

June 22, 1964

Mr. Marc H. Tanenbaum  
The American Jewish Committee  
Institute of Human Relations  
165 East 56 Street  
New York 22, New York

Dear Marc:

I received this morning the release from the Religious News Service of May 29th concerning your talk in Pittsburgh.

While I find that I can, by and large, agree with what you say, I must take exception to some individual features.

First, your comment about the Church and Christians needing the decree "in order to restore unambiguously the Biblical and prophetic mode of Christian life and thought." I think it may be gratuitous for us to advise Christians how to restore the pristine purity of their faith. Inevitably, it leads us into complications which are not always foreseen. In this case, it would imply that if the decree is accepted, then we will acknowledge the "Biblical and prophetic" nature of Christian life. Of course, I deny it, decree or no decree. Even without anti-Semitism, Christianity, in the traditional Jewish view, does not partake of the nature of Biblical and prophetic modes.

Secondly, I do not share your sentiment that placing the decree within the secretariat for non-Christians will lead to "such great misgivings among many thoughtful Catholics as among Jews." I already expressed to you orally, when we met earlier this week, my feeling that this indeed is the secretariat which should handle the decree, and that, on the contrary I am keenly suspicious of this decree being placed in the context or secretariat of "Christian unity."

My best wishes for a pleasant and healthful summer,

Cordially yours,

RABBI NORMAN LAMM

NL:ff

CC: M. Feurstein