

News Letter

ORDO EQUESTRIS SANCTI SEPULCRI HIERSOLYMITANI

THE EASTER MEDITATION OF THE GRAND MASTER

The appalling beheadings of our 21 Orthodox Coptic brothers in Libya rightfully induced both worldwide shock and increased fear on behalf of the Christian Faithful in the Middle East. And the massacres are far from over, with leadership in the Western world seemingly helpless or unwilling to take effective action.

For us believers and more, Knights and

Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, the thousands of martyrs in Syria, Iraq and Libya, might bring to mind the prescient words of Pope Francis at the Sepulchre of the Lord's Death and Resurrection. In that historic pilgrimage to the Holy Land last May our Pope chose to mark the "culmination" of his sacred journey "in the company of my beloved brother in Christ, His Holiness Bartholomaios":



The Order in Union with the universal Church

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IMPRESSUM

GRAND MAGISTERIUM
OF THE EQUESTRIAN ORDER
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"When Christians of different confessions suffer together, side by side, and assist one another with fraternal charity, there is born an ecumenism of suffering, an ecumenism of blood, which proves particularly powerful not only for those situations in which it occurs, but also, by virtue of the communion of the saints, for the whole Church as well. Those who kill, persecute Christians out of hatred, do not ask if they are Orthodox or Catholics: they are Christians. The blood of Christians is the same."

The 21 martyrs locked arms as they marched to their deaths, each praying, "Jesus help me".

Where can such Faith be found in our soft Western Culture? Up to now, we are not faced with anything resembling such barbaric challenges, but day in and day out, moral compromises too often erode our witness to the Living Jesus among us.

An ecumenism of suffering, an ecumenism of blood is also being lived out in the countless thousands of Christian refugees in Jordan, Palestine, and so many

other places – many of their loved ones murdered, all because of their faith in Jesus. The root and source of this ecumenism, that which binds us together with them in the one Christ is our sacred Baptism.

As he offered prayer at the Basilica Pope Francis cited the relevance of that Holy Sepulchre for every Christian, and particularly, I would hold for us with special devotion to the empty tomb: "Each of us, everyone baptized in Christ, has spiritually risen from this tomb, for in baptism all of us truly became members of the body" of Christ.

Throughout the Easter Season, our Sacred Liturgy will often call us to ponder the meaning of our Baptism into Christ and to stir up the baptismal embers of grace that await us in abundance.

May the ecumenism of blood and suffering which we share with our brethren in the Holy Land prod us to be more convincing witnesses to our unity with them and with all the members of Christ's Body.

Edwin, Cardinal O'Brien

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The Order in Union with the universal Church

IN THE FACE OF PERSECUTIONS: "LET US NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PRAYER!"

During the Way of the Cross at the Coliseum, and throughout the Paschal celebrations, the Holy Father launched a heartfelt appeal for persecuted Christians, these "martyrs of our time, more than in the first centuries", crucified and killed before our eyes in a "complicit silence". He spoke widely for "the defense and protection of our brothers and our sisters persecuted, exiled, killed, beheaded for the mere fact of being Christians", calling on the international community "not to look away", "not to stand by, mute, inert, at such an unacceptable crime, which constitutes a worrying drift away from the most basic human rights".

Faced with the violence against Christians in the Middle East, Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants live a true "ecumenism of blood". During his Lenten message, Pope Francis urged us to resist the "globalization of indifference" – which particularly affects those faithful of Christ discriminated against on the land of their ancestors – and proposed a concrete initiative of "24 hours for the Lord", on 13 and 14 March, to show the necessity of prayer in order that "we do not get caught up in this spiral of distress and powerlessness" as we are flooded with news reports and troubling images of human suffering.

