

75th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of St Maximilian Kolbe

Week 25

The Roots of Anti Semitism



The fratricide of Cain against his brother Abel began the division of man against man, but at some time in human history it turned to a specific hatred of one group of people in particular, the Jews.

Why?

The early Christians were Jewish.

Jesus, Mary, and the Disciples were all Jewish.

After the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, the early Christians would go to the Temple on the Sabbath/Saturday and Break the Bread on Sunday.

Eventually Jew became divided against Jew as to the Person of Jesus.

Over time there came a permanent division between Jews and Christians.

Between Temple and Church.

Jews were dispersed throughout the Christian world after the destruction of the Temple in 70.A.D. by the Romans,

Gradually Jews were blamed by some Christians for the death of Jesus.

Jews also lived apart, separated from the rest of Christian society.

Sometimes this was by choice and other times not.
In many parts of the world Jews dressed differently, spoke a different language and worshipped differently than the majority of the population.

These elements led to animosity between Christians and Jews.
For centuries Jews have been persecuted.
In the Middle Ages They were forbidden to own property, expelled from England and Spain and some were even blamed for the Black Death in Europe.
Jews often became scapegoats for the ills of society.

Perhaps the greatest cause of Anti Semitism however is stereotyping.
Stereotyping takes away the humanity of an individual and paints the entire group, race or culture with one color.
This rationalizes and justifies one's behavior therefore towards the individual and the group because they "all act and think that way."

Blacks, Indians, Italians, Irish, people from Appalachia, Catholics, Protestants and Moslems to name a few are groups that have been stereotyped and yet within each group there is wide diversity.

The best way to destroy stereotypes is to talk to a variety of individuals within a particular group to begin to realize that there is no single, monolithic color, thought, spirituality or culture that can fully encompass and express the fullness of a particular group, race, culture or religion.

Neil Diamond, Barbara Streisand, Albert Einstein, Moses, Kings David and Solomon, Tony Curtis, William Shatner, Anne Frank, Benny Goodman, Jonas Sauk, Spinoza, George Gershwin and Harrison Ford are all Jewish.

Jews have received 194 Noble Prizes from Chemistry, Economics, Literature, Peace, Physics and Medicine.

How can one possibly stereotype such a broad range of people and ideas who come from almost every country of the world?

People who stereotype other people also have a tendency to stereotype God!

Prayer : Heavenly Father, open my eyes and my heart to see everyone as you see them, made in your image and likeness.

Questions and Meditations :

1. Have I ever been stereotyped?
2. Have I ever stereotyped any individual or group by the race, culture, religion, or appearance?
3. What Jewish people do I personally know?
4. What are some Jewish stereotypes?
5. How are they true or false?
6. What is Anti Semitism?
7. How can I stop Anti Semitism?
8. Do I stereotype God?

