



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE HOLY SEE
TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY
AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

**STATEMENT BY MONSIGNOR MICHAEL W. BANACH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HOLY SEE,
AT THE 792nd MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

28 JANUARY 2010

RE: HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mister Chair:

Yesterday, at his weekly General Audience, Pope Benedict XVI joined with those marking Holocaust Remembrance Day.

At the end of the General Audience, the Pope made the following statement, which I will read in its Italian original:

“Sessantacinque anni fa, il 27 gennaio 1945, venivano aperti i cancelli del campo di concentramento nazista della città polacca di Oświęcim, nota con il nome tedesco di Auschwitz, e vennero liberati i pochi superstiti. Tale evento e le testimonianze dei sopravvissuti rivelarono al mondo l’orrore di crimini di inaudita efferatezza, commessi nei campi di sterminio creati dalla Germania nazista.

Oggi, si celebra il ‘Giorno della memoria’, in ricordo di tutte le vittime di quei crimini, specialmente dell’annientamento pianificato degli Ebrei, e in onore di quanti, a rischio della propria vita, hanno protetto i perseguitati, opponendosi alla follia omicida. Con animo commosso pensiamo alle innumerevoli vittime di un cieco odio razziale e religioso, che hanno subito la deportazione, la prigionia, la morte in quei luoghi aberranti e disumani.

La memoria di tali fatti, in particolare del dramma della Shoah che ha colpito il popolo ebraico, susciti un sempre più convinto rispetto della dignità di ogni persona, perché tutti gli uomini si percepiscano una sola grande famiglia. Dio onnipotente illumini i cuori e le menti, affinché non si ripetano più tali tragedie!”

(The OFFICIAL English translation of the Pope’s Appeal is as follows:

“Sixty-five years ago today, on 27 January 1945, the gates were opened at the Nazi concentration camp in the Polish city of Oświęcim, known by its German name of Auschwitz, and the few surviving prisoners were liberated. This event and the testimonies of the survivors revealed to the world the horror of crimes of unprecedented savagery, committed in the extermination camps created by Nazi Germany.

Today we are marking *International Holocaust Remembrance Day*, calling to mind all the victims of those crimes, remembering especially the planned annihilation of the Jews, and honouring those who, at the risk of their lives, protected the persecuted people, resisting the homicidal madness. With deep emotion, we think of the countless victims of blind racial and religious hatred who suffered deportation, imprisonment and death in those perverted and inhuman places. May the memory of those deeds, especially the *Shoah* which afflicted the Jewish people, call forth an ever deeper respect for the dignity of every person, so that all men and women may be recognized as one great family. May Almighty God enlighten hearts and minds, so that such tragedies may never be repeated!”)

Thank you, Mister Chairman.