"We can pray in communion with the Church on earth and in heaven. Let us not underestimate the power of so many voices united in prayer!", he insisted, in speaking of this initiative which was largely observed by the dioceses, in particular with the assistance of members of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre who also help by acts of charity. Thanks no doubt to the permanent attention the Holy Father pays to our persecuted brethren living



A family of refugees from the Middle-East which hopes, one day, to return to the land of their ancestors (photo Aid to the Church in Need).

in the vast area of the biblical territories, more specifically in Iraq and Syria, the UN Security Council recently decided to hold a meeting on the defence of Middle Eastern Christians threatened with extinction, chaired by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs. In an interview with radio Vatican, the Director of Aid to the Church in Need in France had "some reservations about these attractive statements" by shedding an interesting light on the situation: "Unfortunately, we have to acknowledge that, for the moment, there is a kind of unanimous consensus to continue to support and fund all jihadist mercenaries in eastern Syria with the primary aim of overthrowing Bashar al-Assad". Regardless of this cynical geopolitical opportunism, the Pope draws worldwide attention to the plight of these innocent people, victims of a real religious cleansing. Let us implore the Lord with him that "this persecution against Christians which the world tries to hide, may end", in also thanking these brothers in faith for their testimony of hope.



TWO NEW PALESTINIAN SAINTS

During the Consistory of Cardinals gathered in Rome with Pope Francis in February, the date for the canonization of the two Palestinian saints was announced. On 17 May 2015, Sister Marie Alphonsine, foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Rosary, and Sister Mary of Jesus Crucified, founder of the Carmel of Bethlehem, will be proclaimed saints for the Church (see their portraits in our previous newsletter). From Rome, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Fouad Twal, expressed the joy of the whole Catholic community of the Holy Land which rejoices at the canonization of two Palestinian daughters

from the Patriarchal Diocese of Jerusalem: "They are for us our light and consolation amidst the difficulties that are ours".

The Patriarch rejoices that the Diocese can rely on the example and the prayer of these two Disciples of Christ, and thanks all those who have been involved in making their testimonies known. He invites all those who can, to join in the festivities which will take place in Rome and in the Holy Land on the occasion of these canonizations, especially the members of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. The reading of Mgr Twal's very beautiful pastoral letter entitled "On the way to holiness" at www.lpj.org, is recommended.

EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE DEDICATED TO DIVINE MERCY

During the penitential celebration "24 hours for the Lord" on Friday 13 March, the Pope gave us a surprise: on the occasion of the second anniversary of his election as Bishop of Rome, he announced the opening on 8 December, on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, of a special Jubilee dedicated to Divine Mercy. It will run until Sunday 20 November 2016, on the Feast of Christ the King. This Jubilee requested by Francis will start just after the Synod of Bishops on the Family, and will mark the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council (Misericordiae Vultus: www.vatican.va).

Blessed Paul VI, during the last session of the Second Vatican Council, on 7 December 1965, gave the merciful Samaritan as a model for the renewal of the Church. "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful". (Lk 6:36). Each one will therefore have the opportunity of responding personally to the call of Christ to live accordingly in community. On the occasion of this Holy Year, all pilgrims - including members of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre - will experience this first through the sacrament of reconciliation, which will enable them then to become the hum-



ble and joyful witnesses of this mercy. In this great ongoing persecution of the holy Church from Pakistan to Nigeria through Libya, Syria, and Iraq, the successor of Peter feeds his sheep through the many tribula-

tions. May this Jubilee "bring comfort to every man and every woman of our time", as Francis hopes, by reminding us that "God forgives all and God forgives always" (Homily 13 March 2015).

MEMBERS OF THE ORDER AMONGST THE NEW CARDINALS

Among the new cardinals created by the Pope during the Consistory of February, four of them are members of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. Our prayer accompanies them in the mission entrusted to them to support the action of the Holy Father in the service of the universal Church. They are: the Patriarch of Lisbon, His Eminence Cardinal Manuel José Macário do Nascimento Clemente - Grand Prior of the Order in Portugal since 2013 - His Eminence Cardinal Edoardo Menichelli, Archbishop of Ancona, His Eminence Cardinal Francesco Montenegro, Archbishop of Agrigento, as well as His Eminence Cardinal José de Jesús Pimiento Rodríguez, Emeritus Archbishop of Manizales in Colombia, absent from Rome at the time because of his great age. By a motu proprio from Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, Grand Master of the Order, dated 14 February 2015, each of them is heretofore a Knight Grand Cross.

