

The Two-Thousand Year Road to the Holocaust

Study Guide



“Den Toten zur Ehr, den Lebenden zur Mahnung”
To Honor the Dead, to Warn the Living

From a memorial at Dachau

The Two Thousand Year Road to the Holocaust
Session 1: Introduction

Musical Selections for “Contemplation”
(Slide show for the 2,000-year Road to the Holocaust)

Section One: Reflections on rural Europe, Jewish village life and children

Music: “Vlatava” from the symphonic poem, *Ma Vlast*, (*My Country*) by Bedrich Smetana (1824-1884). Smetana describes the course of the River Vlatava (Ger. Die Moldau) evoking the sounds, history and countryside of one of Bohemia’s great rivers. This selection contains Smetana’s most famous theme. It is likely an adaptation of the folk song from Renaissance Italy, La Montovana, which is also the basis for the Israeli National Anthem, “Hatikvah.”

Section Two: The Rise of Fascism

Music: “Siegfried’s Funeral March” from *Gotterdammerung* (“*Twilight of the Gods*”) by Richard Wagner (1813-1883). *Gotterdammerung* is the fourth opera in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (1876). The funeral march contains three themes: father, mother, son, that is, the end of the family. Wagner decided to combine Siegfried’s death with the doom of the gods. The Nazi propaganda perpetuated the myth of the supermen, beyond good and evil. Siegfried (Nazism) is not the gods’ redeemer but is destroyed by possessiveness, abuse of power and the destruction of others.

Section Three: Lament

Music: “Agnus Dei” (Lamb of God) by Samuel Barber (1910-1981) based on his earlier work, “The Adagio for Strings.” Barber’s “Adagio for Strings” originated as the second movement in his String Quartet No. 1, Op. 11, composed in 1936. The composer also transcribed the piece in 1967 for eight-part choir, as a setting of the *Agnus Dei* (“Lamb of God”). The *Agnus Dei* captures the same grief, depression, and sorrow that seems to bleed from *Adagio for Strings*. It has since become renowned as a masterwork of the modern choral repertory. Sung in a plaintive Latin: “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.”

“Bridge and Train”

by Brenda Washington

Front Cover

I have had the honor of knowing Brenda Washington for many years, now. She is a compelling and insightful woman able to transform thoughts to images.

Her photograph, *‘Bridge and Train’* on the front cover of our syllabus has a special meaning for this course. As we look up at the bridge we see a railroad bridge carrying a train. Our perspective is one of a child’s we don’t know where the train came from and where lies its destination. We don’t even know what the train is carrying.

As we grow our perspective changes. We rise above the railway tracks soon realizing the train’s link to the past and its journey into the future. From the perspective of a child the bridge and train represent a moment in time. From the vantage-point of a mature adult we understand that the present is linked inextricably to the past and to what lies ahead.

As adults of different faiths we are now ready to assume a different vantage-point. We can now look at the train from a different perspective. We are able to see its containers gaze off into its two-thousand year road that brought us to a moment in time---and peer into the mist as its future lies off in the distance.

If you want to see more photos by this talented local artist visit her website at www.bjw-photo.com.

Rosemarie Molser (1921 – 2009)



Born Rosemarie Marienthal in Bochum, Germany, she was 12 years old when Hitler rose to power. Outspoken as a teenager, her parents sent her to a convent school in Switzerland when life became difficult for German Jews. She came home disguised as nun in 1938—just before the outbreak of *Kristallnacht* and witnessed the destruction. When her illegal re-entry into Germany was discovered, she was forced to go to England as a domestic servant to avoid being sent to a concentration camp.

When war broke out between England and Germany, Rosemarie went to the Belgian Congo on the invitation of a German-Jewish doctor who became her husband. After Germany invaded Belgium, she and Dr. Herbert Molser survived imprisonment as “enemy aliens” until they were released in 1941. They emigrated to the United States in 1945 and were active members of our Rochester community.

Rosemarie spoke to school and community groups for many years about growing up in Nazi Germany and the dangers of intolerance. *Comes a Little Light*, co-written with Darice Bailer is the story of her teenage years. Rosemarie can also be heard telling her story in the web book, *Perilous Journeys*, published by The Center for Holocaust Awareness and Information (CHAI) as well as on-line at <http://www.perilousjourneys.org/>.

In 2007 she became a member of the Holocaust Study Group and part of original faculty for this course—The 2000-Year Road to the Holocaust.

The Holocaust Study Group is proud to dedicate the second offering of this course to her memory.

The Two-Thousand Year Road to the Holocaust: an Interfaith Study

We live in the aftermath of the Holocaust. What began in Europe 70 years ago continues to impact our lives and our world. The part that confounds us is whether we have learned any of the painful and tragic lessons of the Shoah or are we continuing to permit genocide and intolerance through our own indifference and silence.

On Yom Kippur 2006, Daan Braveman, president of Nazareth College, and I presented a public forum: "*Does the Holocaust still matter?*" Over three hundred people came to listen and learn. The overwhelming response made it clear there was a desire and a need to find a new way to communicate the powerful and timeless messages of the Holocaust. We spent two years creating this interfaith course – "The Two-Thousand-Year Road to the Holocaust".

In 2008 we launched the class to overwhelming response. We have learned from our first year and reflect those changes in the course we invite you to engage this year.

We know there are many who have decided to ignore the ethical and moral challenges that the Shoah places before all humanity. For some, this investigation is too overwhelming or just too painful to engage. Yet, we know that our own survival is ultimately linked to an understanding and rejection of the evil which human beings have and continue to inflict on others. We believe there is an ethical imperative for us to consider and study what influences and factors brought human beings to accept and participate in such barbaric and horrific acts against other human beings.

Our purpose is clear as is our passion to teach these lessons that we might improve our world. Our hope is that we might be voices for tolerance and acceptance – rejecting the violence and genocide that continues in our day. As George Santayana has taught us: "Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it"

We encourage you to join us in this learning. We hope that through this experience we will become voices of hope for our world.

Rabbi Laurence A. Kotok
Senior Rabbi
Temple B'rith Kodesh

The Two-Thousand Year Road to the Holocaust: An Interfaith Study

How this course came to be

On Yom Kippur 2006, Temple B'rith Kodesh (TBK) hosted a discussion led by Rabbi Laurence Kotok and Nazareth President Daan Braveman entitled "The Holocaust: is it still relevant?" This standing-room-only event quickly underscored a need in our community to learn more about a tragedy that still compels us to remember a time of great pain.

In April 2007 Rabbi Laurence Kotok and congregants Dr. Morris Wortman and Mr. Jeff Wicks met for the first time and agreed to establish a Holocaust awareness course based on three principles.

- ▣ There is a great need and interest in the **adult** world for Holocaust education. Until now, most Holocaust education had been focused toward school-age children as mandated by NYS education law.
- ▣ The **interfaith** study of the Holocaust is particularly important so that this tragedy is not seen as "just" a "Jewish story" but rather a "world" story. In that context its lesson can be more fully recognized and learned—perhaps the most important of which is that ordinary people can be led to extraordinary evil.
- ▣ We need to do it now! The Survivors of this experience who are willing and able to teach are dwindling—and **we must hear their testimony now.**

Our community is blessed with a handful of Survivor-educators who are able to provide first-hand accounts of this time in human history when the "world went mad." Additionally, Temple B'rith Kodesh offered, through its adult education program (Kollel), a "short" interfaith course on the Holocaust and there were many dedicated and talented individuals who were willing to explore and develop this interfaith adult education experience.

The Kollel class experience proved that religious boundaries were soon cast aside as Christians and Jews taught each other of their customs, practices, beliefs and frustrations as they tried to grapple with the question "Why did this happen?"

By June 2007 we had assembled a group of Survivors, clergy, educators and "individuals of passion" who were determined to make this course a reality. After 18 months of working together we have set the stage to launch into a new direction for Holocaust study — an in-depth interfaith adult-education course on the Holocaust.

