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## Editorial

The Synagogue was fairly full and the parking area certainly was. A gathering of mainly Jews and Catholics came to listen to Archbishop Timothy Costelloe talk about *Nostra Aetate* and the developments in the fifty years since it was first published at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council. Several CCJWA members attended and enjoyed hearing Archbishop Costelloe speak on the topic again, and listening to the very emotional response by Rabbi Dovid Freilich.

The Rabbi exclaimed that this is what true religion is! We gathered together as children of the one God. It was good to celebrate our common heritage and our close relationship with each other. But! There are still so many barriers and misconceptions – how do we overcome these? Many of our traditions on all sides stop us being so open to each other, and so prevent the hopes of that 50-year-old document of being fulfilled. How do we come to realise what is really important, what we need to hold dear, and what is insignificant in a world so divided? How do we listen to each other and understand the reasons ‘the other’ has certain traditions, customs, and protocols? Understanding is surely one way to break down barriers.

We have been overwhelmed with the news of the horrific attacks in Paris on 13 November, and early this year in Istanbul and Jakarta. For many people in Perth, these are places they have visited, places where they have friends, places where they have business, or for Paris, a place they have seen romantically in so many films. The people are so much like so many of us. It is then so easy to think of people who are different as ‘the other’. Often people are seen as different because of their religion. *Nostra Aetate* reminded us of our common humanity. The anti-Muslim feeling in our community can categorise all Muslims, as others, as the enemy. Yet the Muslims too are children of Abraham, children of God. Many are fleeing from persecution by fellow-country people, people of the same religion. We can see many of the forces which had been at work in Germany seventy years ago here alive in our community.

There are so many places in the world suffering from war and terrorism. Often this division has religious labels. But the reason can be more a need for power, or wealth. Let us not forget the people of Israel and Palestine, the people of Syria, the people of Beirut, and those we hear little about in Africa and Sri Lanka and Burma and countries around the globe.

Last year in Jerusalem we heard from the Chief Rabbi, the Grand Mufti and a Lutheran Bishop who all agreed that it was the extremists in all our religions that were the cause of trouble.

Let us remember our common humanity under God’s loving care, and work so that the reconciliation we may achieve may be a sign of True Religion. We celebrate *Nostra Aetate* by working towards the realisation of its ideals.

*Reverend Marie Wilson*  
Chairperson, CCJWA

## Review of Events 2015

### Annual General Meeting for 2014

CCJWA’s AGM for 2014 was held on 8 February at St David’s Church Hall, the Anglican Parish of Applecross, with The Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB, Archbishop of Perth, giving the keynote address. About 30 members and guests attended to hear Archbishop Costelloe reflect on *Nostra Aetate*, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions, on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its promulgation by the Vatican Council.

In the brief business meeting, the Chairperson, Associate Professor Glenn Morrison presented his annual report; Dr Ralph Hickling delivered his report as Hon. Treasurer; the incoming Executive Committee was elected; and the events planned for 2015 were announced.

In his occasional address, Archbishop Costelloe spoke of the terrible consequences in history, of Catholics and Christians in general treating those of the Jewish faith — our “elder brother” — with arrogance, anger, suspicion, and resentment. *Nostra Aetate*, with the full authority of the Catholic Church, called for a change, reminding us that “We cannot truly call on God, the Father of all, if we refuse to treat in a brotherly way any [person], created ... in the image of God.”

Archbishop Costelloe then shared from his understanding of Genesis and his own theological tradition to revisit, stimulate, challenge, and rejoice in our shared inheritance. Focusing first on Genesis 1:26–28, he concluded that it presents God as a “creating, life-giving God,” and suggested that humans fulfil their calling and destiny as the “image of God” when they give life, nurture it, and are at its service. To do the opposite is to repudiate God’s created purpose in the most fundamental way.

He then noted that in Genesis 2, God states that “it is not good that man should be alone,” and that there is a profound truth here about how to be truly human — that we’re made for communion, for inter-relation.

