

יום השואה - Yom Hashoah  
Memorial Observance



Remembering the six million  
Temple Beth El of Cedarhurst  
Temple Hillel of North Woodmere

April 21<sup>st</sup> 2020 Nisan 27<sup>th</sup> 5780

## The beginning

*“In the beginning of God’s creating the heaven and the earth, the earth was without form and void. And darkness hovered upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said: ‘Let there be light’. And there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day and the darkness Night. And it was evening and it was morning: the first day”.*

(Bereshit/Genesis 1:1-5)

Out of silence, out of darkness, the creative Word of God was spoken. It first took the form of wind, of *ruach*, God’s spirit hovering over the waters of chaos to control them, to hold them back and make possible the goodness of creation itself. Through the millennia, the process has continued, as humanity came to share in the work of creation. Days of light and nights of darkness were linked together. We turn back to the days of creation and we link them with the days of destruction in our time, so that the *ruach* of God may drive back the darkness and give us light.

(E. Wiesel, ‘The six days of destruction’)

*“And God said: let us make humanity in our image, in our likeness, and let it have*

*dominion over ... all ... in God’s image, male and female God created them. And God blessed them ... and God saw everything that was created and found it very good. And it was evening and it was morning, the sixth day”.*

(Bereshit/Genesis 1:26-31)

God of Creation, we thank you for light and darkness and our ability to recognize them. We thank you for the unending light shining out of the six days of creation. O God of Creation, help us to find that light again in the days of darkness and destruction. Please help us also to remember the millions of souls that were shattered in the abyss of the dark night. God, Creator of light and darkness, we do not demand answers even when we have troubling questions we cannot but ask. And we will always praise Your Name: *Yitgadal Veyitkadash Shmay Rabbah ...* These Hebrew words glorify God’s name and come from the Jewish tradition. The Shoah was a devastating, diabolic wind that scoured Europe leaving behind a chaos of death and destruction. Six million Jews, a million children among them, were taken into the death chambers to die in gas and fire.

Many others died with them. We remember them all.

Adapted from ‘The six days of destruction’

## Churches and the Shoah

“Why was the fate of the Jews so different from the fate of the planned victims of the euthanasia program? Why did one rouse Church leaders to an effective and courageous open protest while the other – with few exceptions - roused nothing? ... Church protests against Hitler ... concerned matters of Church prerogatives, power and doctrine. Euthanasia, like crucifixes on schoolroom walls, qualified. Jews did not. The contrast speaks for itself”.

(Constantine's Sword, p.30)

“ Daniel Jonah Goldhagen ... deals extensively with the failure of Christian Churches in Germany ... “The foundational element of the Nuremberg Laws was the regime's capacity to distinguish and demonstrate the extent of a person's Jewish ancestry, to know who was a Jew. Enforcement, therefore depended on the use of the genealogical records in the possession of local churches”. Lewy quoted a priest who defined this identification activity as a “service to the people”... heroes among the clergy, including Angelo Roncalli, the future Pope John XXIII, exploited the Church's function as a racial certification agent to provide false identity documents to Jews, but the institutional Church never renounced this role. “The cooperation of the Church in this matter continued right through the war years ... when the price of

being Jewish was ...outright physical destruction.”  
(Constantine's Sword, p.532)



## The dark night

“November, 1944. Jewish children were brought to Auschwitz. A truck stopped in front of the Political section. A little boy jumped off. He held an apple in his hand. Two of the SS men were standing in the doorway. Suddenly one of them went over to the boy, grabbed his legs and smashed his head against the wall. Then he calmly picked up the apple. And the other told me to wipe “that” off the wall. About an hour later I was called by the first to interpret in an interrogation and I saw him eating the child's apple” – Bernd Naumann



“Maidanek was an industrial factory for producing corpses: death, the destruction of the greatest number of prisoners in the shortest time at the lowest cost was Maidanek's purpose. Life was treated as something ephemeral and unimportant, as essentially worthless; in fact, contemptible. Death was our constant companion and not a terrible one, for quite often

one wished passionately for it. It was life that was terrible, the long, agonizing process of parting from it after it had been shorn of dignity.” – Alexander Donat



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## **Light shines through the darkness: Heroes of all faiths**

*These are only two examples among many heroes of all faiths and backgrounds that risked and often lost their lives in the defense of human dignity.*

### ***Raoul Wallenberg***



The

energetic efforts of a young Swedish diplomat saved thousands

of Hungarian Jews from certain death in the gas chambers of Auschwitz.

Sent to Budapest by the Swedish Foreign Ministry, Wallenberg worked to save the city's remaining 200,000 Jews from planned deportations in July 1944. He issued thousands of special Swedish Embassy-stamped "protective passports" to Hungarian Jews. In organizing a network of hundreds of young Jewish agents, he managed the distribution of food and medicine to Jews taking refuge in those shelters. Using bluff and diplomatic credentials, Wallenberg even pressured the SS into turning over to him some prisoners already on board deportation trains. As Adolf Eichmann initiated the death marches of thousands of Jews, Wallenberg pursued the departing columns, winning the release of many of those in possession of the Swedish passports. In early 1945, as the Soviet Army neared Budapest, he dissuaded the SS commander from carrying out an ordered massacre of Jews still in the city. After Budapest's liberation, Wallenberg disappeared, presumably arrested by the Soviets on espionage charges. His fate remains a mystery.