Why adults?

Until now most of our educational efforts have been aimed at children. At one level this makes sense—it needs to be included in the school curriculum. At another level, one must recognize that much of the meaning of Holocaust education is lost on children who, developmentally, are not ready to deal with much of it.

We've been working on a false assumption—that if our children didn't learn about the *Shoah* (Hebrew for "catastrophe") our opportunity to teach the next generation would be lost. It's simply not true. All learning must be age appropriate. Most of us are simply not ready until the middle of our lives before we have the time, energy and maturity to face the darkness of this period.

The Two Thousand Year Road to the Holocaust
Session 1: Introduction

Why an interfaith approach?

The interfaith approach is quite helpful and indeed necessary—the Holocaust took place in an “interfaith” world. Events of this complexity cannot be fully understood from a Jewish or a Christian perspective alone; it needs to be both. An interfaith world provided the protagonists—the victims, persecutors, bystanders and the righteous that sought to help at great peril to their selves.

Why now?

The answer is simple—we’re ready and we’re running out of time. The human psyche needs time to heal after it can begin to examine a crime. Victims of violent crimes often require decades before they can speak of their ordeals. It takes longer still for their children to be able to hear of it.

As a culture, it’s taken us many years to prepare ourselves to hear the chilling accounts of those who’ve suffered unimaginable violations and losses. Now is a point in time when the intersection of those who can speak can face those who can finally listen.

After the Holocaust it was hoped that the days of such rampant anti-Semitism were in the past. Today that hope has revealed itself to be an illusion as a new and different variety of anti-Semitism again emerges—oftentimes by those who question that the Holocaust ever even occurred. The lessons of history face the threat of short memory—it’s time to be reminded.

The Holocaust Study Group
Rochester, New York

Dear Members of the class:

We welcome you to an experiment in learning. For the past two years a group of devoted and dedicated clergy, survivors, and scholars have struggled with creating a unique new course: The 2000-year road to the Holocaust: An interfaith study.

The Holocaust Study Group set a primary goal to look carefully into why holocaust education has been marginalized in our time. We began with the question: Does the Holocaust still matter? Our answer is found in the course that has been created; you’re choosing to learn with us and the wonderful across the religious spectrum support we have received.

We are deeply thankful to the following religious communities for signing on as supporters of our efforts:

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester
The Episcopal Diocese of Rochester
The American Baptist Church of the Rochester Genesee Region
The Greater Rochester Community of Churches
Rochester Colgate Divinity School
The Center for Interfaith Studies and Dialogue – Dr. Mohammed Shafiq
The Rochester Board of Rabbis
Center for Holocaust Awareness and Information (CHAI)
Monroe Community College – Holocaust Genocide Studies Project
Nazareth College
Temple B'rith Kodesh

Holocaust Study Group

Course Schedule

All sessions at Temple B'rith Kodesh from 6:30 – 9:00 PM

| <i>Session</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Session Topic</i> | <i>Presenter</i> |
|----------------|-------------|--|--|
| 1 | 10/14/09 | Introduction: The Two-Thousand-Year Road to the Holocaust: An Interfaith Study | Rabbi Laurence Kotok Henry Silberstern |
| 2 | 10/21/09 | In the Beginning: A Family Feud (165 BCE – 150 CE) | Rev. Theodore J. Weeden, Sr. |
| 3 | 10/28/09 | The Growth of Anti-Judaism | Professor Susan Nowak |
| 4 | 11/04/09 | Anti-Judaism Spawns Anti-Semitism (1789 – 1914) | Deacon Anthony Sciolino |
| 5 | 11/11/09 | A Hundred Years of Preparation: Creating the Climate and Soil for the Holocaust (1830 – 1930) | Steven Hess, Survivor |
| 6 | 11/18/09 | “Insights” Women and the Holocaust | Professor Charles Clarke, MCC Susan Nowak SSJ, Nazareth College |
| 7 | 12/02/09 | The Nazification of Germany (1933 – 1938) | Steven Hess, Survivor Warren Heilbronner, Survivor |
| 8 | 12/16/09 | The Nuremberg Laws <i>Kristallnacht</i> | Hon: Karen Morris Professor Michael Dobkowski DVD: In Remembrance of Rosemarie Molser |
| 9 | 1/6/2010 | The Holocaust: From Poland to Barbarossa September 1, 1939 – June 22, 1941 | Morris Wortman, MD |
| 10 | 1/13/10 | The Holocaust: The “Final Solution.” June 22, 1941–May 8, 1945 | Steven Hess |
| 11 | 1/20/10 | Christians and the Holocaust (1938 – 1945) | Deacon Anthony Sciolino Rev. Ted Weeden |
| 12 | 1/27/10 | Life and Death in the Concentration Camps: A Twins story | Steven Hess and Marion Lewin |
| 13 | 2/3/10 | Immediate Aftermath (1945 – 1948) The Nuremberg Trials and International Military Tribunals | Morris Wortman, M.D. Hon. Karen Morris Hon. Michael Miller |
| 14 | 2/10/10 | Mourning, Scholarship and Repairing the World: תיקון עולם (<i>Tikkun Olam</i>): | Professor Charlie Clarke |

Holocaust Study Group

Rabbi Laurence Kotok **Senior Rabbi Temple B'rith Kodesh**



Rabbi Laurence A. Kotok, D.D. serves as the senior rabbi at Temple B'rith Kodesh. Prior to arriving in Rochester in 1996, Rabbi Kotok served the North Country Reform Temple Ner Tamid of Glen Cove for 22 years.

Rabbi Kotok has been active and involved in bringing awareness and knowledge of drug and alcohol addiction to the Jewish and general community. Trained as a drug and alcohol counselor, Rabbi Kotok helped create Nassau-Suffolk Jewish Recovery – a unique Jewish response for Jews in recovery. Rabbi Kotok served as a member of the U. S. Congressional Commission on Drugs and Alcohol. Education. He has brought this important message to seminars at the U.A.H.C. Biennials, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, school districts and religious communities.

Active and visible in the Rochester community, Rabbi Kotok has served as the president of the Rochester Board of Rabbis, served on the boards of the Jewish Community Federation and the Rochester United Way and is a member of the Religious Observance Committee of the Pittsford Schools.

He is a member of the New York State Human Rights Commission and serves on the board of the Jewish Child Care Association.

Working to increase mutual tolerance and respect, Rabbi Kotok has been recognized for his long-standing involvement with interfaith programs, such as TBK's associations with Mt. Olivet Baptist Church and the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsford.

On the national level, Rabbi Kotok created and chaired the Rabbinic Council of ARZA World Union, which supports the work of the Reform movement throughout the world.

Henry Silberstern, Survivor



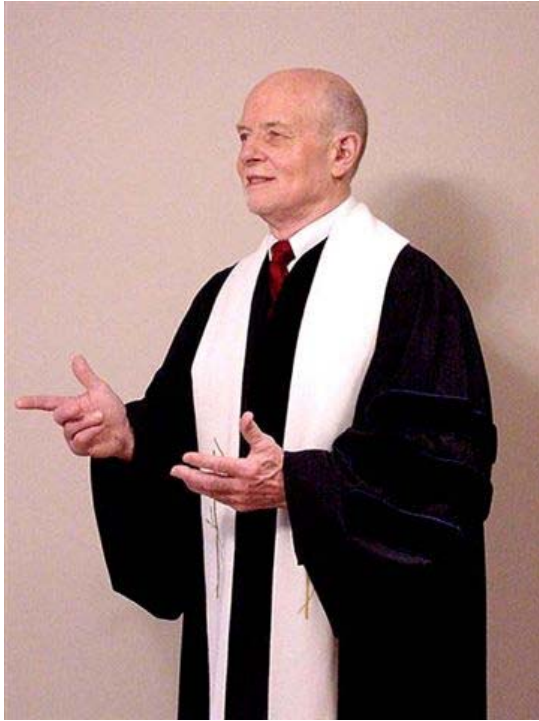
Born in 1930 to a middle-class family in Teplice, northern Bohemia, Henry and his family moved to Prague in 1938, shortly before the Nazis took over Czechoslovakia. In 1942, at the age of 12 Henry and his mother were transported to *Terezin* (Theresienstadt)--a model camp created by the Nazis to deceive the world into believing that Jews were being treated humanely. Henry recalls Terezin as a place of starvation and deprivation where Jewish adults struggled daily to make life more bearable for children. Later, Henry and his family were “selected” and sent “East”—the Nazi code-word for sending Jews to Auschwitz-Birkenau. At Auschwitz Henry became one of the 89 of the 500 Jewish boys “selected” for slave labor by infamous “Angle of Death”—Dr. Joseph Mengele.

