

Rabbi Hector Epelbaum Marks Historic 60th Anniversary of "Nostra Aetate" with Visit to the Vatican

B'nai Torah Congregation Leader Participates in Global Interfaith Gathering and Presents Artwork to Pope Leo XIV

BOCA RATON, FL, UNITED STATES,
December 10, 2025 /

EINPresswire.com/ -- Rabbi Hector Epelbaum of [B'nai Torah Congregation](#),

the largest conservative synagogue in the Southeastern United States, joined Jewish and interfaith leaders from around the world last month at the Vatican to commemorate the 60th anniversary of "Nostra Aetate," the landmark 1965 declaration that transformed Jewish-Catholic relations and reshaped interreligious dialogue worldwide.

“

This anniversary reminds us not only of how far we have come, but also of the sacred responsibility we share to continue building bridges of understanding, respect, and peace.”

Rabbi Hector Epelbaum

Rabbi Epelbaum's participation underscored both the historic nature of the anniversary and the ongoing importance of strengthening ties between faith communities. Rabbi Epelbaum is also a member of the Boca Raton Interfaith Clergy Association (BRICA). His presence signified the progress made since "Nostra Aetate" rejected antisemitism, recognized the shared spiritual heritage of Jews and Catholics, and opened the

door for honest, respectful dialogue—while also highlighting the shared responsibility to continue fostering understanding in the decades ahead.

The international program – held from November 17-20, 2025 – was organized by Abarbanel University of the Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano in Buenos Aires and the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Vatican City. Delegates explored the evolution and impact of "Nostra Aetate," contemporary interfaith challenges, and the role of religious leadership in promoting peace. The itinerary included visits to significant religious and historical sites such as the Jewish Catacombs, the Fosse Ardeatine, the synagogue in the Jewish Ghetto, a Buddhist



B'nai Torah Congregation

temple, the Great Mosque of Rome, the Vatican Museum, and the Vatican Library. The delegation also met privately with Pope Leo XIV.

Throughout multiple roundtable discussions, participants examined the transformative influence of “Nostra Aetate” and its ongoing relevance. Before 1965, centuries of Christian teaching contributed to widespread hostility, persecution, and theological misconceptions about Jews. The declaration’s call for respect, dialogue, and shared learning marked a profound shift—one that has continued to shape communities and religious education worldwide.

Rabbi Epelbaum reflected on how these changes informed his own rabbinic development, noting his connection to Prof. Abraham Joshua Heschel through his teacher, Rabbi Marshall Meyer. Prof. Heschel, one of the most influential voices during the Second Vatican Council, played a decisive role in the creation of “Nostra Aetate, bringing intellectual depth and moral clarity to Jewish-Catholic conversations during a pivotal moment in history.

One of the most meaningful moments of the visit included the presentation of a gift from B’nai Torah Congregation to Pope Leo XIV. Created by artist and B’nai Torah Congregation member Janette Kulvin Oren, the artwork symbolizes peace, unity, and interfaith friendship. It features a dove with an olive branch, the words “Shalom” and “Pax,” a palm tree representing Florida, and the verse from Psalm 133: “How good and how pleasant it is for brothers and sisters to dwell together in unity,” in both Hebrew and English, along with B’nai Torah’s logo. Pope Leo XIV received the gift with admiration and gratitude.



Rabbi Hector Epelbaum



Artwork to Pope Leo XIV

"Nostra Aetate remains one of the most important moments in the history of Jewish-Christian relations," said Rabbi Epelbaum. "This anniversary reminds us not only of how far we have come, but also of the sacred responsibility we share to continue building bridges of understanding, respect, and peace."

Rabbi Epelbaum's visit to the Vatican stands as a significant milestone in his rabbinic career and reaffirms B'nai Torah Congregation's commitment to interfaith collaboration and community leadership.

About B'nai Torah Congregation

B'nai Torah Congregation is the largest conservative synagogue in the Southeastern United States with over 1,300 membership families. It is a close-knit, multi-generational, modern, and egalitarian synagogue, which offers diverse services, programs of worship, learning, tzedakah, social action, and social activities. B'nai Torah Congregation creates a perfect outlet for arts, culture, and learning, and we are home to several schools of Jewish education. The synagogue, which offers a wide variety of volunteer opportunities that will enrich the synagogue experience, is a tremendous and vibrant center for tzedakah acts and projects that touch thousands of people. Learn more at <https://btcboca.org>.

Melissa Perlman

Bluelvy Communications

+1 561-310-9921

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Facebook](#)

[X](#)



Rabbi Epelbaum and Pope Leo XIV

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/873897831>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.