

JUST HOW BIG
IS OUR ORDER?

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del Vaticano
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NEW
LIEUTENANCIES

News Letter

ORDO EQUESTRIS SANCTI SEPULCRI HIEROSOLYMITANI

Dom. Peter Damen O.Praem.
Provost of the Norbertine Convent in Oosterhout, Netherlands

DEATH AND RESURRECTION

Men die.

No matter how deeply it affects us, and how painful it is, it happens.

Death of the body is a natural process; it is part of our existence.

*“As for man, his days are like grass; he flowers like the flower of the field;
the wind blows and he is gone” (Psalm 103:15ff.).*

Man is on earth to cultivate and build (Gen. 2:5) and to die.

The book of Genesis tells us the first man was created naked, and thus vulnerable. This is true of the first man, Adam, and of the second, i.e. Jesus Christ. But this is man as God wanted and chose him to be.

Indeed, dust... dust to dust. But not simply dust: dust sculpted by God. Man must not seek his essence only in himself. Dust is just an opening for the spirit, a way of orienting ourselves towards God.

Hence man destroys himself – which is only a different word

for sin - when he turns his back on God, wanting to live for himself and himself only.

When a man lives only for himself, turned in on himself, so that he does not even wish to be with God, that man is naked and vulnerable and lives as if he were dead. Of course, when man ignores God's calling, breaking off the relationship with God and thereby renouncing his destiny, that is a different kind of death from the death of the body.

When man sins (sin means turning away from God) then

that man takes his own life.

The result of sin is not that man dies a bodily death, but that death, a much deeper kind of death, penetrates his life.

Adam experiences death, not as the natural process of dust returning to dust, but as jealousy, as an assault on humanity itself.

In this way, life and death suddenly take on a totally different meaning from the one you would first expect. Both say something about God's attitude towards man and the destiny this entails.

“I have set before you life and





death, therefore choose life". (Deut. 30:19). Hence sin, i.e. death, is the selfishness of the human being, because it prevents him from rising to help in God's creation. Whenever God does not live in man, there is death. Whenever God lives in man, there is life.

Jesus Christ, the second Adam, fulfilled the destiny of Adam the man... Within Him, earth and the whole of mankind were moulded to the Promised Land and the Heavenly Kingdom. Jesus chose life. Throughout His earthly existence, He turned to his fellow man. His life fulfilled God's desire to be with us human beings and to be there for us. To Him, choosing life means helping your fellow man to live a better life – which is the same as love – and this becomes

the basis for our existence. If you can only love yourself, then you're alone and your life is stripped of meaning, leaving it naked and vulnerable. When man accepts his fellow man he acknowledges his existence. He acts in a way that is faithful to what God wanted from the beginning. Love says "yes" to one's neighbour and gives him a name. Love accepts and calls one's fellows by their names. Love makes the other person receptive; makes it possible to reach him.

If God breathes His breath into me, if God gives me His Spirit, the soul of His existence, it is my duty to continue God's original plan of creation for my fellow men.

Yet still death comes, the oh so natural death of the body.

I experience this death as an invasion of the life that displays this loving approach to God. When I love someone, I want that person to be by my side. I wish that person to live and not to die. Love and friendship demand our presence. When a loved one dies, it tears apart what was meant to be together. Destruction of a loved one's presence causes unbearable pain. So the question arises: is death then truly stronger than life or love?

Man knows the inner conflict between dust, selfishness and the approach to his fellow man. He knows the strain between choosing to be alone and choosing to love, the strain of the original choice between life and death. "I say to you ... choose life". It is a fact that those who



love give life. That means understanding each other and, through mutual understanding, both sides are able to live and breathe. Those who abuse love fear dying and death, because their life becomes empty and unbearable.

Each one of us knows intellectually, but also in our hearts, that our fellow man can only exist when we give him room to be himself and don't judge or want power over him. That was Cain's choice, that got the upper hand in the first garden. Genesis 4 says, "It is better that I am alone".