Henry was transferred from Birkenau Furstengrube (a mining camp controlled by I.G. Farben), to Dora-Nordhausen (a camp supplying labor for the manufacture of V1 and V2 bombs). He was then moved once more to Bergen-Belsen where he was liberated by Canadian soldiers under the command of the British army. Of the 15,000 children under the age of 15 who were sent "East" from Terezin, less than 150 survived. Henry is one of those children. He lost his entire family.

Henry immigrated to Canada in 1948 and moved to the US in 1954. He graduated from the University of Buffalo and worked as the Director of Information Services at Roswell Park Cancer Center. Henry has two daughters and sons-in-law and four grandchildren He travels to schools throughout the upstate New York sharing his history with thousands of students every year.

Henry has been a committed member of the Holocaust Study Group whose mission is to provide an interfaith adult education course on the Holocaust. We are extremely grateful to Henry for his dedication to teaching the lessons of the Holocaust and for keeping its memory alive.

Reverend Dr. Theodore J. Weeden, Sr.



The Rev. Dr. Theodore J. Weeden, Sr. is a biblical scholar, theologian, and retired Methodist Pastor at United Methodist Church. He was born in Long Branch, New Jersey and grew up in Atlanta, GA. At age 15 he experienced a call to the ministry. He received his BA and Bachelor of Divinity degrees from Emory University and was ordained into the ministry of the Methodist Church in 1956, and served several churches in rural North Georgia. In 1964 Rev. Weeden received his Doctor of Philosophy in Religion from Claremont Graduate University. While pursuing his doctorate, he served Methodist churches in Ontario and Los Angeles, CA, including Anglo-Hispanic and Native American congregations.

In 1966, disillusioned by Methodist Church's failure to support the Civil Rights Movement, he left the pastorate to teach religion at Shaw University in Raleigh, NC. In 1968, Rev. Weeden left Shaw to join the faculty of Wake

Forest University, Winston Salem, NC, and a year later was appointed to the New Testament faculty at Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, PA. Crozer Seminary united with Colgate Rochester Divinity School (CRDS) in 1970. After teaching New Testament at CRDS for four years, Rev. Weeden returned to the Methodist pastorate to serve Rochester's Wesley United Methodist and at the same time taught the New Testament at Rochester's St. Bernard's Seminary from 1977-81. In the 1980's he was appointed as an adjunct Professor of Religion at the University of Rochester. From 1977-1995 Rev. Weeden served as Senior Pastor of Rochester's 2,000-member Asbury First United Methodist Church.

Dr. Weeden is a Fellow of the Jesus Seminar, a group of scholars devoted to the study of the historical Jesus and Christian origins, and he has written extensively on biblical and theological subjects. He is recognized internationally for his ground-breaking book, *Mark-Traditions in Conflict*, in which he advances the argument that the Gospel of Mark was not intended as a biography of Jesus but rather a polemic generated by a feud within the Jesus movement. Dr. Weeden has also co-authored the book, *Preaching on the Death of Jesus*, and published articles on the Christian oral tradition, the Protestant perspective on Jesus' mother Mary, Jesus' trials, crucifixion, and resurrection. Currently, he is working on another book on the Gospel of Mark, and articles on Christian origins in Southern Syria and the non-canonical Gospel of Mary.

A life-long advocate for social justice and interfaith ecumenism Rev Weeden along with a Shaw student organized a 1967 Raleigh Black Community against Urban Renewal in 1967. He also organized a group of whites to an organization known as Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME), whose mission was to end segregation in Raleigh. During his time at Colgate Rochester Colgate Divinity School (1970-74), he led the faculty and administration in successfully ending gender discrimination in faculty hiring. Additionally, while Senior Pastor of Asbury First United Methodist Church, Rev. Weeden enabled the appointment of the church's first woman pastor, as well as its first African-American pastor.

Dr. Susan E. Nowak



Dr. Nowak is Professor and Chair of Religious Studies at Nazareth College as well as a member of the Sisters of Joseph of Rochester. She holds a Ph.D. in Religion with a Certificate in Women's Studies from Syracuse University. She is involved in Holocaust studies through teaching and publication with a particular focus on women's experiences, post-Holocaust interfaith dialogue, and the role of the Church during and after the Shoah. Dr. Nowak serves on various Holocaust and interfaith committees in the Rochester area. She also facilitates the participation of college students on "The March of Remembrance and Hope: a Student Leadership Mission to Poland."

Deacon Anthony Sciolino, J.D.
The Church of the Transfiguration



Anthony J. Sciolino was ordained a Permanent Deacon of the Roman Catholic Church, Diocese of Rochester N.Y., in 1998, the same year he earned a Master of Arts in Theology degree from St.

The Two Thousand Year Road to the Holocaust

Session 1: Introduction

Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Columbia University in 1967 and his Juris Doctor degree from Cornell Law School in 1970.

After graduating from Cornell he returned to Rochester to practice law and begin his career in public service. His first position was as an associate attorney in the law firm of Martin, Dutcher, Cooke, Mousaw & Vigdor. In May 1973, he became a Monroe County Assistant District Attorney, leaving in October 1976 to open his own law practice. In 1979, Sciolino was elected to the Rochester City Council and re-elected in 1983.

In 1986, he was elected Judge of the Monroe County Family Court and re-elected in 1996, serving as Supervising Judge of the Court in 1992-93. In June 2000, he became presiding judge of the Monroe County Juvenile Drug Treatment Court, the first of its kind in New York State. He retired from the bench at the end of his second 10 year term on December 31, 2006.

Married 41 years, Deacon and Mrs. Sciolino have one daughter, Kate, age 28. He ministers at the Church of the Transfiguration in Pittsford.

His interest in the Holocaust began in 1964, when as a student at Columbia College in New York City, he attended the Broadway production of "The Deputy" by Rolf Hochhuth -- a controversial play critical of Pope Pius XII's alleged "silence" during what was arguably the greatest catastrophe in human history. "I have since come to understand," he says, "that for Jews the most challenging question posed by that horrific event is 'Where was God?' For Christians, the most challenging question posed ought to be 'Where was the Church?... Church as *institution* and Church as *people of God*?' A related question is "How could the Holocaust have happened in one of the most Christian countries in Europe, birth place of Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation?"

When invited to join the inter-faith study group that would explore the two thousand year road to the Holocaust, he accepted without hesitation. Why? Among various reasons, he firmly believes in philosopher George Santayana's observation: "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to relive it."

Steven Hess, Survivor



Mr. Hess and his twin sister Marion ("Zus") were born on January 14, 1938 to Karl and Ilse Hess, who had fled Nazi Germany in 1936. After the Nazi invasion of Holland in May 1940, the family was trapped and could flee no further. In mid-1942 the "Final Solution" reached the Netherlands and the deportation of the Jews from Holland to eastern death camps started.

