

Archbishop Hickey highlights personal solidarity with Jewish people

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Keith Shulkin, Shelley Rush, Archbishop Hickey & Ken Arkwright.

Cardinal Kasper.

Rev Hickey told the AGM attendees that he had spent four months in Israel, during which time his empathy for Israel had been enhanced. "My personal solidarity with the whole Jewish history up to the coming of Christ; that you are brothers and sisters of mine, was heightened by (my) experiences," he said, adding that he'd had the most extraordinary things happen to him during this, his second time, in Israel.

A story he'd heard, sparked an interest in the temple mount and he told the audience how, with time to reflect, being so close to the temple, the mountain and the foundations had filled him with empathetic wonder, "This place had contained the Tablets of Stone, Aaron's Rod, the Scrolls and Manna. It was Holy, so Holy," he said. He had spent time standing in awe, just thinking about it, "The presence of God among His people ... What a loss to lose the sacrifices, priesthood and all the rituals ... This is a terrible loss."

Adding a touch of mirth, Rev Hickey recounted how a visit to Mt Sinai with a group of Australians coincided with a live broadcast of the West Coast Eagles defeating the Swans at exactly the time the tour embarked and stepped onto Mt Sinai.

Again at Mt Sinai, he said he was overawed by his empathy for the Jewish people. "That God would come with these enormous signs ... and the people getting upset ... Listen Israel, you must love the Lord your God How God loved his people and they were to respond by loving their God.

"My word for it is 'Awesome'," said Rev Hickey.

Archbishop Hickey presented 'Nostra Aetate under Pope Benedict XVI' not as a policy or position, but as his own personal journey of empathy.

glimpse into his own personal journey to Israel on a sabbatical last year.

Introduced in 1965, Nostra Aetate (literally 'in our time') is a history changing document inaugurated by the Roman Catholic Church encouraging religious tolerance, including Israel. One of the strategies arising out of Nostra Aetate is 'dialogue with the Jewish people'. Followers of Catholicism are encouraged to recognize Israel as chosen of God, and Christianity's connection to Judaism, and a Commission for Relations with the Jewish People has been established under

Who can visit erez Israel without feeling nostalgic?

Not even the Catholic Archbishop of Perth. The Most Reverend Barry Hickey, who recounted his heightened feelings of solidarity with the Jewish people, as he addressed the Council of Christians and Jews' (CCJ) Annual General Meeting last weekend.

Members and guests of The CCJ had been advised The Most Rev B.J. Hickey, would be addressing the AGM on 'Nostra Aetate under Pope Benedict XVI'. They may have been expecting a policy address, but Archbishop Hickey delivered a rare privilege - a touching