

October 7, 2021

## Rescuing A Torah Scroll

The Jewish holiday of Simchat Torah (celebrated last week) concluded the important Jewish Fall holidays that began with the Jewish High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Simchat Torah literally means the "joy of Torah."

Come visit the Torah scroll that was rescued from Romania during the Holocaust that is on display in Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology's Leo Dehon library and read about another one that was recently returned to its home of origin in the Czech Republic.

<https://religionnews.com/2021/09/27/this-simchat-torah-one-ancient-czech-scroll-will-return-to-its-country-of-origin/>

[This Simchat Torah, one ancient Czech scroll has returned to its country of origin](#)

This Simchat Torah, one ancient Czech scroll has returned to its country of origin Jewish life was nearly extinguished by the Nazis. But because of a historical quirk, Czech Jewish liturgical ...

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## The Vocabulary of Interreligious Dialogue

Do you ever wonder why interreligious dialogue can often be so challenging? Can't we just talk to one another about our religious cultures, rituals, and beliefs to learn from one another?

One potential obstacle to open discussion is that each religion has developed its own vocabulary to name and possibly describe aspects of religious belief and practice. Some of these are words that we have in common that have the same meaning or may have a different meaning in reference to a particular religion. Some are words non-members of a religious faith have never heard of, and even members of the religion may not be aware of or do not understand of their meaning.

For example, when I came to work at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology (SHSST) as director of the Lux Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies and a non-Catholic, I discovered that there was an alphabet soup of Catholic terminology. There are a few amazing words I have learned from Catholics that are derived from Greek or Latin such as *eschatology*, *soteriology*, *ecumenism*, *eucharist*, *vespers*, *propaedeutic*, and *deuterocanonical* (a definite mouthful). For the meanings of these words that are often difficult to learn to pronounce, see the vocabulary list at the end of the article. There are also more recognizable words that are easier to pronounce such as baptism, gospel, Advent, Lent and communion.

In Judaism, most of the religious vocabulary is in Hebrew. Here are a few terms important to Judaism: *tzedakah*, *teshuvah*, *tefillah*, *tikkun olam*, *Torah*, *Tanakh* (no, not all Hebrew words begin with a "T" sound), *shalom*, *siddur*, *baruch*, *chesed*, *kavod*, *kadosh*.

Unfamiliar words can make people feel uncomfortable until they are understood within the context of a particular religion. Catholicism and Judaism, as well as many other religions, do share words in common. Both religions speak about Truth, Mercy, Repentance, Confession, Atonement, Salvation, Sacred, Holy, Bible, Covenant, Faith, Grace, Forgiveness, Messiah. Even though we may use many words that are the same, the religious interpretation or perceived meaning of a shared word may be quite different. Sometimes, these shared words cause the most confusion and often greater misunderstandings.

Once we can explain to one another the words that are particular to our own religion, then we can roll up our sleeves and dig into the deeper understandings of the words we commonly share. That is what I see as the nature of true interreligious dialogue.

*However many holy words you read, however many you speak, what good will they do if you do not act upon them? --Buddha*

### **Catholic Words in Simple Terms**

Eschatology—theology concerned with the final events of history, or the ultimate destiny of humanity.

Soteriology—study of religious doctrines of salvation. In Christianity, it relates to saving of human beings  
from sin and its consequences.

Ecumenism—promoting unity among the world's Christian Churches.

Eucharist—the Holy Eucharist, or Holy Communion, is the most central and important sacrament and ritual

of Catholicism. Holy Communion is offered at every Mass. The unleavened bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus (transubstantiation) and the congregation receives the body  
blood of Jesus Christ that have been blessed by the priest in memorial of Jesus' sacrifice on  
and the cross and the Last Supper.

Vespers—evening prayer service.

Propaedeutic—the introductory stage in the formation of a Catholic priest.

Deuterocanonical Books—books of Scripture contained in the Septuagint (Greek version of the Hebrew

Bible or Old Testament) but not in the Hebrew canon. These books include  
Judith, Sirach, Tobit, Baruch, Wisdom of Solomon and Maccabees I and II and are regarded by the Roman Catholic Church as canonical but they are not universally acknowledged.

### **Jewish Words in Simple Terms**

Tzedakah—although this often refers to 'charity', it literally means 'justice' referring to the ethical obligation  
to do what is right or just.

Teshuvah—means repentance. It literally means 'returning' as returning to doing what is right.

Tefillah—is the word for Jewish prayer from the root that means executing judgement, the process of  
contemplation or judging oneself.

Tikkun Olam—the concept of repairing the world in partnership with God.

Torah—Hebrew Biblical Scroll containing the first five books of the Bible. The holiest scripture of Judaism.

Tanakh—the Hebrew Bible. The word is an abbreviation for the three parts of the Bible—Torah, Prophets,  
Writings.

Shalom—means peace.

Siddur—Jewish prayer book. It is derived from the Hebrew word meaning 'order.'

Baruch—means blessed.

Chesed—means kindness.

Kavod—means honor.

Kadosh—means holy. It literally means separate as in separating the sacred from the ordinary.

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## WEDNESDAY EVENING WEBINARS

What Jews Do When They Pray

**NOV. 17,** 7:00-8:15 pm CST *Rabbi Scott Shafrin*

Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel: Visions of the Hebrew Prophets

**DEC. 1,** 7:00-8:15 pm CST *Rabbi Noah Chertkoff*

Learn more and register:

[shsst.edu/lux-events](https://shsst.edu/lux-events)

Follow The Lux Center for Catholic-Jewish Studies on Facebook!

Join Boston College Center for Christian-Jewish Learning, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Yad Vashem, The International Institute for Holocaust Research for a Webinar Program

**The Holocaust-Era Archives of Pope Pius XII:  
The State of the Question**

Sunday, October 17, 2021

1:00-2:30 CDT

For years, questions have eddied about the role of Pope Pius XII and the Catholic Church during the Holocaust. The recent opening of the Vatican archives from this era allows us to begin to know answers. After an introduction to these archives by Vatican archivist Piero Doria, this webinar will feature a discussion among leading scholars working with these archives about their work, their initial findings, and the significance of archival scholarship for Jewish-Christian relations.

Click here for zoom registration

[https://bccte.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_jbbr-xYdTyCvbDOyUvprwQ](https://bccte.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_jbbr-xYdTyCvbDOyUvprwQ)

Presenters:

Suzanne Brown-Fleming, Director of International Academic Programs at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

David Kertzer, Paul Dupee University Professor of Social Science at Brown University

Robert Ventresca, Professor of History at King's University College at Western University

Moderator: Iael Nidam-Orvieto, Director of the International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem

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