

**Fr. Wayne Jenkins' Acceptance Speech:
"Building Bridges Award"
The Lux Center for Catholic Jewish Studies**

My first introduction to the Jewish community was in Milwaukee. Dr. Richard Lux organized a study tour of Israel that included the Shalom Hartman Institute. I was fascinated by how the modern-day concerns of Israel were debated. One of the concerns presently is with Ukraine's comparison with the Holocaust. Dr. Lux also was my thesis director for **Berakah-Eucharistia: Prayers of the Covenants**. My research centred on the development of the *berakah* within the Tanakh, the Qumran Scrolls, the New Testament and Jewish Manuscripts like the *Birkat ha-mazon*. Rabbi Scott Shafrin states that the berakoth, words of blessing, form the second pillar of Jewish prayer life. With the renewal from Vatican Council II, the *berakah* was introduced in the Liturgy of the Eucharist during the prayers for the Offertory; for example, Blessed be G-d forever. I pray the *berakoth* at every celebration of the Eucharist when I preside.

For my work as a professional archivist, I am invited to conduct classes on archival administration. During this time, I also was asked to help establish an archive in our SCJ missions. My work has taken me to the SCJ missions of India, Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam. For my teaching in India, I took my students on a field trip to Fort Cochin where there is the Paradesi Synagogue with its museum that was built in 1568. Jewish merchants have journeyed to this southwestern tip of India since the fourth century. Because of persecution, Portuguese Jews fled to the area around Cochin. 6,000 Cochin Jews have immigrated to Israel. To this date, the required ten persons for a sabbath service is observed in Cochin. I bought this blue *kippa* to attend. It is like stars in the heavens representing G-d's promise to Abraham.

My archival skills with French reading proficiency were required by my Superior General Ornelas to work at the three Vatican Archives in Rome, Italy. During my down time, I often visited the Jewish Quarter where I enjoyed delicious Jewish food. I visited the museum under the synagogue with its treasures that were saved from World War II. For the Sabbath, I entered the magnificent Roman synagogue. But before entering, I had to surrender my Canadian passport. It was like entering a new country within Italy like the Vatican. Once again, I was given a *kippa* to wear. This one was white with an emblem of the Great Synagogue of Rome. *Berakoth*, words of blessing, were prayed during the service.

The *kippa* is a thread for me tonight. This year will be approaching the 50th anniversary for the Catholic Jewish Conference. This blue *kippa* with the emblem of the Catholic Jewish Conference was worn recently throughout the Greater Milwaukee Area. Personally, it reminds me of why I participate in Catholic Jewish relations. A Jew can be a Jew and a Roman Catholic can be a Roman Catholic as we share freely our faith stories with each other. Together, we can be a light in the darkness such as at Fort McCoy when we purchased new winter clothes for the Afghan refugees. More importantly, we can challenge together any acts of antisemitism and of anti-Judaism within the Greater Milwaukee area.

Thank you for this award. Blessed be G-d forever!

**-Fr. Wayne Jenkins, SCJ
US Provincial Archivist**