



COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR JEWISH FILM

Pope John Paul II in Israel.

Judaism as an elder brother

Film examines changing Jewish-Catholic relations

By Daniel M. Kimmel

In "I Am Joseph Your Brother," we meet a nun who recalls walking in Jerusalem and being accosted by a Jewish woman who demands she remove her cross, a symbol she despises. The nun, who has an advanced degree in church history, is flabbergasted. What would cause this Jewish woman to react in such a way? What she learns of

leaders and theologians have begun rethinking the place of the Jewish people in their worldview. If this seems like something far removed from ourselves, consider the long path traveled from Theodore Herzl, who was rebuffed by the Vatican when he looked for support for a Jewish state – unless the Jews agreed to convert! – to the full diplomatic recognition that occurred in the 1990s. As one person puts it, Jews may not need to learn about Catholicism, but

one might say that the Church has been undergoing a process of "teshuvah," of recognizing past wrongs, apologizing for them, and making attempts to see that they do not occur again.

The anchor for this hour-long film is John Paul II's visit to Israel, a marked contrast to Pope Paul VI's visit, in which he did everything he could to avoid acknowledging the existence of the Jewish state. We also see him visiting a synagogue in Rome and addressing the congregation, the first pontiff ever to do so. The film's title, "I Am Joseph Your Brother," comes from the Genesis text John Paul II quoted on the occasion of his synagogue visit. This movie documents the amazing and positive changes that have taken place in the relations between Catholics and Jews.

Movie Maven

the history of the Catholic Church and its relations with Jews astonishes her, and she's not alone.

This 2001 documentary focuses on the changes over the past few decades as the Vatican slowly but deliberately reexamined its long history of oppressing and persecuting Jews, and began changing course. Starting with Vatican II and continuing with Pope John Paul II's historic visit to Israel, the Roman Catholic Church has abandoned two millennia of denouncing Jews for a variety of imagined evils, and begun recognizing it as an "elder brother" to their faith.

This English-language Israeli documentary touches on issues of continuing contention, such as the role of Pope Pius XII during the Holocaust, but also

In Jewish terms, one might say that the Church has been undergoing a process of "teshuvah."

Catholics definitely need to learn about their Jewish roots. Another person notes that since they believe that Jesus was resurrected, he not only was Jewish, but he is Jewish.

What are particularly interesting are the contemporary interviews with priests and scholars who said that consideration for the Christian role in the Holocaust had never been part of their education, which is no

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"I Am Joseph Your Brother" is available through the National Center for Jewish Film for \$36. Public performance rights separately available. Call (781) 736-8600 or go to [www.jewish-](http://www.jewish-...)