FRANCIS IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF BLESSED BARTOLO LONGO, KNIGHT OF THE ORDER

During the recent trip of Francis to Campania, we liked his prayer before the tomb of Blessed Bartolo Longo, Knight of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, in the Marian shrine which this apostle of the Rosary had built near the ruins of ancient Pompeii, destroyed by an eruption of Vesuvius. Bartolo Longo, a converted lay man who went through a phase of spiritualism, created orphanages and schools, manifesting, in this way, the social fruitfulness of the Christian faith and its power of love. With this spiritual patronage, the Pope urged the population of the region

to react against crime, reminding them that, for a Christian, evil never has the last word.

"A Spring of hope" rightly headlined the *Osservatore Romano* after the Pope's visit to Pompeii, and Naples, the hell of "Gomorra". His meeting with the children of the very poor area of Scampia in the Neapolitan suburbs touched people, as the children ran and surrounded him, like Jesus in the Gospel. His unique ability to relate to people touched all hearts deeply, beyond words, displaying a goodness that is noiseless. "If you cannot see hope, then find it within you", could be our synthesis of the message deliv-





Pope Francis in Pompeii, in silent prayer before the body of Blessed Bartolo Longo, Knight of the Holy Sepulchre, servant of the poor, and Apostle of the Rosary.

ered to the poorest inhabitants of this Italian city stricken by unemployment and endemic corruption.

Let us invoke Bartolo Longo, the only lay

member of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre beatified to this day, so that his example of prayer and charity may inspire us every day on the way to holiness.

THE HOLY SHROUD, MIRROR OF THE GOSPEL AND ICON PAINTED WITH BLOOD

For those who, like the Knights and Dames of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, root their own vocation to holiness so radically in the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Shroud is an additional opportunity to contemplate the infinite love of the Father: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).

The Shroud is, in fact, a linen cloth bearing the image of a man who died after a series of acts of torture and crucifixion. According to tradition, this cloth is the one that was used to wrap the body of Jesus after He was taken down from the Cross. In a very tender and profound way, John Paul II during his visit to Turin in 1998, called the Shroud "the mirror of the Gospel".

Benedict XVI, a pilgrim at

the 2010 exhibition, offered this explanation to what could be a simple cloth, but is, in reality, much more: "How does the Shroud speak to us? It speaks with blood, and blood is life! The Shroud is an icon painted with blood; the blood of a man scourged, crowned with thorns, crucified and wounded in the right side. The printed image on the Shroud is that of a dead man, but the blood speaks of his life".



May the exhibition of 2015, at the end of this Lenten journey, be a time to meditate again, in the joy of Eastertide, on the importance of the Cross and the empty tomb in the life of each member of the Order.

For more information on the organisation of the exhibition which will be held from 19 April to 24 June in the Cathedral of Turin, please visit the official website: www.sindone.org.



Proceedings of the Grand Magisterium

A NEW INTERNET SITE FOR THE GRAND MAGISTERIUM

The website of the Grand Magisterium of the Order, integrated within the website of the Holy See, is now presented in a renewed format with easier navigation.⁽¹⁾ Another result of the work undertaken by the Communication Service and the Internet Service of the Holy See: a new website of the Grand Magisterium, more autonomous, is being developed and should be released in the autumn, on the occasion of the opening of the Jubilee of Divine Mercy. The existing site will continue to provide historical information concerning the Order and will refer to the new site – directly managed by the Communication Service of the Grand Magisterium – for everything related to current events.

⁽¹⁾ http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/institutions_connected/oessh/index_en.htm

WHEN WE SEE THE PROJECTS FINISHED...

The on-site visit of the Holy Land Commission in March

In March the Holy Land Commission of the Grand Magisterium of the Order performed one of its regular on-site visits to assess the progress of the projects approved each year by the Grand Magisterium and also to study the feasibility of projects for 2015. As for the finished projects, it is always a great joy to be able to see the positive effects of the improved structures fi-

nanced in previous years. Such effects are the smiles and the joy of these children (in the photo) who are now in one of the new classrooms of the Institute in Mafraq, where building works took place last year to add an additional floor level.

