



‘Religions and Ideologies,
Polish Perspectives and beyond.’

International Council of Christians and Jews
in cooperation with the
Faculty for International and Political Studies
of the Jagiellonian University Cracow.
2011 Conference, July 3-6.

Joint Meditative Moment.

Sr. Gemma Del Duca and Sr. Maty O’Sullivan
Oswiecim, Tuesday July 5
Center for Dialogue and Prayer

Good morning. Dzień Dobry. Boker tov. We have before us a special day for reflection, remembrance. When Pope John Paul II came to Auschwitz in June 1979, he spoke these words, “I kneel before all the inscriptions that come one after another bearing the memory of the victims of Oswiecim in the languages Polish, English, Bulgarian, Romany, Czech, Danish, French, Greek, Hebrew, Yiddish, Spanish, Flemish, Serbo-Croat, German, Norwegian, Russian, Romanian, Hungarian and Italian.

In particular I pause . . . before the inscription in Hebrew. This inscription awakens the memory of the people whose sons and daughters were intended for total extermination.”

And so our reflection this morning will begin with Jewish voices, who came from different countries and spoke in different languages. Then we will move into the simple, stark recitation of events from Danuta Czech’s Auschwitz Chronicles, events that occurred in Auschwitz, on this day, from the years 1941 to 1944.

We will use as our refrain that memorable statement of Elie Wiesel, “Whoever listens to a witness becomes a witness.”

(Music)

Whoever listens to a witness becomes a witness: (Music: Silence)

Imre Kertesz

The Holocaust has no language - in fact, it cannot have one at all. The writer of the Holocaust is an intellectual immigrant everywhere and in every language, who always seeks asylum in other

languages Is it at all possible for the Holocaust to have its own exclusive language? And if there was a language like this, should not it be so horrible, so sorrowful that it would finally kill those who speak it?

Simone Veil

Of course, what history will remember will be slightly different than what it really was, even different from what we remember today What is important however, is to preserve the essentials. The essentials are the events themselves, horrible and incredible as they might be: the organization, the methods employed for the murders, the wish to humiliate and dehumanize. But the facts themselves would have no meaning if we were to ignore the racist ideology, its roots, and support of all kinds that it has been accorded, all of which brought about the genocide of Jews and Sinti Roma.

Samuel Pisar

It is obvious that we, the survivors of the survivors ... are now disappearing one by one But as long as some of us are still here, today more than ever we have an important legacy to transmit to our fellow humans - to Jews and to non-Jews alike. The mass murder of innocents in the gas chambers was once unthinkable But our legacy also says that man (woman) has an astounding capacity to endure, to overcome, to create, and to rebuild from the ashes of a broken life, new and happy families with the joy and laughter of children and grandchildren-children and grandchildren that were never meant to exist.

(Music)

Whoever listens to a witness becomes a witness: Music: Silence

From the Auschwitz Chronicles

On this day 05 July 1941: Arrival of 2 prisoners from the Gestapo in Bielsko. They were numbered 17813 and 17814

On this day 1942: Arrival of 31 prisoners who came on a group transport. They were numbered 44991 - 45021

On this day 1943: Arrival 31 males numbers 127680 - 127710 and 19 females numbers 48302 - 48320 on a group transport.

Baby Theresa Steinbach was born in the Gypsy camp at Birkenau. She was given the number Z-8914

On this day 1944: Freed 3 prisoners numbers 187885 - 187887. Sent from Katowice.

Arrival transport RSHA Jews from Hungary. 13 youth young and healthy selected for work. Given Numbers A-16939 - A-16951. The rest of the transport were sent to the gas chamber.

Arrival of 4 women sent from secret police in Vienna. Given numbers 82474-82477

Arrival of 30 women from Budapest on a group transport. Given numbers 82492 -82521

(Music)

Arrival 05 July 2011, 150 members of ICCJ to listen to the voices of this soil. The memory, the history and the ashes of the past are here. Today we walk two roads - the past in remembrance and the present in our personal reflection. Let us honour the truth of both.

Whoever listens to a witness becomes a witness

(Music)
