

I wrote these notes on March 13, 2001. I reworked them on September 12, 2001, a day after the terrorist attack on the USA. I completely repudiate and abhor the destruction of human life by any form of terrorism. "Weapons of mass destruction" (WMD) like nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons are intrinsically evil because they target whole populations. With the Church, I believe just causes must be pursued using just means.

1. Clarification of Terminology.

Semite = descendent of Shem (son of Noah).

Abraham is a Semite.

Abraham's oldest son was named **Ishmael**. Ishmael is the father of the **Arabs**. Both the Hebrew scriptures (**TNK**) and the **Quran** agree on this genealogy. Therefore, the Arabs are *Semites*, too.

Abraham's second son was **Isaac**. Isaac is the father of **Jacob (Israel)**, and Jacob was the father of **Judah**. "Jews" are Judaites as well as being Semites. The Jews are all that is left of the **Twelve Tribes of Israel**, so "Jew" and "Israeli" have become virtually synonymous.

So both the Jews and the Arabs are equally descendents of Abraham and are equally Semitic. To be precise, we should speak of "**anti-judaism**" rather than "**anti-semitism**" when we wish to condemn (as we should) the injustices done to the Jews in Europe.

2. Human rights belong to all human beings.

In my view, *whatever justifies the founding of the United States or Israel justifies the foundation of an independent Palestine*. Human rights belong to all humans, not just to the allies of the U.S. If every ethnic group has a natural right to a homeland, then so do the Palestinians (a.k.a. the **Philistines** in Biblical times--they were there before the Israelites invaded).

If Jews need a homeland, so do Palestinians.

If Jews need a safe haven, so do Palestinians.

If Jews have the right to conquer by war, so do Palestinians.

If Jews have the right to subjugate other ethnic groups, so do Palestinians.

If Americans had the right to wage war against Britain, Arabs have to right to wage war against Israel.

The principles of the Declaration of Independence, which justified the American Revolution against England, justify the Palestinian war for independence, too. Palestinians today are held in a state of **apartheid**. We condemned it in South Africa but uphold it in Israel. Palestinians are second-class citizens in their own country. They do not have equal rights as voters, employers, employees, or tax-payers. They are taxed without representation. They are not allowed to travel as freely as other citizens in the same country--not within the country and not outside the country. The United States is dedicated to the proposition that "All human beings are created equal"--but in Israel, some humans are more equal than others.

3. Neither Israel nor Palestine are willing to become secular democracies like the U.S.

The reason that the Israelis cannot now and probably never will be able to grant full human rights to Palestinians is that, within a short time, the Palestinians would outnumber and outvote the Israelis. Most of the Arab nations are in a state of war with Israel and have declared their intention to eradicate the Jews living in the Middle East. Neither group is willing to live by "majority rule" with respect for the human rights of a minority. Both desire the same thing: a **racist state**. Jews want Jews to control Israel; Palestinians want Palestinians to control Palestine.

4. I completely abhor and repudiate the terrorist tactics of the PLO.

Making war on non-combatants is a violation of the human rights of the terrorists' victims. "**The end does not justify the means.**" But the United States Declaration of Independence from Britain, which justified our War of Independence, justifies the Palestinians in striving to gain their independence from Israel. *Their goal of obtaining basic human rights is praiseworthy even if their methods are despicable.*

I abhor, condemn and repudiate *all* forms of terrorism: eco-terrorism, the IRA in Ireland, pro-life murderers, arsonists and bombers, Palestinian suicide-murderers, Israeli attacks on civilians, Chechen kidnappers, the fire-bombing of cities in WWII, Stalin's murder of 100 million people, the Holocaust, Christian witch-hunts, Christian massacres of Jews, the use of WMD by the U.S. and its allies in Germany and Japan, etc.

5. The Religious Issues.

1700 BC	Abraham-->Ishmael (Arabs); --> Isaac-->Jacob (Israel)-->Judah (Jews).
1010 BC	King David, the Messiah (the Christ), chose Jerusalem as his capital.
970 BC	King Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem.
586 BC	The Babylonians (Iraqis) destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple.
520 BC	The Jews returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt the Temple.
70 AD	The Romans destroyed Judea, Jerusalem, and the Temple--->" diaspora ."
622 AD	Mohammed's flight (hijra) from Mecca to Medina.---> jihad, crusades, etc.
1933-1945 AD	The Nazis and their collaborators attempted to kill all European Jews.
1947 AD	The U.N. divided (partitions) Palestine . The surrounding Arab states declared war on the new state of Israel. They lost every war that they fought against the Israelis, in large measure because of the military and financial support of the United States.

At the very heart of the conflict lie competing claims to **exclusive control of the Temple Mount**. The Romans tore down the Temple in **70 A.D.**, killed a million Jews, and left the Jews with nothing but little communities scattered around the world (the **Diaspora**). The Jewish community in Venice lived in a restricted area called "**The Ghetto**."

This scattering of the Jews left the land vacant for the Philistines/Palestinians to fill. Muslim armies conquered the Holy Land in the first century AH (After Hegira), which is 622-722 AD in the Christian calendar. Muslims venerate the same rock on which the Jewish Temple had been built as the place where Mohammed ascended to Heaven and returned to earth. They have built a **dome over the rock** and a **mosque** on the same grounds where the Temple once stood. In all likelihood, the foundations of the Temple still lie under the **Dome of the Rock** and the **Mosque of Omar**, but the Muslims refuse to let the Jews excavate underneath their shrines.

Today, Jews are allowed to get no closer to the site of the Temple than the **Wailing Wall**, which was just a retaining wall built by Herod the Great (a despised, quisling Jew appointed to be "King of the Jews" by the Roman emperor). Religious Jews--the **Orthodox** and **UltraOrthodox**--want to tear down the Muslim shrines and rebuild the Temple where Scripture says it should be. For the Muslims, restoration of animal sacrifice on the site would be a complete profanation of ground made holy by Mohammed, the Seal of the Prophets. "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His prophet." For the Muslims, to allow worship based on the previous prophets would be a huge step backwards from the pure revelation which God granted to the whole world through Mohammed. Therefore, **religious Muslims cannot conceive of granting what religious Jews desire**.

This central conflict is connected to all the others. Apart from some act of God that would be recognized by both religious Jews and religious Muslims, I don't see how to let both occupy the same rock the way that their religions require them to. And therefore I don't foresee an end to the Palestinian/Israeli conflict in our lifetimes.

6. Two Wrongs Never Make One Right.

Over the centuries, my fellow Catholics have sinned grievously against Jews and Muslims. **Nothing in Christianity justifies the injustices that have been done** in persecuting the Jews and while fighting the Arabs to regain the Holy Land in the crusades. Jesus told us how to treat our enemies: love them, pray for them, forgive them the way we want to be forgiven, go the extra mile, and turn the other cheek. **That we have not done so is a testimony against us as individuals, not against the faith itself.**

7. The Terrorists Perceive Us as the Enemy.

Not only has the United States made Israel's creation and survival possible (earning us the title of "Zionists" in the eyes of the Muslim terrorists), but we have also backed forms of Arab government in Egypt, Jordan, Iran, and other nations that are or were secular and that did or do not function according to the Quran. Many Muslims also see and resent the fact that our culture is conquering their culture (clothing, music, media, customs, attitudes, ethos & ethics).