

# **New edition of Holocaust survivor's book on Pope John Paul II issued**

WASHINGTON – After Polish-born poet, author and Holocaust survivor Lena Allen-Shore had her first private meeting with Pope John Paul II in 1996, her younger son, Jacques, told her, “You have to write an article. The title of the article should be ‘Building Bridges.’”

After additional meetings and correspondence with the pope, the “article” turned into a coffee-table book of more than 300 pages titled “Building Bridges: Pope John Paul II and the Horizon of Life.”

Flanked by Cardinal William H. Keeler of Baltimore and Archbishop Pietro Sambi, papal nuncio to the United States, Allen-Shore unveiled the third edition of her book at a reception June 13 at the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington.

The book was published by Cathedral Press, the publishing company of the Baltimore Archdiocese.

Allen-Shore, who is Jewish, is also a musician, composer, philosopher and innovative educator who uses the arts to draw students into the exploration of human values. She is founder of the Lena Allen-Shore Center for Human Potential in Philadelphia.

Her book combines an account of Pope John Paul's life, exploring his dramatic and poetic writings and the influences on his life during his Polish childhood and World War II experiences, with an account of her own life, including her experiences growing up in Poland and her Jewish family's narrow escapes from Nazi death camps – aided in part by sympathetic Christians and false Catholic baptismal certificates.

The book also includes excerpts from the pope's poetry and several poems Allen-Shore has written reflecting on the pope's life, character and mission.

The third edition – the first was completed in 2000 – adds a chapter on Pope John Paul's funeral and the texts of several letters the pope sent Allen-Shore over the years.

After reading the book in 2003, the pope wrote to Allen-Shore, "Thank you for seeing deep into my thoughts and understanding the intentions guiding my actions."

Archbishop Sambi praised the book's insights and said that "a poet sometimes can go more inside" than even a person's closest political allies or friends and capture the reality of the person.

Cardinal Keeler noted that, in addition to meeting with the pope several times at the Vatican, Allen-Shore was among the Holocaust survivors whom the pope met with during his 2000 visit to Jerusalem and, at the pope's invitation, attended the interfaith prayer meeting for peace convened by the pope in Assisi, Italy, in 2002.

The cardinal said the book's title, "Building Bridges," refers not only to Pope John Paul's efforts to build bridges between people of different faiths and cultures. "It also describes Lena's lifework," he said.

During the reception at the cultural center, Allen-Shore gave a dramatic reading of several excerpts from the book.

"Building Bridges" by Lena Allen-Shore is available for \$39.95 plus \$8 postage and handling from: Cathedral Press, P.O. Box 777, Baltimore, MD 21203; it can be ordered online at: [https://www.cathedralfoundation.org/book\\_bb.html](https://www.cathedralfoundation.org/book_bb.html).