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Joint statement to the media by the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts and the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston

Representatives of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts and the Jewish Community Relations Council met today at the offices of the diocese at 138 Tremont Street, Boston. The meeting followed the participation of the Episcopal Bishops M. Thomas Shaw, SSJE, Barbara C. Harris, and Roy F. Cederholm, Jr., in a demonstration before the Israeli consulate in Boston.

Attending were Nancy K. Kaufman, executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council; Geoffrey H. Lewis, president of the board of the JCRC; Rabbi Michael Menitoff, vice president of the Massachusetts Board of Rabbis; the Rev. Robert Tobin, Christ Episcopal Church, Cambridge; the Rt. Rev. M. Thomas Shaw, bishop of Massachusetts; and Kenneth Arnold, director of communications for the diocese.

The participants issued the following statement:

- “We had a fruitful discussion that has brought us to a better understanding of where each other stands on the issues that deeply concern our communities. We heard each other’s candidly expressed pain and concern about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- “Both sides affirm in the strongest terms the mutual regard each has for the other and the commitment to work together, as we have in the past, on issues of social justice and common concern, locally and globally.
- “We know that we will have disagreements about important issues, but our meeting today showed both the depth of our feelings and the urgency of our going forward together. We have lacked a venue in which to hold necessary discussions and agree that we must create an environment in which we can talk. We are in substantial agreement that we live together in this community and need to, indeed must, come to a better understanding of our differing perspectives.
- “We intend to move forward to have a more meaningful dialogue about the issues that concern our two communities. It is expected that we will enter the next stage of this dialogue with a broader meeting of representatives from the leadership of the Boston area Jewish and Christian religious communities before the end of November, to be organized under the auspices of the Massachusetts Council of Churches and the Jewish Community Relations Council. The date and location of the meeting has yet to be determined.
- “Both parties also agree that the eventual goal of this dialogue is to engage not only leaders but lay people in our various communities in a constructive educational process. We must know and learn to hear each other better.

- “Today’s meeting is important in many ways. Most critically, it is a statement to the religious community and the Boston community that Jews and Christians can and will talk together about the issues that matter most to them. We have begun a new dialogue. We look forward to continuing it, knowing that the subject is difficult but trusting in each other’s good faith, as this morning’s meeting so clearly demonstrated.”

The parties to the morning’s discussion agreed not to speak separately to the media.