypt...You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do you also. Which of the prophets have not your fathers not persecuted? And they have slain them who foretold of the coming of the Just One; of whom you have been now the betrayers and the murderers: who received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. Now hearing these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed with their teeth at him. But he being full of the Holy Ghost, looking up steadfastly to heaven, saw the glory of God. and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And he said: Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. And they crying out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and with one accord ran violently upon him. And casting him forth without the city, they stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, invoking, and saying: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And falling on his knees, he cried in a loud voice, saying: Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord (Acts 6: 15; 7:37-39, 51-59).

Let us continue to pray to God for the Jewish people, that they will no longer stop their ears: *Listen to your Church as we pray that the people you first made your own may arrive at the fullness of redemption.*

Bro. Thomas Mary

The Pontifical Biblical Commission during the reign of Pope St. Pius X did great work in suppressing the heresy of Modernism. But in 1971 Pope Paul VI in the decree *Sedula Curia* made the Commission a purely advisory body of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The recent statement it issued on the Jews has absolutely no magisterial authority.