The Hess family was arrested in mid-1943 and sent first to the Dutch "transit camp" of Westerbork, in northeastern Holland. It was from there that the Nazis deported the Jews from Holland to the camps. On February 15, 1944 the Hess family was put on a train, together with some 775 other Jews, and sent to the infamous Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in northern Germany. Although the average survival time was measured in weeks, especially for young children, the family managed to stay alive. On April 9, 1945 they were forced, along with the remaining remnants of the camp, onto cattle cars with the intent of exterminating the last surviving Jews.

The Two Thousand Year Road to the Holocaust

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The train, which was later dubbed as “The Lost Transport” ran aimlessly throughout the German countryside under periodic strafing attack from Allied fighter planes who presumed the cattle cars held war material. Finally after 14 days during which hundreds of those on board died, the train was liberated by the advancing Russians at the farm village of Troebitz. Even after their liberation, scores of the survivors died from disease and malnutrition.

In the summer of 1945 the Hess family was repatriated to Holland. They immigrated to the U.S. at the end of 1946, arriving in New York harbor on New Year’s Day, 1947.

Mr. Hess is a 1960 graduate of Columbia College where he majored in American history. He served on active duty with the U.S. Navy for four years (1960-1964) first as a line officer on board a destroyer and later as a public relations officer with the Third Naval District. He separated from the service with the rank of Lieutenant. Following military service, he was employed at The New York Times and then as a public relations specialist with the Western Electric Company. In 1967 he joined Berkey Photo and served in a variety of assignments leading to the presidency of their professional manufacturing division. In 1975 Mr. Hess moved to Rochester, NY as president of Saunders Photo/Graphic, at the time a six-person photographic equipment company. The company grew to one of the most successful and recognized U.S. manufacturers and distributors of photographic accessories.

Mr. Hess spent his childhood years under Nazi occupation. He and his family, including his parents and twin sister, were in both the Westerbork and Bergen Belsen concentration camps during the period 1942-1945. They were liberated by Russian troops while on a train transport en route to an eastern European extermination camp. The family eventually returned to Holland and immigrated to the United States on January 1, 1947.

Mr. Hess has four grown children. He has lectured frequently on the Holocaust throughout the Rochester school systems and at area colleges and universities. His community activities include membership on the Board of Directors of the Rochester Humane Society.

Professor Charles Clarke



Charles Clarke, Professor of Psychology and Director of the Holocaust Genocide Studies Project

Marion Ein Lewin



Marion Ein Lewin is a Holocaust survivor. According to available records, she and her twin brother, Steven Hess, are thought to be the youngest surviving twins of the Holocaust.

Marion Ein Lewin serves as a special projects health policy consultant and has written extensively on a wide range of health care topics.

Until September 2001, Marion Lewin served as Senior Staff Officer at the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies of Science and headed its Office of Health Policy Programs and Fellowships. In this position, she directed The Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellowships and other related programs. Ms. Lewin has also served as study director for major IOM reports including, "Balancing the Scales of Opportunity: Ensuring Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Health Professions," "Improving the Medicare Market : Adding Choice and Protections" and "America's Health Care Safety Net: Intact but Endangered" (2000). Ms. Lewin worked at the IOM from 1987-2001.

Before coming to the IOM, Ms. Lewin was Director of the Center for Health Policy Research at the American Enterprise Institute; Deputy Director of the National Health Policy Forum at George Washington University; and a health legislative aide in the Congress.

Ms. Lewin is on board of the DC Jewish Community Center and co-chairs the Council of Theatre J. Ms. Lewin is also vice-chair of the Montgomery County Primary Care Association and serves on the board of the Quality Health Foundation.

In 2008, Marion Ein Lewin was recognized for her lifetime achievements in leadership development and health care policy by the National Research Center for Women and Families. She received her undergraduate and graduate education at Barnard College and Columbia University.

Warren Heilbronner, Esq., Survivor



Warren H. Heilbronner is a practicing attorney associated with the law firm of Boylan, Brown, Code, Vigdor and Wilson, LLP., as Of Counsel. He is admitted to practice in New York, Florida, the Western District of New York and the United States Supreme Court. He specializes in the area of Trusts & Estates and also serves as a Chapter 7 Trustee in the Rochester Office of the United States Trustee program.

He is the member of the Executive Committee of the Trust & Estates Section of the New York Bar Association, serving as Vice-Chair of the Surrogate's Court Committee and a member of the Committee of the Elderly and Disabled (former chair). In the local Bar Association he serves on the Elder Law Committee and the Bankruptcy Committee.

Mr. Heilbronner also serves on several Religious and Civic organizations. He is a past President, member and/or Ex-Officio member the Board of Trustees of Temple B'rith Kodesh since 1968, serving as a director of the Temple B'rith Kodesh, and as a member of the Finance and Social Action Committees. Mr. Heilbronner serves as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Union for Reform Judaism and has served on numerous committees over his 21 years of service. He is a member of the Board of Governors of the Jewish Community Federation and serves on the Executive Committee of CHAI (Committee on Holocaust Awareness & Information).

As a member of CHAI and as a Holocaust survivor, he speaks to students in Middle and High Schools, Colleges and various religious groups on the history of the Holocaust and its relevance in today's world. He is also a member of the Board of Governors of Hillel of Rochester Area Colleges. He is a Past President and Honorary member of the Board of Directors of the ARC of Monroe County, serving on its Guardianship and Finance Committees.

His honors include being the first recipient of the Pro Bono Service Award in 2008 by the New York State Bar Association. He is also recipient of the Hodgson-Jacobs Legal Award of NYSARC for 2006, awarded in New York State for legal services rendered to persons with disabilities. He has been listed in "Best Lawyers in America" (Trusts & Estates area of practice), since its inception in 1983.

He is married to the former Joyce Aroeste (1961). They have three sons---Jerome, a Systems Annalist with Raytheon Corp. Lawrence, Chief Financial Officer and Executive Vice-President of Operations at Canandaigua National Bank; and Kevin, insurance agent for Liberty Mutual Insurance Co. and Public Address announcer for the Washington Wizards of the National Basketball Association. They also have 6 grand children.

Judge Karen Morris



Town Justice in Brighton, New York, a Distinguished Professor of Law at Monroe Community College (MCC), and an author.

She co-authors *Criminal Law in New York*, a treatise for lawyers. She has written several textbooks including *New York Cases in Business Law*, and *Hotel, Restaurant and Travel Law*. Judge Morris writes a column for *Hotel & Motel Management Magazine*, as well as occasional newspaper commentaries on various legal issues for the *Democrat & Chronicle*, the *Brighton Pittsford Post*, and other periodicals.

Among the courses she has taught are Constitutional Law, Business Law, Hotel and Restaurant Law, Movies and the Law, Michael Jackson and the Law, and "O.J. Simpson 101: Understanding our Criminal Justice System." Her course offerings include some in traditional classroom settings and others online. She received a grant to study the Holocaust and infuse related topics into existing courses. In 2006 she was elevated to the rank of Distinguished Professor by the Chancellor of the State University of New York, the first time a community college professor was so designated.

Judge Morris is a past president of the Greater Rochester Association for Women Attorneys, Alternatives for Battered Women, Inc., Brighton Kiwanis, the Northeast Academy of Legal Studies in Business, and Text and Academic Authors Association, a national organization that advances the interests of academic authors, and the Faculty Senate at MCC.

Her favorite current volunteer activities include being a Big Sister in the Big Brother program, which she has done for fourteen years, and being a Girl Scout leader at Anthony Square located in downtown Rochester.

She received her Juris Doctor degree from St. John's University and earned a Masters of Law (LL.M.) from New York University. She previously was in-house counsel for Macy's Department Stores, an Assistant District Attorney in Monroe County, and an attorney in private practice.

