

## CONFERENCE PROCEEDING

*The Lifting of the Excommunications  
of Bishops Ordained by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre:  
A Briefing and Panel Discussion*

Philip A. Cunningham, Director, Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations, SJU  
Michael J. Carroll, Director, Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs,  
Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Alan Iser, Executive Committee, Philadelphia Board of Rabbis;  
Adjunct Instructor, SJU and Villanova

Presented at St. Joseph's University, Philadelphia, PA, February 3, 2009

On January 21, 2009, Pope Benedict XVI lifted the excommunications of four bishops who had been ordained by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, founder of the Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX). These 1988 ordinations violated a papal prohibition, resulting in the excommunications of all involved. The SSPX rejects the ecumenical and interreligious outreach of the Second Vatican Council, which it believes contradicts Catholic "Tradition." It had requested the lifting of the excommunications, but had not renounced its rejection of the Council.

One of the four bishops, Richard Williamson, gave an interview in which he denied that the Shoah (Holocaust) had resulted in the deaths of six million Jews in gas chambers. This added to the controversy over the Pope's action, which for some called into question his commitment to a vigorous implementation of the Second Vatican Council declaration, *Nostra Aetate*. Rabbinical bodies in several countries, including Israel, Germany, and Italy, have withdrawn from scheduled events with the Catholic Church.

To update the St. Joseph's University community on these developments, the Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia, PA sponsored this panel discussion to explore the controversy.

Video Presentation: <http://rehost.sju.edu/ramgen/SJUevents/JewishCathfeb3.rm>

PowerPoint Presentation: <http://www.sju.edu/academics/centers/ijcr/pdf/SPXX.pdf>