We should think seriously about this, to make sure that, even subconsciously, we do not share this inclination.

In the beginning there was a man – Adam – and he was alone. But a voice called Adam by name, and that voice was Eve. She became the mother of all life.

For does not life mean being called by name or being called into existence? In the Garden of Eden, human beings were called by their names.

We find this calling by name again in that other garden, where a man called the woman by her name and called her from the brink of death to life! Mary Magdalene became a tree of life in the middle of the garden.

At once, Mary Magdalene understood that to give life to another, you cannot hold on to it for yourself.

If Jesus could leave His heaven behind Him so that He could feel like us and reach out to us, then she certainly could not hold on to life or she would be abusing it.

She went... She had seen the Lord. In the spirit of Psalm 27, she might say, "I have seen His soul, His dream, His spirit of origin. I have seen; understood and recognised: it is the soul, the dream of God, in Him and through Him in me".

When Jesus was in the synagogue at Nazareth and was given the scroll, He knew that God's spirit would guide Him in His earthly life and He knew that that is true for everyone.

Everyone is God's dearly beloved child. Jesus had to die because He carried a vision within himself: a vision that rose against everything that fills man with a fear of any religion that keeps man submissive and frightened, a vision that rose against kingdoms, no matter who was their ruler. Jesus says, "Stand up! Rebel! because you are destined to live". The vision of a kingdom not of this world; in other words the vision of a world where there is resistance to every form of death. All of Jesus' life was focused on this vision and gave Him the strength to sacrifice His life for it. This must have been a very hard struggle for Him. Only in God's nearness to Him and His receptiveness to God helped Him be true to his task. Such

love was able to conquer death; it was even stronger than death. And what of us? Do we choose life, do we opt for what it is that makes us human? Do we choose a life that goes against our quest for power, against our quest for superiority, against all forms of strength that desire to diminish and rule mankind?

Whenever we opt for life Jesus will arise, and we will live a different kind life from our mortal life, which comes but also goes.

Here we can begin to create a little bit of heaven on earth.

"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Lk. 18), is not a question about how to reach the hereafter. It is a question about how to experience the hereafter in this life, a question of how to discover the hereafter through this earthly life. Eternal life is a quality of life, something we already possess. If we have love then we have God here and now. We can rise up like Mary Magdalene did; she saw that eternal life is here and now, that here on this earth eternal life can already help us pass from death to life. Resurrection is: Living and dying in the knowledge "that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rm. 8:38-39).



*The Catholic Church in the Holy Land
is a many-faceted, mirror image of the Church's history
and by no means as uniform as in
most countries where the Order works for the Holy Land*

THE STRUCTURE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE HOLY LAND

The last Newsletter showed that in the Holy Land, from a proportion of 20% in 1914, the number of Christians in the population has dropped to the lowest limit at which statistics are measured.

And Catholics are only a part of that figure. Mgr. William Shomali, who supplied the article "The Christians in the Holy Land" in Newsletter No. 2, now describes the composition of the Catholic community.

What strikes us is that the Catholics appear in five different Churches and with five different names, known as "denominations": as well as the Latins (we would say "Roman Catholic") there are also Melkites, Maronites, Syrian Catholics and Armenian Catholics. These four additional Churches have their own independent liturgies. However, their roots lie in the early divisions of the Church's history and are often related to important direction-changing decisions taken by the Vatican Council.

Pastoral care for the members of these five Catholic groups is provided by a total of 154 parish priests:

67 parishes in Jordan

56 parishes in Israel and

31 parishes in Palestine

The Melkites have the most parishes, 72, of which almost half (33) are in Israel and 31 in Jordan. For the Catholics of Latin rite there are 66 parishes: 33 in Jordan, 18 in Palestine and 15 in Israel. In comparison with these, all the 11 Maronite, 3 Syrian and two Armenian Catholic parishes look very basic indeed.