Dr. Michael Dobkowski



Professor of Religious Studies at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. He received his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in history from New York University. His areas of specialization include the Holocaust, the American Jewish Experience, American Anti-Semitism, Genocide, Jewish Thought and the history of Zionism and Modern Israel. A popular lecturer, he brings analysis tempered by humor and irony to these significant subjects.

Dr. Dobkowski is passionate about his fields of interest. He lives this passion both in the classroom and outside of the classroom, where he is active in community service and Jewish communal activities. He was a key organizer of the HWS Genocide Series, which continues to bring notable speakers on this important topic to campus, and has led three March of Remembrance and Hope Student Leadership trips to Germany and Poland since 2004. He is a former chair of CHAI and an active board member, a faculty member in the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School and a frequent lecturer locally and nationally. He believes that despite violence and apathy, we have to maintain faith in people and in our ability to solve problems through analysis and purposeful and informed action.

A prolific writer, he has written *The Tarnished Dream: The Basis of American Anti-Semitism*, *The Politics of Indifference: Documentary History of Holocaust Victims in America*, *A Family Among Families*, and *Jewish American Voluntary Organizations*. He has co-written, edited and co-edited numerous books including *Nuclear Weapons, Nuclear States and Terrorism* (2007), *On the Edge of Scarcity* (2001) and *Genocide and the Modern Age* (2000).

Morris Wortman, M. D. **Chairman Holocaust Study Group**

Dr. Wortman is the sole surviving child of Israel and Helen Wortman. His mother was born in Warsaw, Poland in 1910—one of 5 children. The war claimed her parents, her husband and all but one sibling. Israel Wortman was born in Opatow, Poland in 1908—one of eight children. By the outbreak of WWII he had already lost his father and worked, along with his siblings, to support their mother. Israel was married to his first wife and had two sons, Joseph and Isaac. During the war years Israel was assigned to forced labor at the *Skarzysko-Kamienna* concentration camp where he worked in a factory that produced nerve gas for the Nazis. He was later transferred to Buchenwald and then to Dachau. Before the end of the war he was herded onto a train headed for

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an extermination camp in the east before being liberated by American armed forces on April 30, 1945.



Helen and Israel met at the Feldafing Displaced Persons Camp—the first Jewish DP camp. They arrived in the United States on November 29, 1947 the day that the United Nations passed UN Resolution GA181 dividing Palestine into an Israeli State and an Arab State--a resolution that was rejected by the Arabs.

Morris Wortman was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1950. He was a *summa cum laude* graduate of Brooklyn College before receiving his medical degree and serving his internship and residency training at the University of Rochester School of Medicine. He has been in medical practice since 1980 and is the founder and Director of the Center for Menstrual Disorders and Reproductive Choice.

Dr. Wortman is nationally recognized figure in minimally invasive surgery and has written numerous articles in scientific journals and textbooks. He is on the editorial board of the *Journal of Minimally Invasive Surgery* and an Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Rochester School of Medicine. He has 3 daughters, Erina, Rachel and Arielle. He and his wife, Rebecca, celebrated the birth of their son, Israel, in 2008. "Izzy" was named in memory of his grandfather and namesake born a full century earlier.

Judge Michael J. Miller, Ret.



Michael Miller was born February 12, 1939, in Rochester, New York. He attended Rochester Public Schools and entered Syracuse University in 1956 and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Political Science. He received a Juris Doctor degree in 1963 from the

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Syracuse University College of Law. After graduation, he returned to Rochester and engaged in the general practice of law. During that time, he served as councilman for the Town of Brighton, from 1974 to 1989 and was Chair of the Monroe County Democratic Party from 1986 to 1988. He has authored numerous articles on local government and advocated extensively for rights of disabled citizens. In 1990 Michael Miller was appointed by Governor Mario M. Cuomo and confirmed by the New York State Senate to fill a vacancy on the Monroe County Family Court and was elected in November 1990 to a full ten-year term. He wrote over 20 published decisions including Matter of Angelica C., which resulted in a major change in New York State's Child Abuse Law.

He presently serves on Monroe County Bar Association's Lawyers Helping Lawyers Committee. This Committee's function is to help lawyers and judges who suffer from alcohol abuse, substance abuse or clinical depression. He is a member of the Board of Governors of the Jewish Home and of the Board of Directors of St. Joseph's Villa, and on the Advisory Board of the Children's Agenda.

Judge Miller is the recipient of many community awards: the Association for Retarded Citizen's Community Partner of the Year Award, Citizen of the Year designation by the Brighton Rotary Club, a Friend of Children Citation from the Rochester Area Children's' Collaborative, the first annual Dick Schonfeld Circle of Courage Award given by the Monroe County Reclaiming Youth Collaborative, the Lyman C. Wynne Award for service to families, the Center for Dispute Settlement Jurist of the Year Award, the Daily Record's Nathaniel Award for outstanding service to the legal community, the Hannah G. Solomon Humanitarian Award from the National Council of Jewish Women and the Alternatives for Battered Women's "Restore the Hope" Award. He is now of counsel with the law firm of Chamberlain D'Amada.

Barbara G. Appelbaum



Barbara G. Appelbaum served for 22 years as Director of the Center for Holocaust Awareness and Information (CHAI) at the Jewish Community Federation of Greater Rochester where she created an oral history archive, trained teachers and hosted annual interschool conferences. Her speakers'

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program brought survivors, rescuers and liberators into the classroom. Over 100,000 area students heard eye witness testimony through this initiative.

Barbara has been an interviewer for the Survivors of the Shoah Visual Documentation Project and oversaw the videotaping of local area survivors. She was a founding member of the Courage to Care Project, which launched an *Instructional Strategies and Resource Guide* offering role models of people who exemplify courage and caring. Working with the Urban League of Rochester and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Education Commission, she helped develop and administer *Building Bridges of Harmony*, a student essay contest fostering cross-cultural understanding.

Barbara co-edited *Perilous Journeys: Personal Stories of German and Austrian Jews Who Escaped the Nazis* and co-authored *Angie's Story*. She oversaw the development of study guides and DVD's for both books. She is a member of the Consortium of Holocaust Educators and has published a chapter in its Teachers Guide to *The Call of Memory: Learning about the Holocaust through Narrative*.

Barbara is a recipient of the Educator of the Year Award from the local chapter of Phi Kappa Delta, a national educational honor society, and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Award from Nazareth College. A graduate of Barnard College, Barbara received her Master of Arts in Teaching degree from Harvard University's Graduate School of Education. She has taught English at the secondary school level and at Monroe Community College and has served on the adjunct faculty at Nazareth College where she supervised student teachers and taught courses in the Foundations of Education and the History and Philosophy of Education. Barbara and her husband David live in Rochester, New York. They have a son, two daughters and six grandchildren.

Bonnie Abrams
Director of the Center for Holocaust Awareness and
Information (CHAI)



Bonnie Abrams is the Director of The Center for Holocaust Awareness & Information (CHAI) of the Jewish Community Federation of Greater Rochester. She left a successful 26 year career as a professional winemaker to take on this important job. She is also the music educator at Irondequoit Hebrew Studies Center and taught a year long course on the Holocaust at Temple Beth El's Machon Hebrew High School.

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As the child of two Holocaust survivors, Bonnie grew up with the constant awareness of this dark chapter in history. Unlike many Holocaust survivors, Bonnie's parents were able to speak about their experiences. Bonnie created an educational program called "Voice of the Second Generation" using songs she composed, Yiddish music written during the Holocaust and her parents' testimony, to tell their stories. She presented this program at Holocaust education conferences including Yad Vashem's "6th Annual Conference on the Holocaust and Education" in Jerusalem, Israel in July of 2008. Bonnie also keeps the legacy of pre-Holocaust Jewish life alive by performing Yiddish music. Her CD, "A *Sudenyu of Yiddish Song*" was displayed and sold at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM).