This is why we should be responsive to other faith groups. We are inextricably woven together as a human family. To be in the image and likeness of God, the archbishop concluded, is to “give expression to God’s creative, life-giving presence in the world through our own life-giving and creative lives.”

During the question time that followed, Archbishop Costelloe encouraged us to open ourselves to God who walks with us, and to be more open to new things that God wants to do for us. At the conclusion of discussion, the Reverend Marie Wilson gave a vote of thanks, and presented the Archbishop with a gift. The meeting celebrated with refreshments and fellowship.

*The full text of Archbishop Costelloe’s address, and a more detailed report of the meeting, are accessible on the CCJWA website.*

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### **Film Afternoon: *Divided We Fall***

On 19 April, about 40 members and friends attended a private screening of the film *Divided We Fall*, at Temple David Function Centre. The film, directed by Jan Hrebek, is set in 1943 in Nazi-dominated Czechoslovakia, and centres on a Jew who has escaped from a concentration camp and seeks refuge with a couple he knows from the past. With great trepidation they agree to shelter him for a short time, but eventually house him for two years. The host couple are unable to have a baby, but it becomes essential for the wife to become pregnant to prevent discovery of the Jew. A friend who works closely with the Nazis pretends to be unaware of the Jew’s presence, but does much, at personal risk, to save the three of them. When liberation occurs the couple’s problems are exacerbated: the host is considered a collaborator and he and his wife only avoid execution by the Jew’s testimony that they gave him refuge. The birth of a baby boy — the means of saving the life of his mother and many others — gives an ending with hope.

The drama, based on a true story, is bittersweet, and the film contains many humorous twists which are in stark contrast to the extremely serious nature of the situation. While the movie aroused some painful memories for some members of the audience, it was warmly received and enjoyed by most.

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### **An Evening at St George’s College**

The Council’s collaborative venture with the Winthrop Singers and St George’s College was held on Thursday 21 May, commencing at 6:00pm with evening worship in the Chapel. The Winthrop Singers were conducted by A/Director Lucian Watkins, and the service was led by Dr Sarah Gador-Whyte, Co-Dean of Studies and Lay Chaplain at the College. For the Introit, the choir sang *Enosh Kechotzir Yomov* (Psalm 103:15–17), by Louis Lewandowski. Michael Sebbag, of Perth Synagogue, read the Old Testament lection from Isaiah 55:6–13, and this was

followed by Psalm 150, sung by the choir. The New Testament lection, 1 Corinthians 13:1–13, was then read by Executive member Mrs Ann Smith, and the canticle, Psalm 100, was said antiphonally. For the anthem, the choir gave a marvellous performance of *Adonai roi*, the second movement of Leonard Bernstein’s *Chichester Psalms*. The service concluded with prayers and a blessing, and the congregation sat for the organ voluntary, before lingering for some time in the Chapel.

CCJWA members and guests were then invited to the College dining room, and we enjoyed an excellent meal in company with friends and students. We then reconvened in the Junior Common Room for the traditional Fireside Chat, which this time was a conversation between Dr Michael Champion, Lay Chaplain at the College, and Rabbi Dovid Freilich, of Perth Synagogue. Many topics were covered, but Rabbi Freilich never strayed far from his main focal points: that humankind is made in God’s image, and the crucial importance of loving God and neighbour.



He was gracious in his acknowledgment of Christian beliefs, and spoke capably on the conflict between Israel and Palestine. The rapport observed between Rabbi Freilich and his Christian interviewer exemplified the respect and friendship that Council members hope to achieve in our engagement with those of different faiths. Indeed, the harmony experienced throughout the evening indicated that the “formula” of worship, table fellowship, and conversation, is drawing Jews and Christians together and facilitating the building of understanding, respectful relationships.

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### **Seminar on “Sin and Forgiveness”**

On the evening of 27 August, about 40 gathered at the Temple David Function Centre to hear Rabbi Adi Cohen, of Temple David, and Rev Steve Francis, Moderator of the Uniting Church in WA, outline their respective positions on the subject of “Sin and Forgiveness”. The session was chaired by Reverend Marie Wilson, Chairperson of CCJWA.