The majority of Christians (which therefore includes Catholics) are Palestinians. However, in Israel there are also four Catholic societies, similar to parishes, that use the Hebrew language and are under the care of the Latin Patriarchate. Still other parishes serve foreigners in:

Jerusalem

(for Africans, Germans, French, Austrians, Filipinos and Poles

Jaffa

(for Filipinos and Rumanians)

Amman

(for English-speaking people).

The high ratio of parishes in comparison with the number of Catholics – statistics show an average of approx. 1,900 believers per parish in Israel and Palestine – presents the Church authorities with a heavy workload. How many Priests are available? Altogether, there are 163 diocesan priests working with Catholics of all denominations, i.e.

86 Latins, 62 Melkites,

11 Maronites, 3 Syrians and

1 Armenian.

In addition to the diocesan clergy, orders play an important part; just take, for example, the effect of the Franciscans on the Holy Land or the Sisters of the Rosary, who are so very much involved in so many schools, or the Benedictines on Mount Zion. The number of people who belong to orders



soon becomes extremely impressive. The most recent figures show:

Male orders 549

Female orders 1,158

Members in the same area of the Holy Land.

The majority of members of the various orders live in the Palestinian Territories:

in male orders in Palestine 343

in Israel 187

and in Jordan 19

in female orders in Palestine 588

in Israel 365

and in Jordan 205

To maintain the Christian presence in the Holy Land, the Churches consider a good education system to be essential. Therefore, the Churches themselves manage 65 schools (42 are run by Latins, 20 by Melkites and one each by the three other denominations). Another 68 schools are managed by religious societies. If we take all the schools together, the territorial picture is as follows:

51 schools in Palestine

38 schools in Israel and

44 schools in Jordan.

In accordance with its Constitution (Article 2, paragraph 2), it is the particular purpose of our Order to sustain and aid the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, but we must certainly not forget that the Catholics of all five denominations are our brothers and sisters in the Faith.



HELP IS AT HAND “WHEN THE WOLF’S AT THE DOOR”

The Cardinal Grand Master’s appeal for additional support for Humanitarian Aid echoed the fact that many Christians in the Holy Land need some relief from their hardships. In 2002, the Holy Land Commission of the Grand Magisterium made around 90 transfers, together totalling US \$666,000 to get things moving in the Holy Land. Those who received the aid were, to a very great extent, private individuals or parish priests. For all these payments, the Commission required a formal receipt.

To distribute the monies, 27 different local institutions were involved. Chief of these was the Latin Patriarchate, which distributed 53% of the total sum. Amongst those to whom aid was distributed were the Greek

Catholic Patriarchate, the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate, Caritas Jerusalem, Bethlehem University and the Baby Hospital. In the last year, pleas for help have concentrated increasingly on medical aid. In the case of major operations, such as heart transplants or kidney operations, that require considerable sums, the Holy Land Commission has followed the policy of making available a substantial part, but not the whole of the amount needed. In that way, it has succeeded in involving other institutions in providing the remaining finance necessary. Mgr. Shomali of the Latin Patriarchate has been especially helpful, and very successful, in this regard.

The Commission also observed that it often takes too long in

cases of real need for the transfer from our Order to reach the place where the money is required. The Grand Magisterium has therefore now agreed to arrange a permanent emergency fund of US \$150,000 in the Latin Patriarchate, from which the necessary sum can be made available immediately.

One final item of information: at the end of March 2003 the Holy Land Commission had at its disposal US \$140,000 of emergency aid. This clearly shows that for the mounting needs of the Holy Land not enough money is available. Is it any wonder then, that we are appealing urgently for further, substantial support? As a preacher once said: We can’t take our savings with us when we go – but we can send them on ahead.



*In 2002, the Equestrian Order
of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem increased
by 7.15% to 22,978 members – regional breakdown –
the biggest Lieutenancies – the United States
has most Lady members*

JUST HOW BIG IS OUR ORDER?

Anyone who studies the information about our Order carefully will become more and more amazed that for a large part of our sodality very different figures are often quoted. This is not due to any wish to keep secrets nor to a desire to boast, but simply to the fact that in recent years the Order has grown considerably. Hence, older figures are always smaller than those that are more up to date.

