

## **Houston Jews and Catholics Together Initiative (celebrating *Nostra Aetate*, Pope John XXIII, and Jewish-Catholic relations)**

**By: Megan Wright**

“I am Joseph, your brother.”

Components: informative and engaging website + focus week bringing Houston’s Jewish and Catholic young adult communities together for a week of learning, partnership, and service.

This initiative is focused on development in awareness, cooperation, understanding, and action in the field of Jewish - Catholic Relations. The intertwining Jewish and Catholic histories have been plagued by much tragic violence and strained, hateful perceptions of one another. The twentieth century saw the long-overdue establishment of positive Jewish-Catholic relations and the genesis of true reconciliation, most notably under the leadership of Pope John XXIII. The shift under Pope John XXIII and opened the door for a bright future between the Jewish and Catholic communities. We live in a unique period for Jewish-Catholic relations - an opportune time ripe to further reconciliation and cultivate fruitful understanding, cooperation, and friendship between the vibrant Houston Jewish and Catholic communities.

The tangible, long-lasting element of this project will be the informational, engaging, website for Jewish-Catholic relations. There is a specific need of an online platform for young Jews and Catholics to learn about the history between them, what

changes happened in the twentieth century for the groups, and opportunities to continue healing, reconciliation, and friendship. The focus week will serve as an on-the-ground movement to facilitate opportunities for young Houston Jews and Catholics to meet, learn from one another, serve the community, and promote friendship between their groups. Finally, to the best of my knowledge, there has also been little celebration or recognition of Pope John XXIII's enormous role in Jewish-Catholic reconciliation in U.S. Jewish and Catholic communities. This week will serve to spotlight Pope John XXIII as well as other Jews and Catholics in the 20th century who helped bring about an era of positive Jewish-Catholic relations.

**Components:**

- Website launch
- Houston Jews and Catholics Together Week

Monday - Speaker Event with Cardinal DiNardo and Rabbi Rosen

Tuesday – Houston Holocaust Museum evening/day

Wednesday - Pope John XXIII table @ RMC

Thursday - Shepherd School Celebration Concert, President Leebron for brief address

Friday - open Shabbat

Saturday – combined service project

Sunday- open Mass/celebratory dinner (Pope John XXIII celebration @Rice CSA)

**Breakdown:**

History website/online platform:

Where we've been, are, and going

(Early Christianity, Judaism evolvement, crusades, Deicide, Inquisitions, art, Vatican II, Nostra Aetate, Shoah, Righteous Among the Nations, 20<sup>th</sup> century popes, Vatican and Israel, “The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable”)

Website

\$1000 domain & sustainable platform

\$1000 graphics and design

\$4,000 research coverage and compensation

**Total: \$6,000**

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## **Houston Jews and Catholics Together Week**

### **Monday:**

Speaker event celebrating 50 + years of Jewish-Catholic relations with Cardinal DiNardo and Rabbi David Rosen at Congregation Beth Yeshurun

Model event:

<http://houston.adl.org/event/cardinal-dinardo/>

Costs

-speaker costs/facility cover

-advertisement (Facebook event, email (contact entire partners list), and flyers)

-refreshments

Total: **\$2,500**

## **Tuesday:**

Houston Holocaust Museum Day for Houston College Students

- Facebook event
- free admission for students

## **Wednesday:**

Pope John XXIII Celebration Table @ RMC

- candy handout for ID quiz
- brief laptop presentation of pics/info
- cardboard cutout of John XXIII
- Photo campaign (Pope and white board)
  - what does reconciliation mean to you?
  - how can you be an agent of reconciliation?
  - where do you see the future of Jewish-Catholic relations heading?
  - why care about Jewish-Catholic relations?

Cost:

Cardboard cutout and candy

**\$50**

## **Thursday**

Evening concert celebrating *Nostra Aetate* @ Shepherd School with President Leebron address

Featuring Jewish and Catholic composers and musicians

(Advertise on Facebook, Shepherd School Performance Calendar, Shepherd Society and flyers

Cost:

Pay musicians + reception

**\$2500**

## **Friday**

Open Shabbat @ Houston Hillel

(Advertise on Facebook, partner with Boniuk Council, Jewish Studies Program, contact UH, UST, groups etc)

Cost:

Dinner

**\$1000**

## **Saturday**

Combined Service Project(s) (guided by Adore Ministry and JFGH)

Service Day partnering Catholic and Jewish organizations at UH, UST, Rice, HBU, Young adults at SVDP, St. Anne, Beth Yesh

Expense:

\$2500 T-shirts (production and graphic design)

\$2000 box lunches

**Total: \$4,500**

## **-Sunday**

-Evening open mass @ Rice St. Mary Chapel

+ Kosher Sunday supper @Rice CSC  
-Pope John XXIII cake and celebration  
-note writing and video film to Pope John's surviving family members

Cost:

Dinner

**\$600**

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**Date contingent on schedules of speakers and performers  
(Possibly the week of Oct 22 to celebrate *Nostre Aetate*  
anniversary. Another possibility is late January)**

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## **Partners**

CJCUC

Rice Center for Religion and Public Life

Rice Jewish Studies Program \*

Rice Medieval and Early Modern Studies Program

Houston Hillel

Chabad

Young Catholic Professionals

Beth Yeshuran \*

IAC Houston \*

Archdiocese Galveston - Houston \*

Houston Holocaust Museum

Lewis and Joan Lowenstein Foundation/Anti-Defamation

League\*

Philos Project Houston Chapter\*

Passages \*

\*some are potential donors

Total: **\$17,150**

<https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/i-am-joseph-your-brother>

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