

INTRODUCTION

The addresses of Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz and Rabbi David Rosen presented in this book were delivered on March 6th 2009, in the Jesuit Center for Culture and Dialogue at the University School of Philosophy and Education „Ignatianum” in Krakow, Poland. They were given during the conference entitled: „Catholic-Jewish Dialogue – Where We Have Come, Where We Need to Go”.

The conference was organized to honour the late Father Stanisław Musiał S.J. (1938-2004), the Polish pioneer of the Catholic-Jewish dialogue. The keynote speakers, Cardinal Dziwisz and Rabbi Rosen were active participants of the major events in the history of Catholic-Jewish dialogue and today they belong to its leading propagators.

Cardinal Dziwisz, the closest co-worker of the late John Paul II, accompanied him during the first visit of the Bishop of Rome at the synagogue of Rome (1986), the interfaith prayer meetings in Assisi (1986, 2002), and the papal pilgrimage to Israel (2000). As the Archbishop of Krakow, he cultivates the „spirit of Assisi” in the Roman Catholic Church in Poland. He is a founder of the Institute for Intercultural Dialogue in Krakow, and encourages and supports various inter-religious initiatives in Poland.

Rabbi Rosen had been for years the leading representative of the Jewish community in the dialogue with the

adherents of other religious traditions. He headed the Jewish delegation at the interfaith meeting in Assisi, as well as at the numerous meetings of the Jewish leaders with John Paul II and Benedict XVI. In recognition of his outstanding contribution to Jewish-Catholic reconciliation, Pope Benedict XVI made Rabbi Rosen a Knight Commander of the Order of Gregory the Great. He is the first Orthodox rabbi and the first Israeli citizen to receive this honor. Rabbi Rosen heads the American Jewish Committee's Department of Inter-religious Affairs and is Honorary President of the International Council of Christians and Jews.

The conference in Krakow gathered many practitioners of the Christian-Jewish dialogue from Europe, Israel and USA, which was made possible through the generous support of the Cardinal Suenens Center, the Cardinal Bernardin Center, Boston College, the American Jewish Committee and the Tanenbaum Foundation.

The conference concluded with the Father Stanisław Musiał Award ceremony. The Musiał Award is conferred yearly for special contribution to Christian-Jewish dialogue. Professor Jan Błoński and the Town of Chmielnik were the first recipients of this award, which was initiated by the Krakow Club of Christians and Jews „Covenant” and funded by the President of Krakow and the Rector of the Jagiellonian University.