Naturally, it is very difficult to give the exact size, because each Lieutenancy only reports once a year. The Grand Magisterium bases its calculations on the previous year's figures and includes the new members invested in the current year. However, the Knights, Ladies and Ecclesiastics who pass away during the year in progress cannot yet be taken into account; and it is even harder to establish how many members are actually active.

On the basis of the calculations described – in fact, the figures will always be slightly lower, especially because of deaths that occur during the period in which reports are received – at the end of 2002, the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem had **22,978 members, divided as follows:**

**12,796 Knights,
7,407 Ladies and
2,775 Ecclesiastics.**

The smallest Lieutenancy is Finland, with 15 members. The two biggest are in the United States: USA Eastern with 2,223 members and USA Southwestern with 2,211.

The biggest Lieutenancies in Europe are in Italy: Italia Centrale (before it was divided) with 1,953 members, Italia Meridionale, with 1,202, and Germany with 1,171 members. Next comes Italia Settentrionale with 1,080 members.

55.2% of all members live in North America (USA, Canada, Mexico and Puerto Rico), with 41.8% in Europe, 1.1% in Australia and 1.9% in South America and Asia.

The Order has 7,407 Ladies, of whom 5,226 (70.6%) live in the United States.

Twelve Lieutenancies have over 100 ecclesiastics each, the majority in Italia Centrale (278), USA Southwestern (234) and USA Southeastern (215).

After all these figures based on the provisional statistics, one question, however, is still outstanding: How great is our inner development – the strengthening of our spirit – our increased support for the Holy Land – our positive involvement in all the activities of the Order? Only He knows the answer to that, who knows us better than we do ourselves.

We hope that His answer is satisfactory...



NEW LIEUTENANCIES

*In two regions of the world,
territorial boundaries have recently been redrawn
for purposes of administration and, in so doing,
two new Lieutenancies have been created*

On 1 November 2002 the Cardinal Grand Master founded the

**Lieutenancy of Australia –
South Australia.**

The Lieutenant is H.E. Anthony George Nemer in Adelaide. The Grand Prior is H.E. Archbishop Philip Wilson, also in Adelaide.

In the middle of January 2003 the Cardinal Grand Master divided the Lieutenancy of Italia Meridionale into two Lieutenancies. Moreover he transferred Sardinia to the Lieutenancy of Italia Centrale, which is now reflected in its name.

The newly designated Lieutenancies are:
**Lieutenancy of Italia Meridionale
Adriatica**
under the leadership of the existing

Lieutenant, H.E. Avv. Francesco Zippitelli and Grand Prior, H.E. Archbishop Francesco Cacucci, both in Bari, and the new
Lieutenancy of Italia Meridionale

Tirrenica

whose leaders are the newly appointed Lieutenant, H.E. Prof. Avv. Gaetano Dal Negro, from Naples, and the Grand Prior, H.E. Beniamino Depalma, Archbishop of Nola, also newly appointed.

**Lieutenancy of Italia Centrale
e Sardegna**

where there are no changes in the leadership.

We hope the Lord will freely bless the activities of both new Lieutenancies and give all the members the will to work wholeheartedly for the Order's objectives.

IMPRESSUM

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Editor: AGOSTINO BORROMEIO
Co-Editor: OTTO KASPAR





THE DAILY PRAYER OF THE CHILDREN AT THE CRÈCHE IN BETHLEHEM

Dear God,
we love You very much.
Teach us to love all people,
let us grow up and be wise.
Dear God, bless all those who love us.
Dear God, give us Peace, the Peace...
Dear God, take away the tanks
and bring back the cars,
show the soldiers the way of love.

يا رب نحنا بنحبك كثير،
علمنا اتحب كل الناس،
و اجعلنا تكبر و نكون عاقلين...
يا رب بارك كل اللي بحبونا...
يا رب امنحنا السلام، السلام...
و ابعده عنا الدبابات و رجعلنا السيارات،
و حط الحب في قلوب الجيش.