

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 19, 2015

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**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY AN IDEAL SITE
TO VISIT DURING *WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES AND PAPAL VISIT***

**Family-friendly exhibition and iconic artifacts
celebrating religious liberty will be on view**

Museum open late September 26

The National Museum of American Jewish History (NMAJH) is pleased to announce that it will be offering several experiences to serve those who will be visiting Philadelphia to participate in Pope Francis's visit and the World Meeting of Families. **The Museum will be open until 8 pm on Saturday, September 26** to accommodate those who attend the Pope's historic address at Independence Hall.

"We are thrilled to be a part of this historic visit," says Ivy Barsky, CEO and Gwen Goodman Director of NMAJH.

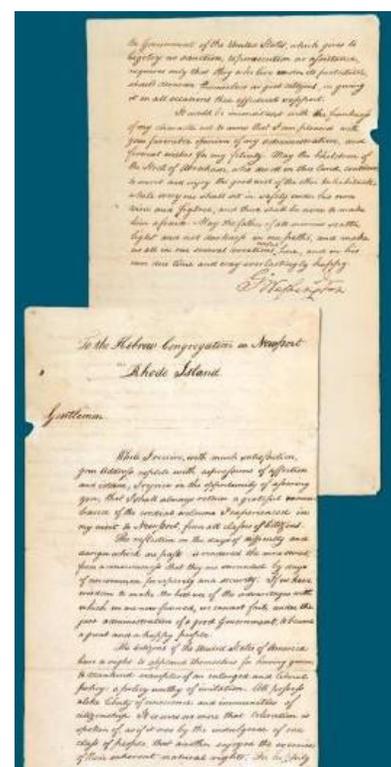
"So much of what Pope Francis teaches is echoed in our



Moses Jacob Ezekiel (1844 – 1917)
Religious Liberty, c. 1874-76
Photo by Jeff Goldberg/Esto.

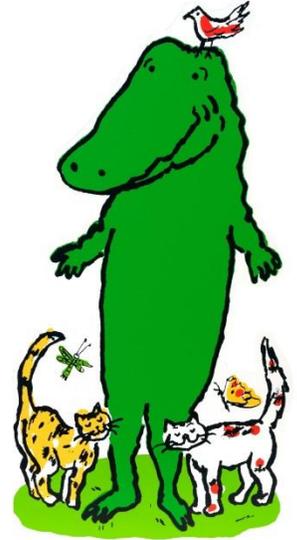
galleries. We believe that those who are inspired by him will also be inspired by the experiences we offer at the Museum.” Impossible to miss is the **Moses Ezekiel sculpture of *Religious Liberty*, which stands directly in front of the Museum, reaching a hand out to Independence Mall.** The sculpture, **carved from a single block of carrara marble in Rome**, was commissioned by B'nai B'rith for the U.S. Centennial and dedicated in Fairmont Park in 1876, rededicated for the Bicentennial in 1976, and in 1986 moved just north of the Museum, where NMAJH used to share its space with historic Congregation Mikveh Israel. The sculpture was finally relocated, through the generous support of Daniel and Joanna Rose, to its current site in front of the Museum on the occasion of its reopening in 2010.

Inside the Museum, visitors will have a unique opportunity to view **the original, iconic 1790 letter from George Washington to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, Rhode Island.** In the letter, to which NMAJH has been proud home for the past three years, and will be for another seven, America’s first president proclaims “the government of the United States ... gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance,” underscoring the new nation’s commitment to religious liberty and equality for people of *all* faiths. **Alongside this letter will appear the letter that George Washington wrote to the Roman Catholic community** (on loan to the Museum by the Archdiocese of Baltimore) to similarly assure that community of its rights as citizens. “We believe that the presentation of these documents side by side provides a profound affirmation of the importance of religious liberty in this country, and is a tangible testament to the values Pope Francis will be addressing while speaking in front of Independence Hall, just steps from our Museum,” says Josh Perelman, Chief Curator and Director of Exhibitions and Collections at NMAJH. **The documents will be on display side by side from September 22 – October 4.**



Courtesy of the Morris Morgenstern Foundation

For all of the families that will be in town during this time, NMAJH will be presenting family-friendly exhibition ***Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile and Friends***. Named for one of the more than three dozen books native Philadelphian Bernard Waber wrote and illustrated, the exhibition features a broad selection of original illustration art and preliminary sketches for his now classic picture books. The whimsical characters in Waber's books address values that will be celebrated during the World Meeting of Families, including the importance of friendship, sharing, and family. The exhibition opens August 27 and **will be on view through November 1**. Children 12 and under will, as always, enjoy free admission.



A self-guided tour of the core exhibition highlighting the centrality of family in Jewish American history will be provided to all visitors.

Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile and Friends: The Art of Bernard Waber is organized by The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, Amherst, Massachusetts. Support for the organization of this exhibition has been generously provided by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Major support for this exhibition at NMAJH has been provided by Hallee and David Adelman, Jen Mendel and Fred Fox, the Louis and Bessie Stein Foundation Fund #2 Audrey Merves, Trustee, and the Solomon and Sylvia Bronstein Foundation. Additional support by Lee Meyerhoff Hendler, Elaine L. Lindy, and The Rittenhouse Foundation.

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The National Museum of American Jewish History, located on historic Independence Mall in Philadelphia, brings to life the 360-year history of Jews in America. Tracing the stories of how Jewish immigrants became Jewish Americans, the Museum invites visitors of all backgrounds to share their own stories and reflect on how their histories and identities shape and are shaped by the American experience. An open door for all, NMAJH honors the past and contributes to a better future by sharing the power of imagination and ideas, culture and community, leadership and service, in ways that turn inspiration into action.

The National Museum of American Jewish History is located at 101 South Independence Mall East at the corner of Fifth and Market Streets in Philadelphia. Museum hours are Tuesday to Friday, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, and Saturday and Sunday 10:00 am - 5:30 pm. NMAJH is closed most Mondays, including federal holidays and some Jewish holidays. Museum admission is \$12.00 for adults, \$11.00 for senior citizens and youth, free for children 12 and under, Museum Members, and active military with ID. For more information, visit NMAJH.org or call 215.923.3811.