Rabbi Adi spoke first, with frequent humour, illustrating his teaching on the twin subjects with a PowerPoint presentation. He referred to the various different types of sin, giving examples of each: *Cheynt* (“to miss the point!”); *Avon* (referring to a flawed personality); *Pesha* (indicating rebellion); and *Aveira* (the opposite of the good work). He then turned to the matter of *T’Shuvah* (forgiveness), which involves amending our way or attitude toward God and others, an important point being that the gates of repentance are always open.

He then drew on Psalm 34:12 (*Mi ha-ish*) and verses 13–15, to observe that sin is avoidable. We are to guard our speech and take care not to deceive. He explained that the Jewish faith does not include veneration of saints. All are imperfect, including Moshe and David. Rather than trying to emulate such persons we should ask ourselves, “How can I best follow my own path?” We never have a clean slate. In conclusion he said: as “Rabbi Bruce Lee” put it: *Our only sin is to aim too low!*

Rev Steve Francis then took the podium and embarked from a different perspective, beginning with the shame in Spanish history: the sin of the Christian Church in mistreating Jewish persons. In the NT, sin is “falling short” and “missing the mark”. For St Paul, sin was deviating from the will of God. This distorting or twisting the will of God is not a mere neurosis, but a virus that separated us from God and one another. The person who commits sin is “a sinner.” Jesus intentionally associated with persons branded as “sinners,” making the point that he came to call not the righteous but sinners, with the intention of freeing people from the hold that sin had over them. Jesus alone made the audacious claim that he could forgive. This claim, considered God-like, was felt to be scandalous. Jesus stated that sin is sometimes personal, but that it could also be systemic, and that we are called to reorientate ourselves and repent. As we see in the story of Zacchaeus, a change of behaviour is expected. In the case of the woman caught in adultery, she is not blamed but asked to change.

According to Rev Steve’s position, Christians view the special contribution of Jesus as not only in his example and teaching, but in his death and resurrection, considered to be a solution in reuniting humanity with God.

He suggested that “original sin” was exemplified in the way the first immigrant Australians mistreated the first peoples of the land, and that we still need to repent of the way in which we treat the environment. To conclude, he mentioned that in his work in the prison system, he witnesses inmates realising the seriousness of their actions, and turning away from their past.

Each of the speakers was then given an opportunity to seek clarification from the other, and this process revealed several differences in their views.

Reflecting on what Rev Steve mentioned in his speech, Rabbi Adi observed that Jesus was just being the observant Jewish boy that he should be.

Responding to a question from the floor about original sin, Rev Steve commented that Christians believe we are made in the image of God, but also flawed. We have the potential to worship the wrong or the right thing. Rabbi Adi’s response in relation to Eve was that she didn’t sin – she made a choice.

Following the presentations, the speakers, members and guests then mingled for another hour, further discussing the topics over refreshments.

*A detailed report of the seminar is available on the website.*

*The review of the above 2015 events was compiled by Dr Mary Marshall, Hon. Secretary, drawing on articles written by Dr Judith Schneider, Vice-Chairperson, and Dr Ralph Hickling, Hon. Treasurer.*

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## **Kristallnacht Commemoration**

As the light faded and the shadows grew long across the Swan River, the rich deep sound of the ‘cello filled the Chapel of Christ Church Grammar School (CCGS) and set a sober tone as Ernest Bloch, *Prayer* (from Jewish Life No. 1) was played by CCGS staff members – ‘cellist Kevin Gillam, accompanied on piano by Dr Martin Lamb.

Approximately 150 guests gathered to commemorate the 77<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ‘Night of Broken Glass’ on Monday, 9 November at 7.30 pm. In attendance was Her Excellency the Honourable Kerry Sanderson AO, Governor of Western Australia, accompanied by Dr Judith Schneider, Vice-Chairperson CCJWA. The MC, Revd Marie Wilson, Chairperson CCJWA, invited Canon Frank Sheehan, CCGS Chaplain, to give the welcome speech.