Since taking the directorship of CHAI, Bonnie has taken teen groups to the USHMM a sites of former concentration camps and other Holocaust atrocities in Poland. She is responsible for the planning of the community's annual Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance) service and makes arrangements for Holocaust survivors to speak at schools and community functions. Charged with continuing the legacy of Holocaust education when there are no survivors left to speak, Bonnie arranges annual Holocaust education workshops for teachers and students from middle school through college and is working with other second generation members to help them tell their parents' stories.

Additional members of the Holocaust Study Group Team

Debra K. Brenner, Joel Elliot, Kim E. Harwood, Terry McArdle, Andréa Miller, Barbara

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Grief Abated
By Gertrud J. Lind

Planting a garden
staking a broken flower
learning of God's creation
full of sparks of Holiness.

God gave us hands
to nurture the world.

A Reich cannot last
a thousand years
when it preaches hate
when it commits murder.

Why did my Jewish sisters have to perish?
Why am I here
carrying the burden of guilt,
the burden of shame?

The burden is heavy.

Hands reach out,
hearts open.
A path is found
away from that scorched earth,
into fresh air.

Still I cannot breathe free.

I learn to grieve all that loss.
I cry for the victims.
I cry for me
and I know I was only a child:
I am not on trial.

There is planting to do
there is love to give
love to receive.
I have hands for reaching out,
eyes to drink in the glory of a summer sky
still mingled with the remains of ashes.
I breathe deeply,
ash particles in my lungs.
We are one.

Self-Deception

A Homily by Deacon Anthony J. Sciolino

Jesus said: “Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.” Mt. 7:21

Time and time again, Jesus makes it crystal clear that to be his disciple requires more than lip service. It requires action -- moral and ethical behavior grounded in love of God and neighbor. That's why in today's gospel from **Matthew**, he says: “*Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.*” By these words, Jesus warns us against self-deception; deluding ourselves into thinking we're doing God's will, when, in fact, we're doing quite the opposite.

Last month on May 1st, Gloria and I drove to Washington D.C. for a long week-end of rest and relaxation. Yes, retirement too can be stressful! We hadn't been in D.C. since our daughter Kate, now 26 was a little girl, and we wanted to check out newer attractions and sample some local cuisine. During a glorious springtime day we went to the National Zoo to see the pandas, to the World War II and Korean War Memorials, and because of my work with a local inter-faith group developing a study course on the causes of the Holocaust, we went to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Walking through the museum, which chronicles the unprecedented human tragedy that happened less than seventy years ago, was a most sobering experience. The Holocaust was the systematic, state sponsored persecution and murder of over 6 million Jews from 21 European countries, including 1.5 million children.

Although Jews were the primary victims, other groups and individuals were targeted as well, totaling an additional 5 million people. Gypsies, Poles, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, intellectuals, Soviet prisoners-of-war, clergy, political dissidents and people with disabilities were also intentionally murdered for racial, ethnic, political or other reasons.

According to its Visitors' Guide, the Holocaust Museum's mission is three-fold - to advance and disseminate knowledge..., to preserve the memory of those who suffered, and *to encourage ... visitors to reflect upon the moral and spiritual questions raised by ... the Holocaust ...*

A *moral and spiritual* question that has troubled me and lots of others for a long time is this: how could the worst catastrophe in human history have happened in one of the most Christian countries in Europe, birthplace of Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation? My research to date has uncovered some unsettling information.

In the 1930's and 40's, Germany's religious affiliation was 94% Christian; 54% Protestant and 40% Roman Catholic. Organized into 25 dioceses, each with at least one bishop appointed by the pope, the Roman Catholic Church in Germany numbered over 20,000 priests for 20 million Catholics. And there were 16,000 pastors for 40 million Protestants.

Hitler and many of his top henchmen like Heinrich Himmler (SS chief and overseer of death camps in the East), Joseph Goebbels (Nazi propaganda chief), Reinhard Heydrich (principal planner of the “Final Solution”) and Rudolf Hess (architect and SS Commandant of Auschwitz); were all baptized Catholics. Additionally, large numbers of the Third Reich's security forces, military, civil service, judiciary, concentration camp personnel and ordinary citizens identified themselves as Catholics. Those who weren't Catholic were Protestant.

Catholic and Protestant churches remained official state churches throughout the Nazi regime, which meant, among other things, that the state collected a church tax and funded church expenses. Religious education remained part of the state education system; chaplains served in the military; and theological faculties remained active within state universities. Article 24 in the Nazi Party Program professed “positive Christianity” as the foundation of the German state.

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Christians in Nazi Germany and throughout Europe went about living their lives attending religious services, receiving communion, reciting creeds, praying to God, displaying crucifixes, celebrating Christmas and Easter while vast numbers of their neighbors were being rounded up and herded into cattle cars to be transported to concentration camps where crematoria stacks belched out thick, black smoke.

The first concentration camp was Dachau opened in March 1933; only two months after Hitler came to power. Dachau was located 10 miles from Munich—roughly the distance from Rochester to East View Mall.

Hitler's rise from obscurity to dictatorial power (within a republic, no less) was by no means a foregone conclusion. There were plenty of many missed opportunities along the way to stop him, had more people of conscience been willing to do so. In his autobiography, Mein Kampf, (*My Struggle*) published in 1925 -- *eight* years before becoming German chancellor in 1933 and *nine* years before his death camps were at full killing capacity in 1942 – Hitler clearly set forth his vision for the Third Reich, including his plan for territorial expansion and the creation of a “racially pure” European society dominated by a Teutonic “master race.” In *Mein Kampf*, he minces no words in calling for the elimination of Jews from Europe, referring to them as *vermin, parasites, maggots, polluters, destroyers of Aryan humanity and corrupters of society*. His *virulent* anti-Semitism was readily apparent for all to see.

How can history not conclude that Christian *self-deception* of monumental proportions was taking place in Germany and Europe? How can one deny that there was a terrible disconnect between what Christians were preaching and what they were doing? Lots of people, in effect, saying “Lord, Lord,” but certainly *not* doing God's will. And need I point out that, according to our own bible, it was mostly God's “chosen people” being exterminated -- 95% of Lithuanian Jews; 80% of Polish Jews; 66% of European Jewry!

Obviously, not all Christians of the time were practicing self-deception, as there are many documented cases of people acting heroically, following their consciences, even risking their lives to protect victims from Nazi terrorism. And it is imperative to recognize and commemorate their deeds ...the type of moral and ethical behavior that Jesus has in mind in today's gospel.

George Santayana wrote: “Those who do not remember the past are condemned to relive it,” which is why I was encouraged to see so many visitors at the museum on that beautiful day in May, most of them school age children. We certainly need to teach our children about the Holocaust and we adults need to learn more about it ourselves as well.

If there's any doubt about the need for such education, consider this. There are those living today, including Iran's President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who deny that the Holocaust even happened. Only a few years ago, it happened in Bosnia and Rwanda. Moreover, genocide, now euphemistically termed “ethnic cleansing,” is happening today... in the Darfur region of Sudan. Human nature being what it is, it likely to happen again

Today, more that 60 years after the Holocaust ended, anti-Semitism is not just a historical fact; it is a current event. U.S. embassies worldwide have noted an increase in anti-Semitic incidents, attacks on Jewish people, property, cemeteries, community institutions, and synagogues. Discredited myths about Jews, like their need for the blood of Christian children in religious rituals or a Jewish plot to take over the world, persist, particularly in Middle Eastern countries. And neo-Nazi groups continue to spring up throughout the world.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Russian novelist and 1970 Nobel Prize laureate wrote: “The line separating good and evil passes through every human heart...and even in the best hearts there remains an un-uprooted small corner of evil.” That's another reason Jesus reminds us in today's gospel to be vigilant about our behavior, so as not to fall into the trap of self-deception. Obviously, the consequences can be lethal.

Deacon Anthony J. Sciolino
Church of the Transfiguration, Pittsford, N.Y.

