



‘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.

Opening word by Father Jan Novak  
Tuesday July 5  
Center for Dialogue and Prayer, Oswiecim

Good morning everyone, dzien dobry. It is my privilege to welcome you - ICCJ participants, to the Centre for Dialogue and Prayer in Oswiecim. This will be a different kind of day for you and an important one, and it is good that you have come. It is here that we encounter the many challenges of the memory of Auschwitz.

I would like to tell you a little bit about the Centre. It was founded in 1992 by Cardinal Macharski in Krakow in co-operation with the bishops of Europe, as well as with the representatives of Jewish organisations. It was from within a time of tension that our Centre was born. Some of you will remember this. The tension has long since past and no longer remains but it was a painful moment in Jewish Christian relations. Our Centre was one of two buildings which was the outcome of those times – a Centre for Dialogue, Prayer, education and reflection as well as a new monastery for the Carmelite nuns.

The aim of the Centre is to create a place for reflection, education, sharing and prayer for all those who are moved by what happened during WWII. The house is open to everyone.

We welcome people from all over the world. We have guest house accommodation and all is ready for you. We work in close cooperation with Museum Auschwitz, the Jewish Heritage Centre in the town of Oswiecim, the Youth Meeting House, and other local organizations as well.

We plan the programmes for groups and individuals who come. Most stay from 3 to 5 days here. We have peace groups, interfaith groups, schools, colleges and universities. We organize some retreats, seminars, and conferences and occasionally it is possible to create some partnerships among conference participants from different countries.

I would like to thank you for coming and perhaps in the future we may see some of you again in the Centre for Dialogue and Prayer.

Let us now begin our day in Oswiecim at the edge of Auschwitz with the Meditative Moment.