During these visits, the members of the Commission – composed of the President Thomas McKiernan (USA), Heinrich



Dickmann (Germany) and Bartholomew McGettrick (Scotland) – do not miss the opportunity of meeting all the people who work on a daily basis with the local Christian communities. During the March visit, the Commission met Mgr Giuseppe Lazzarotto, Apostolic Nuncio in Israel, Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Custos of the Holy Land, and Claudio Maina, Director of

the Secretariat of Solidarity for the Holy Land.

In Tel Aviv, the Commission was also able to meet with the Jesuit Father David Neuhaus who talked to them about the important work which is taking place within the Hebrew-speaking Catholic community in connection with the integration of migrants and asylum seekers.

MGR SCICLUNA, KNIGHT, ARCHBISHOP OF MALTA

When he was Auxiliary Bishop of Malta, Mgr Charles Jude Scicluna received the investiture from the hands of the Grand Master of the Order on 17 December 2014, in the chapel of the Grand Magisterium in the Palace Della Rovere (our photo). He was appointed Archbishop of Malta on 3 March by Pope Francis. We entrust his pastoral intentions and those of his diocese with such a rich historical and spiritual heritage to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Palestine.



FORTHCOMING APPOINTMENTS OF THE GRAND MAGISTERIUM

The spring meeting of the Grand Magisterium will be held in Rome, at the Palace Della Rovere on 21 and 22 April 2015. It will include the report of the President of the Holy Land Commission on projects completed or underway. The Meeting of European Lieutenants will take place on 11 and 12 May, whilst the Meeting of the American Lieutenants will take place in Quebec from 4 to 6 June 2015. Our next newsletter will report on these three important events in the life of the Order.



The Order and the Holy Land

THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM LOOKS AFTER THE MIGRANTS

An interview with Father David Neuhaus, Jesuit, Patriarchal Vicar for Hebrew-speaking Catholics in Israel, and Coordinator of the Pastoral care of migrants

Father Neuhaus, one of your responsibilities is to coordinate the pastoral care of migrants in Israel. On 9 May 2015 the Apostolic Nuncio will preside at a Mass in honour of Our Lady Woman of Valour in the Centre for Migrants of which members of the Order generously contributed to its construction. Under the preferential option for the poor, which is the heart of the mission of the Church, how can this event be described as historical?

We have decided to institute a feast each year on 10 May (or the Saturday closest to it). Our Lady Woman of Valour is a representation of Our Lady as protector of the migrants in Israel. This is the name of our new Pastoral Centre, opened in February 2014, and largely funded by the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre. The icon written for the centre says it all: Our Lady gathers all the migrants under her cloak. Many of these migrants are strong women who

have been forced to abandon their homes and families in order to support them financially. This 9 May, the Saturday closest to 10 May, the Nuncio in Israel, Mgr Giuseppe Lazzarotto will celebrate this feast for the first time. We hope that this will be the occasion to show that the Church of Jerusalem is deeply concerned with these faithful, migrant workers and asylum seekers, and she gathers them to console them, encourage them and speak out for them.

The small Hebrew-speaking Catholic community of which you are the senior pastor, consisting of about 800 people, is very committed to the service of the many migrant Catholics who form a larger community, which is also Hebrew speaking but

of precarious status. They share the daily realities of the predominantly Jewish Israeli society. Can you describe the relationship between the two communities that share the same faith in Christ, and

of precarious status. They share the daily realities of the predominantly Jewish Israeli society. Can you describe the relationship between the two communities that share the same faith in Christ, and



Icon of Our Lady Woman of Valour, protector of the migrants in Israel.



*The Pastoral
Centre for
migrants,
built through
the
generosity of
the Order.*



tell us how the presence of migrants in Israel has evolved since the 90s?

Today, in Israel, within Jewish Israeli Hebrew speaking society, there are two communities of Catholics. There is a small and diverse community of Catholics who are citizens. Most of them are related to Jews (spouses of Jews, children of Jews) and others are Jewish converts to Catholicism or Catholics who live within Jewish society because of their work or mission. They number about 600 to 800 people, spread out in seven parish communities principally in the big cities of Israel.