## **Angelo Roncalli - Pope John XXIII**

Angelo Roncalli, as the Apostolic Delegate in Istanbul in Turkey during World War II, was actively engaged in the rescue of Jews, and later as Pope John XXIII, transformed Roman Catholic teaching toward the Jews to ensure that the foundations of Christian anti-Semitism were shattered.



Chaim Barlas,  
the  
chief  
Jewish

am going to fast and to pray for the people and our people. Roncalli worked with Church officials in Hungary who issued papers to individuals Jews, which said they were under the protection of the Holy See. He pleaded with King Boris of Bulgaria, in whose country he had served for a decade, not to deport his Jews. And while Bulgaria cooperated in the deportation of the Jews of Bulgarian-occupied Thrace and Macedonia, it did not consent to the deportation of its native Jews. He wrote the following from Istanbul : "Poor children of Israel. Every day I hear their moans all around me. I sympathize with them and I do my best to help them. They are the relatives and the fellow countrymen of Jesus. May the Divine Savior come to their aid".

(from the Summary of the research work of the International Angelo Roncalli Committee - International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation)

delegate from Palestine, wrote that Roncalli cried when told about what was happening to Jews. He said, "I

### **Prayer for the memory of all the righteous:**

***May god remember the souls of the righteous men and women of all faiths and backgrounds who have gone to their eternal rest. In tribute to their memory we pledge to perform acts of charity and justice. May their souls be bound up in the bond of eternal life as an enduring source of blessing, Amen.***

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## The Jewish Partisans song

זאג ניט קיין מאָל, אַז דו גייסט דעם לעצטן וועג,  
כאַטש הימלען בלייענע פֿאַרשטעלן בלויע טעג, –  
קומען וועט נאָך אונדזער אויסגעבענקטע שעה,  
ס'וועט אַ פּויק טאָן אונדזער טראַט – מיר זיינען דאָ!

Zog nit keyn mol az du geyst dem letstn veg,  
Ven himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg.  
Veyl kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho -  
S'vet a poyk ton undzer trot - mir zaynen do!

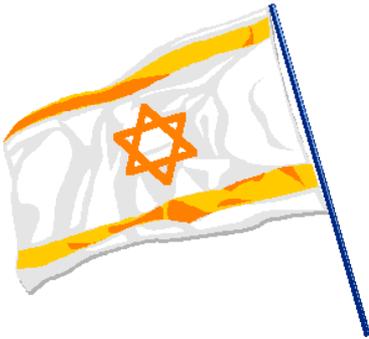
Never say that you go on your last way  
Though leaden clouds may be concealing skies of blue -  
Because the hour that we have hungered for is near;  
Beneath our tread the earth shall tremble: We are here!

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## A new day begins:

As the war ended, there was light once more. One shining moment in human history was the rebirth of Israel, the return of the Jewish People to its ancestral homeland. Never again would the Jewish People be subject to cruel extermination without having any shores of refuge open for them, as it was before World War II. The State of Israel will have its doors wide open, as it welcomed home an estimated 200,000 survivors of the Shoah and 600,000 Jews escaping persecution in Arab lands.



## A new spirit in interfaith dialogue

Angelo Roncalli was just turning 77 when he assumed the papacy in 1958 ... He wanted to end the long tradition of Christian Jew-hatred upon which Hitler had so efficiently built and that is why he charged to those preparing for the council to take up the Church's relation with Judaism as a matter of priority...

Hence his elimination from the Good Friday liturgy of the modifiers 'faithless' and 'perfidious' as applied to the Jews, an implicit rejection of supersessionism. Hence his greeting to a first Jewish delegation to the Vatican: '*I am Joseph, your brother*', he said, then came down from his throne to sit with them in a simple chair. Later on, the Second Vatican Council issued the declaration ***Nostra Aetate*** that "deplores the hatred, persecutions and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and from any source." Breaking with earlier Catholic teaching, it also says that "what happened in his (Christ's) passion cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living, without distinction, nor upon the Jews of today".

(adapted from [Constantine's Sword](#))

## Epilogue:

On January 27, 1945, Soviet troops liberated Auschwitz. The date is now consecrated as International Holocaust Remembrance Day, as the world vowed never to allow murderous anti-Semitism to recur. Yet 75 years later, attacking Jews has once again become socially acceptable in many countries—across the left-right ideological spectrum, and among different groups that blame Jews for their grievances and oppression.