Deuteronomy 11:18, 26-28, 32; Romans 3:21-25, 28; Matthew 7:21-27; 9th Sunday in Ordinary Time. June 1, 2008.

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Memory

Professor Michael Dobkowski

Reprinted with permission from a lecture given at the annual Rochester Yom Hashoah Commemoration April 20, 2009.

I want to write about memory, about hope and about responsibility. Remember—*Gedenk (Yiddish)*. Remember that you were a slave in Egypt. Remember to sanctify the Sabbath... Remember the Amalekites who wanted to annihilate you...Remember that you were once a stranger in a strange land –We just concluded *Pesach*, Passover, a holiday that is all about memory and about recreating that memory. No other Biblical commandment is as persistent. Jews live and grow under the signs of memory. To be Jewish is to remember—to claim our right to memory as well as our duty to keep it alive. For memory is a blessing: It creates bonds rather than destroying them. And it also creates responsibility. *Primo Levi once said that the victims of the Nazis, exterminated in the camps, did not vanish forever in the smoke of the ovens. They have a grave, but it is a fragile one: our memory.*

To remember is to affirm faith in humanity, to affirm faith in history and to affirm a fundamental optimism about the future. Without memory there can be no future in any meaningful sense. Memory, therefore, is really a religious concept, a theological one. *The aim of memory is to restore dignity to justice*, to allow us to live in more than one world, to have the possibility to be tolerant of difference. Without memory, mankind's image of itself would be impoverished. I often wonder about the theological implications of Auschwitz, but here I must emphasize that Auschwitz was conceived, planned, constructed, managed and justified by people. What human beings did there to other human beings will affect future generations. After Auschwitz, hope itself is filled with anguish. But—after Auschwitz, hope is necessary. Where can it be found? Ironically, in remembrance alone. We remember Auschwitz and all that it symbolizes because we believe that, in spite of the past and its horrors, the world is worthy of salvation, and salvation like redemption, can be found only in memory.

Albert Camus said: Where there is no hope we must invent it. What is life without hope; without future? Holocaust survivor Jean Améry said, “No one can become what he cannot find in his memory.” So memory is really about future and we see that powerfully confirmed in the lives the survivors have built. Somehow an entire generation of Jews has risen from the ashes determined to build on and with ashes; to build new homes for themselves and for the homeless and other exiled wanderers. That, in fact, is the hope contained within the Holocaust--that is its lasting legacy.

The greatest instance of hope is, of course, the historic conjunction of the founding of the State of Israel and the Holocaust. You simply cannot separate the two. I am not asserting or even implying that Israel, now so terribly challenged, is, in some measure a compensation for the anguish of the Holocaust. I would never make the metaphysical connection. Israel did not emerge out of the ashes of six million innocent victims. Rather the connection between the two central events of modern Jewish experience is that it demonstrates a creative genius that was able to defy death, an uncanny Jewish ability to discover hope and to build and to survive because of persecution and despite of it.

There are many other examples of such great Jewish creativity and dignity. Certainly the instances of resistance must never be forgotten. Nor must we overlook the many cases of incredible courage displayed by Jews in the way they went to their deaths. Commitment to life and to survival was expressed in a thousand different ways: women continued to have children in the ghettos; the D.P. camps after the war had one of the highest birthrates in the world. This is a tribute to the stubbornness and sense of purpose of our people and are great acts of affirmation.

The survivors took heed of an ancient biblical voice: “I call heaven and earth to witness to you this day, “Moses,” in the name of God says, “that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curses; therefore choose life, that you and your descendents may live.” Moses spoke before Kristallnacht, and Treblinka, Warsaw and Auschwitz. He still speaks today. Choose life. It sounds simple, but the simplicity is a cloud that hides the agonizing content of living after the Shoah. Choose life, choose hope, choose action and *remember the power of laughter*. That is what the survivors have done. They are, when all is said, a surprisingly successful group. Their family lives are stable and they have contributed much to the Jewish

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community, in ways far disproportionate to their number. In an age when Jewish identity is being attenuated, their identity as Jews remains strong.

And then there is their moral voice. We would not have Yom Hashoah, Yad Vashem, The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, The Museum of Jewish Heritage, The Museum of Tolerance, our own CHAI, the Holocaust Study Group and hundreds of other memorials and centers were it not for survivors and their children. The Holocaust has become part of American culture. Every time a survivor speaks to classes of students or participates in a community forum he or she contributes to the awareness, the reality and the meaning of the Shoah. Every such encounter, every life touched, represents a contribution by the survivors toward ensuring that the Holocaust will not be forgotten.

The survivor comes to us and speaks to us with muted voices of the six million resonating in her voice. She tries to warn us of the collapse of meaning and the mutilation of the human and divine image taking place all around us, both then and now. Many, however, find it difficult to listen to their voices. Those who listen often cannot understand. For, unlike the survivor, we have not seen the inside of our own grave or the visage of the corpse staring back at us from a mirror.

And yet, when we do have the courage to listen to those voices, there is something in the soul of each of us, something in our very flesh and blood, that cries out in the midst of their outcry. Suddenly we realize that the tales of terror we receive are not only about them—they are about us. In graphic and literal ways we are connected to this tragedy that we cannot understand. The ashes that ascended on high have rained down to cover the face of the earth.

When a single cloud of radiation rose from Chernobyl in 1986, within days radiation levels in Montana were up. The amount of air pollution for a given year can be measured by taking a plug of ice and snow from Antarctica. How deeply, then, are we bound to the event called the Holocaust, when dozens of clouds of ashes bellowed into the air for a thousand days, twenty-four hours each day? Those ashes helped nourish the bread we harvest from the earth and place in our mouths. They stir in our bodies and they disturb our souls in a transformation of matter into spirit. For it is their voices—the voices of the ones who collided with the thing itself—that reverberate in the voices of the survivors.

Therefore, even if we cannot understand the survivors' accounts of the Shoah, their tales cut us to the quick. For the stories they tell are part of our own stories; deciding something about this matter, we decide something about ourselves, about why we live and die, what we hold dear, and where we go from here. When the survivors bear witness to what few eyes have seen, they entrust us with a message that we must struggle to deliver and a testimony that we must attempt to bear. Thus transformed into messengers and witness, we are transformed into teachers. But, similar to the survivors who must deliver a message that cannot be delivered. We are faced with teaching something that cannot be taught. This matter that comes to us from the anti-world cannot easily be accommodated by the categories of the world.

Despite the fact that we currently possess a mass of information about the Holocaust, there remains opaqueness, a mystery, at the heart of the event. The Holocaust does not lend itself to easy explanation. It does not inform in the conventional sense. The Holocaust perplexes and exhausts; it frightens and defies. It leaves us with many more questions than answers. How could Europe's most cultured people have devised the most efficient mass-murder operation in history? How could "ordinary" people have willingly participated in genocide? Why did the world at large remain indifferent to the plight of the victims? Why was it so difficult, "for 'good' people to move from knowledge of what the Nazis were doing, to comprehension of the significance of Nazi activities, and then to action aimed at thwarting Nazi success"?

In a quest for an elusive understanding it certainly helps to go back to those places that were once sites of great creativity and life but were transformed into a kingdom of night. I had the privilege last May of traveling with forty remarkable students from Hobart and William Smith Colleges and Nazareth College and their brilliant mentors Lynne Bouche, Jennie Schaff, BK, Karen Dobkowski, and three powerful survivor witnesses and educator-guides. I know that some of you are in the room. Please stand. Just a few reflections on that experience. I am drawn to Poland where my family is from.

Today there are about 25,000 Jews in Poland. Before the war there were 3.2 million. The 500,000 Jews of pre-war Warsaw are no longer in Warsaw; they are in Treblinka, two hours away. The Jews of Warsaw are beneath the stones of Treblinka; they are the stones of Treblinka. There they stand at attention, silently witnessing, silently accusing. The thousands of stones that cover the grounds of Treblinka illustrate the

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essential equality of the place. All were worthy and equal in the face of death, all of them, large and small, are impregnated with the same silence. From afar they can easily be mistaken for Jews at prayer.

