



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO RABBI ABRAHAM SKORKA AND A DELEGATION OF JEWISH LEADERS
FOR THE PRESENTATION OF A NEW EDITION OF THE TORAH**

*Clementine Hall
Thursday, 23 February 2017*

[Multimedia]

Dear Friends,

I offer a warm welcome to all of you, who have come to present me with a new and precious edition of the Torah. I thank Rabbi Abraham Skorka, brother and friend, for his kind words, and I am very grateful to all of you for this thoughtful gesture, which brings us together today around the Torah as the Lord's gift, his revelation, his word.

The Torah, which Saint John Paul II called "the living teaching of the living God" ([*Address for the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Declaration "Nostra Aetate"*](#), 6 December 1990, 3), manifests the paternal and visceral love of God, a love shown in words and concrete gestures, a love that becomes covenant. The very word *covenant* is resonant with associations that bring us together. God is the greatest and most faithful covenantal partner. He called Abraham in order to form from him a people who would become a blessing for all peoples of the earth. God desires a world in which men and women are bound to him and as a result live in harmony among themselves and with creation. In the midst of so many human words that lead to tragic division and rivalry, these divine words of covenant open before all of us paths of goodness to walk together. This publication is itself the fruit of a "covenant" between persons of different nationalities, ages and religious confessions, who joined in this common effort.

The fraternal and institutional dialogue between Jews and Christians is now well-established and effective, made so by encounters that are ongoing and collaborative. The gift that you are making to me today is fully a part of this dialogue, which finds expression not only in words but also in

gestures. The extensive introduction to the text and the editor's note emphasize this dialogical approach and communicate a cultural vision of openness, mutual respect and peace that accords with the spiritual message of the Torah. The important religious figures who have worked on this new edition have paid special attention both to the literary aspect of the text and to the full-colour illustrations that add further value to the publication.

Every edition of sacred Scripture, however, possesses a spiritual value that infinitely surpasses its material value. I ask God to bless all those who contributed to this work and, in a particular way, to bless all of you, to whom I renew my personal gratitude. Thank you.