The recent eruptions of anti-Semitism in America have awakened us to a prejudice that has long resided, in quiet ways and in many forms, in this country. And the part of it that now disguises itself as anti-Zionism—hatred of the Jewish state that was established in the wake of the Holocaust as a refuge for Jews—has even seemed, to some, virtuous, a sentiment they believe puts them in humanity’s moral vanguard.

And anti-Semitism has returned, in part, because the general public’s knowledge about the Holocaust has diminished. For a time, that knowledge discredited anti-Semitism and those who indulged in it. But the passing of survivors who experienced the Holocaust and could testify to it, the denial and minimization of the Holocaust, and the hijacking of the word itself to advance numerous other causes, great and small, all combined to diminish its memory. The horrifying knowledge of where anti-Semitism can lead has been, in large measure, lost in a miasma of forgetting, ignorance, denial, confusion, appropriation, and obfuscation.

As a former director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, many of

whose uncles, aunts, and cousins, and a grandmother, were murdered in the Holocaust; as a professor who has taught a generation of students about the memory of the Holocaust; as a psychiatrist who is well aware of humanity’s repertoire of hatred and brutality; as a professor of international affairs; and as a student of Jewish history who is deeply aware of the many times masses of Jews were murdered or expelled simply because they were Jews, I watch anti-Semitism’s global resurgence, so soon after the Holocaust, with alarm and foreboding. Could murderous anti-Semitism, on a large scale, resume in our time? Could “never again,” vowed so solemnly and so repeatedly after the Holocaust, revert to “yet again”?

Walter Reich - Professor and former director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/01/seventy-five-years-after-auschwitz-anti-semitism-is-on-the-rise/605452/>

This service has been collected and edited by Rabbi Claudio Kupchik – Temple Beth El of Cedarhurst

EL MALEI RACHAMIM,

shochein bamromim.

Hamtzei m'nucha n'chona tachat

kanfei ha'Shechinah,

b'maalot k'doshim u't'horim,

k'zohar harakia mazhirim,

et nishmot shisha milyon

acheinu v'ach'yoteinu

shenehergu al kiddush haShem.

Ba'al Ha'Rachamim yastireim

b'seter k'nafav l'olamim,

v'yitzror bitzror hachayim et nishmatam.

Adonai hu nachalatam,

v'yanuchu b'shalom al mishkavam.

V'nomar, amen.

אֵל מְלֵא רַחֲמִים,

שׁוֹכֵן בְּמְרוֹמִים.

הַמָּצֵא מְנוּחָה נְכוֹנָה וַתַּחַת

כַּנְפֵי הַשְּׁכִינָה,

בְּמַעְלֹת קְדוּשִׁים וּטְהוֹרִים,

כְּזוֹהַר הַרְקִיעַ מְזֹהֲרִים,

אֶת נְשָׁמוֹת שֵׁשֶׁה־מִּלְיוֹן

אֲחֵינוּ וְאֲחֵיוֹתֵינוּ

שֶׁנְּהַרְגוּ עַל קְדוּשַׁת הַשֵּׁם.

בְּעַל הַרְחָמִים יִסְתִּירֵם

בְּסֵתֶר כַּנְפָיו לְעוֹלָמִים,

וְיִצְרֹר בְּצִרּוֹר הַחַיִּים אֶת נְשָׁמָתָם.

יְיָ הוּא נַחֲלָתָם,

וְיַנְיְחוּ בְּשָׁלוֹם עַל מְשַׁכְּבָם.

וְנֹאמֵר, אָמֵן.

FULLY COMPASSIONATE God on high:

To our six million brothers and sisters

murdered because they were Jews,

grant clear and certain rest with You

in the lofty heights of the sacred and pure

whose brightness shines like the very glow of heaven.

Source of mercy:

Forever enfold them in the embrace of Your wings;

secure their souls in eternity.

Adonai: they are Yours.

They will rest in peace.

Amen.

Auschwitz      ?תגדל  
                   ויתקדש  
 Lodz            שמה רבא.  
                   בצלמא די ברא כרעותה,  
 Ponar            וימליך מלכותה  
 Babi Yar        בתיכון ובימיכון  
 Maidanek        ובתיי דכל בית ישראל,  
 Birkenau        בעגלא ובזמן קריב,  
 Kovno            ואמרו: אמן.  
 Janowska

יהא שמה רבא מברך לעלם ולעלמי עלמיה.

Theresienstadt    יתברך וישתבח  
                   ויתפאר ויתרום  
 Buchenwald        ויתנשא ויתהדר  
                   Treblinka        ויתעלה ויתהלל  
                   Vilna            שמה דקדשא, בריך הוא,  
 Bergen-Belsen    לעלא  
                   Mauthausen    מן כל ברכתא ושירתא,  
                   Dachau        תשבחתא ונחמתא  
                   Minsk            דאמירן בעלמא,  
                   Warsaw        ואמרו: אמן.

יהא שלמא רבא מן-שמיה וחיים עלינו ועל כל ישראל, ואמרו: אמן.

עשה שלום במרומו, הוא יעשה שלום עלינו ועל כל ישראל, ואמרו: אמן.