There is another group of Catholics, much larger in number, which lives in this same milieu. About 60 - 70 000 Catholic mi-

grant workers and asylum seekers, predominantly Asian and African, they are not citizens but long term residents. Although they speak only a little Hebrew to facilitate their work, and they pray in their mother tongues (Tagalog, Konkani, Sinhala, Malayalam, and Tigrinya), their children are Hebrew speakers, born and raised in Hebrew speaking Jewish society. The Hebrew speaking Catholic communities are called to reach out to this huge Catholic population, sharing the few resources they have and educating their children.

All the Hebrew speaking communities are now deeply engaged in reaching out to the migrant communities.

Interview by François Vayne

A CHRISTIAN MEDIA CENTRE TO FACILITATE THE TRANSMISSION OF NEWS FROM THE HOLY LAND

On 18 December, during the Christmas Press Conference of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, the new Christian Media Centre, requested by the Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land, was presented. Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Custos of the Holy Land, explained that this Centre "despite many difficulties, is designed to be an incentive to fulfil the expectations of the world as regards the message of the Holy Places and bring an increased awareness on the reality of the on-going situation, avoiding any form of partiality". This new Centre, run by the Custody, but available to all Christian Churches in Jerusalem, also plans to coordinate and support the various Christian Media which already cover news on the Holy Land and which work on site.



The life of the Lieutenancies

TO ASSIST THE CREATION OF NEW LIEUTENANCIES

Testimony of the Swedish Lieutenancy

"Our young and small Lieutenancy cannot boast of a greater or longer experience than other Lieutenancies. However, either directly or indirectly, we have been involved in a process that led to the creation of some of the other European Lieutenancies.

On the basis of this experience, we believe that two main factors contribute to the creation of a Lieutenancy: a sufficient number of potential candidates wishing to join the Order, and the support of another Lieutenancy which is active and works well.

Our Lieutenancy was founded in November 2003 by the Grand Master at the time, Cardinal Carlo Furno. The whole process was supervised by Bo Theutenberg, who was then Lieutenant for Sweden and is now a member of the Grand Magisterium. Our colleagues in England and Wales greatly helped us by giving of their time to meet us and teach us how to run a Lieutenancy of the Order. Our English colleagues also organized our first investiture ceremony in Stockholm, which took place in September 2004 with His Beatitude Michel Sabbah, Grand Prior of the Order at that time.

At the beginning, Norwegian members were also invested in our Swedish Lieutenancy. Very quickly however, with the increasing number of suitable candidates, our dynamic and dedicated Norwegian colleagues were able to create their own Magisterial Delegation.

Then, since two members of our Lieutenancy were of Croatian origin, we took the

initiative several years ago to found a new Magisterial Delegation in Croatia, a country where some four million Catholics live. This initiative was entrusted to the Archbishop of Zagreb, Cardinal Josip Bozanic, five years ago and we are hoping that this process will soon lead to the creation of a new group of the Order in this country, the fatherland of Blessed Cardinal Aloysius Stepinac, Knight of the Holy Sepulchre.

At present, our Lieutenancy is helping Danish Catholics to found a Lieutenancy in their own country. For many years we had been looking for suitable candidates to form the basic structure of the future Lieutenancy. Last year, an historic investiture ceremony took place in Stockholm: two new Danish members joined the Order. The next investiture of the Swedish Lieutenancy will take place in Copenhagen, Denmark, with more Danish candidates.

Finally, we are proud to mention that our Lieutenancy also supported the creation of the Magistral Delegation of the Czech Republic, thanks to the personal involvement of our Lieutenant, Stefan Ahrenstedt with Mgr Jan Graubner, the current Grand Prior and Dr Jiri Pořízka, our present Magistral Delegate.

In conclusion, we can say that several new Lieutenancies were created thanks to the personal initiative and the commitment of the members of the Order. The two critical factors for the success of this process are firstly a sufficient number of potential members and secondly the support of another Lieutenancy".

We invite Lieutenancies to send us an account of how their members experienced Holy Week and celebrated Easter. Contact us to share your experiences in our next Summer 2015 Newsletter: comunicazione@oessh.va