Auschwitz is a kind of museum. Clean, well-kept, a real museum. There are photographs, maps, arrows on the walls to direct us, guides. The guide explains: "This way to the gas chamber, ladies and gentlemen." The gate surges open. "Here are the watchtowers, the S.S. barracks, and the offices. This way to the bunker, a torture chamber within a torture chamber, we are led from one block to another.

We walked through the gates of Auschwitz with its inscription that mocks all meaning "*Arbeit Macht Frei*," work makes you free; In that nightmare of a place, work makes you dead.

We stood in the halls and rooms that still hold the possessions of the victims—heaps of suitcases, piles of toothbrushes and combs, hundreds of prosthetic limbs, mounds of hair, piles of cooking utensils, dolls and toys, and hundreds of thousands of shoes, worn, and weathered—and realized that for the Nazis human lives were less valuable than objects. Millions of objects saved, millions of lives taken.

To learn more—to feel more—we walk to Birkenau—the killing camp.

What hasn't been said about this place? Philosophers and historians, psychologists and novelists, theologians and poets, explorers of the human soul and the unconscious have all found in this universe of ashes a subject to be investigated, and rightly so: no subject is more vital to our generation. We listened to our survivors share their painful stories. Terrified children, stubborn Gypsies, the resigned old people and the sick, over a million Jewish people brought from the far corners of enlightened Europe perished here. There was nothing to say, there are no words. A prayer? Which one? There is no prayer really for such places. Some of us lit candles for the victims, for the loved ones of our survivors who perished there. Some of us said Kaddish for our beloved Israeli guide-educator Chaim Fuch's brother.

I found myself saying Kaddish for a brother he never knew.

From somewhere behind me came the young voices repeating the words after me, blessing and glorifying the Master of the Universe. They had tears in their eyes. "For whom are you saying Kaddish?" I asked. Their eyes looked beyond the pits to the collapsed crematoria. "It is for them."

We were struck by the piercing silences of those places. Yet, those places teach and instruct. They call out to us—they demand that we witness and they demand that we accept our responsibility of living in a post-Shoah world. What is our responsibility?

We have a responsibility to commit ourselves to rid the world of the threat of genocide. Genocide is the ultimate crime against humanity because it negates the very value of human life itself. Let me be absolutely clear: we simply do not have to put up with this anymore.

This "we" is an inclusive group; everyone with a will and a way is welcome. But its purpose must go far beyond declaratory well wishing. It is not a bad thing but a grossly insufficient thing to join in choruses of "never again." No, we must act to stop the killers.

And by "we" in the last analysis, I mean the United States. The Shoah should have taught us what happens when we act too little too late to stop the killings. "*Un di velt hot geshvigen*"—and the world was silent. We have the means at our disposal to stop what we and all right-thinking people know is wrong. It comes down to the choices of whether to act or not. That was true 70 years ago and it is certainly true today.

If we are unable to muster the political will to halt genocide, the long-term consequences are truly chilling to contemplate. This is of course true with regard to future victims. But it is also true for us. Future generations more committed to the principles we espouse but fail to act on may look back with disdain on our failure like we now look back at the generation of bystanders and collaborators during the Holocaust who did not do enough to stop the killing. Or, more horrifying still future generations may conclude that all moral reasoning in political matters is sentimental and that the only principle that matters in politics is that the strong take care of themselves and the weak are on their own. That, in fact, is the thinking that the Nazis counted on.

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In 1948, with the dimensions of the Holocaust still unfolding, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution declaring genocide a crime under international law. Due to the tireless work of Raphael Lemkin, a Polish Jewish lawyer who escaped Europe and came to the United States in 1941, the crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Nazis now had a name and a definition. He coined the term genocide thereby making an important contribution to the history of ideas. He also worked frantically to get the UN diplomats to recognize that a unique crime was being perpetrated against his people. It was too late to save his family but he laid the foundation for genocide prevention in the future. This effort 60 years ago to “internationalize” the crime of genocide might have been the UN’s finest hour. The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the crime of Genocide is not self-executing in that it does not compel its signatories to take any particular action if the treaty is violated. But it does provide a legal and moral framework for preventive action.

Several year ago in 2005 the UN embraced the doctrine of “responsibility to protect”, known colloquially as R2P. Hopefully we will be hearing more about this initiative in the future. It states that a nation has the responsibility to protect those living in its territory from atrocities. If a state is unwilling or unable to fulfill this requirement the protection falls to the international community. With sovereignty comes responsibility. If “we” are serious, we have to be willing to take upon ourselves the burden of providing the leadership, the arms, the resources and even the troops, if necessary, because the would-be-genociders are out there now thinking about their future victims and whether they can get away with it and they are getting away with it in Darfur.

And we also have a responsibility to confront the growing dangers facing the Jewish people today—the thickening and darkening clouds of a resurgent anti-Semitism in Europe, the Middle East, South America, even the United States, that does not discriminate against Jews as individuals on account of their religion. Instead, it is centered on Israel, and the denial of the Jewish people the right of self determination. The new anti-Semitism, for the first time since the Shoah, presents an existential threat to the Jewish people—particularly now with the threats posed by Iran, Hezbollah and even Hamas.

The key tactic is a kind of unspeakable Holocaust inversion with the Israelis being demonized as Nazis and the Palestinians being portrayed as the new Jews. The Jews, having suffered the most from genocide, stand accused of genocide. The language is hateful and extremely hurtful. The idea is that the Jews, the Israelis, as the new Nazis, have proven themselves unworthy of their tragic history. The Jews are facing a kind of triple death—First there was the attempt to annihilate us, then our bodies were literally turned to ashes and smoke, and now there is an attempt to pervert and steal our history from us. Many Holocaust survivors who emerged from the ghettos, camps, from hiding and from the forests, like many parents, often had two refrains: no one will believe us, and they will blame us for Auschwitz. Sadly there is a danger that they may have been right.

That is why Holocaust education and awareness, and commemorations of Yom Hashoah are even more important today than ever before. And that is where hope comes in, the hope of the young people, the students who have listened by the thousand to the stories and the words of our survivors, to the young people who have taken the Zikaron trip of Remembrance to the USHMM, to the students who have gone on the Journey for Identity with their Israeli colleagues and to the students from Nazareth College and Hobart and William Smith Colleges who went on the March of Remembrance and Hope leadership trip and their mentors. I want to commend all the students who have found the courage, dedication and commitment to listen to the stories of the survivors, to become the bearers of their memories, to become the witnesses for the witnesses. They have been energized and inspired by those experiences and have already made a difference on their campuses and in their communities. They have reached out to others in generosity and empathy, and have become activists for causes of social justice and genocide prevention. They are laying the seeds for future students, becoming role models for their peers and for us. They understand, as we must, that as witnesses the debt of responsibility must be passed on. We cannot write the future. Only the young people can do that. But we can teach them to create a world of respect for difference that may come tomorrow if they work hard for it today.

If I could humbly suggest what our responsibility to the Shoah should be..., what the deafening silences of those places demand of us, I would say bring children into the world, infuse the world with laughter, song and joy, build schools, honor books, make and cherish friends, make and sustain communities, have faith in God who had faith in mankind despite his genocidal tendencies and make sure that God’s voice is heard wherever evil threatens. Spend some moments from time to time, reflecting and thinking about those who were killed—remember them, please try to remember them! Pursue justice, defend the defenseless, work to end genocide once and for all, champion the responsibility to protect, R2P, have the courage to be different

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and take care of those who are different, the Other in our midst. Recognize the image of God in others, especially in the faces of those unlike our own, and defeat hate with respect and love.