RABBI JACK BEMPORAD

Rabbi Jack Bemporad is an internationally recognized theologian, scholar and interfaith advocate. A Holocaust refugee from Italy, Bemporad came to the United States at the age of six.

He received a B.A. degree with honors in philosophy from Tulane University and his M.A. in philosophy from Hebrew Union College, again with honors. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Rome.

Ordained as a Rabbi in 1959, Bemporad received an honorary Doctor of Divinity from Hebrew Union College in 1984 and has served as an Adjunct Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Southern Methodist University, the New School for Social Research and the University of Pennsylvania. He currently serves as Professor of Interreligious Studies at the Vatican's Angelicum University in Rome.

An interfaith leader for more than 30 years, Rabbi Bemporad serves as director of the nonprofit Center for Interreligious Understanding (CIU), where he is bringing people of all religious faiths together to promote honest dialogue, mutual respect and theological understanding.

Bemporad has been at the center of many of the negotiations improving the relationship between Christians and Jews. In February 1990, he was sent to Rome to help negotiate the relocation of the Carmelite Convent in Auschwitz, Poland. In September 1990, he was the primary writer of the Prague Accord, the first time in history that the Vatican asked forgiveness of the Jewish people for past acts of anti-Semitism.

In 1992, Bemporad worked with Cardinal Johannes Willebrands and Cardinal Edward I. Cassidy to help secure full diplomatic relations between the Vatican and the State of Israel. And in 1999, he delivered an address at the Vatican's Conference on Interreligious Relations before 50,000 people at St. Peters, including Pope John Paul II, the Dalai Lama and religious leaders from throughout the world.

In January 2003, Bemporad was a principal writer of the statement issued on behalf of the world's religions at a Vatican symposium on the "Spiritual Resources of the Religions for Peace."

In June 2003, Bemporad helped lead an interfaith delegation to Iran with Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, Archbishop of Washington, D.C., to address anti-Semitism and religious tolerance with Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, Speaker Mahdi Karrubi, Chief Justice Hashemi Shahroodi and many key Iranian religious, academic, cultural and political leaders.

In November 2003, Bemporad joined with the World Council of Churches to sponsor an international interfaith conference to identify the theological foundations for improved relations between Protestants, Orthodox Christians and Jews.

Bemporad has also had numerous audiences with Pope John Paul II, including a 1990 celebration of the 25th Anniversary of Vatican II in which he gave an address on Christian-Jewish relations

on behalf of the world Jewish community; during the Papal visit to Denver, Colorado, in 1993; a 40-minute private meeting at the Vatican in 1994 to discuss the new Catholic catechism's teachings on Jews and Judaism; and in 2000, when he presented the Holy See with a menorah in remembrance of the Jews who perished during the Holocaust.

Bemporad has served as Chairman of the Interreligious Affairs Committee of the Synagogue Council of America, representing orthodox, conservative and reform rabbinical and lay bodies with the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Council of Churches, the Vatican, the World Council of Churches, and the national and international branches of the Lutheran, Presbyterian, Episcopal and Baptist church bodies.

For his efforts to foster interreligious understanding, Bemporad has received the prestigious Luminosa Award of the Focolare Movement and the Raoul Wallenberg Humanitarian Leadership Award of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies of Ramapo College.

He is the author of numerous books and articles, including *Our Age: The Historic New Era of Christian-Jewish Understanding*, which was published by New City Press.