At the conclusion of the welcome speech, the strains of *Acheinu*, arranged by Lev Tahor and sung by the students of Carmel School accompanied by Shirley Atlas, began soft and low building to a crescendo, seeking the Eternal One’s deliverance for His people.

Guests were then all drawn to participate in the liturgy by the MC’s Call to Worship to remember the purpose for the gathering as Jews and Christians – to confess, seek healing, compassion and courage – to seek righteousness and pursue justice.

Following prayer, two moving poems were read by Carmel School students – *Song is a Monument* by Yala Korwin read by Ari Berelowitz, and *The Butterfly* by Pavel Friedman read by Michaela Wasserman.



The poems were interspaced with the song *Enosh Kechotzir Yomov* by Louis Lewandowski (Psalm 103:15-17) contrasting the fragility and brevity of human life with the robust everlasting love and righteousness of the Eternal One, and sung by vocal quartet James Chapman, Edward Elias, David Woods (soloist) and Kevin Gillam of CCGS.

Guest speaker, Dr Ron Hoenig, Deputy Chair of the ACCJ and Jewish Co-Chair of the CCJ(SA), was introduced by the MC to deliver the occasional address, *After Kristallnacht: echoes of shattering glass into the 21st century – the Australian Experience*. The full address can be read on the CCJWA website. Dr Hoenig challenged Australians not to repeat the mistakes of the past, but to open their hearts to the suffering and plight of modern-day immigrants, just as his family and other Jews had once suffered and had been new immigrants to this country.

The first memorial candle was lit in remembrance of the victims of the Shoah by Rabbi Adi Cohen of Temple David, an Honorary President of CCJWA. The confronting poem *The Little Boy with His Hands Up* by Yala Korwin, was then read by Helen Bryant, also of Temple David, and Committee Member of CCJWA.

Dr Judith Schneider provided a brief historical background concerning the Righteous among the Nations. The second candle was lit in remembrance of them by Her Excellency the Governor, following which Dr Schneider read the poem *Righteous of the World* by Chaim Chefer.

A two-minute silence was then observed, ending abruptly with the unnerving shattering of glass – the shattering of Jewish lives, hopes and dreams. Together we all recited the prayer of remembrance – of the burning of the synagogues, the looting and destruction of schools and orphanages, homes and businesses, the arrests, deportations and deaths. After a brief period of silence, we were exhorted to offer each other a sign of reconciliation, to reach out with the hand of friendship and wish one another *Shalom – Peace*.

The Candle of Hope was brought forward and lit by Dean Newfield of Carmel School and Angus Elliott-Lockhart of



CCGS, representing Jew and Gentile, and symbolising our striving to overcome hatred, and to live in peace and harmony.



The song *Yehi Shalom* arranged by Yitzchok Rosenthal, was sung by students of Carmel School, accompanied by Shirley Atlas, and was a prayer for peace upon all.

Reverend Steve Francis, Moderator of the Uniting Church in Western Australia and an Honorary President of CCJWA, then gave the challenging Exhortation for all to go into the world with peace in their hearts, to have courage to hold on to what is good, to confront evil wherever it may be, and to have compassion on those who are suffering – assisting and honouring them in righteousness and justice.

Concluding the ceremony, Rabbi Dovid Freilich of Perth Hebrew Congregation, an Honorary President of CCJWA, led the *Kaddish*, and this was followed by the MC's expression of thanks to participants and organisers.

All stood for the departure of the Governor's official party to the uplifting strains of *Leading the in-laws home* by Naftule Brandwein, *In-laws' dance*, and *Dance! Dance!* played by violinist Ronniel Orlando with accompanist Cherie Allsopp. The guests were sent out as though coming through the night of death and darkness into the light and hope of a new day, into the light of life.

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