

BUILDING PROJECTS
FOR THE YEAR 2004

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HUMANITARIAN AID
A REFLECTION

News Letter

ORDO EQUESTRIS SANCTI SEPULCRI HIEROSOLYMITANI

Osservatore Romano vom 21. April 2004:

MIDDLE EAST: UNITED STATES BISHOPS APPEAL TO BUSH TO ENGAGE IN DIALOGUE

“New steps to revive the peace process in the Holy Land” – that was the appeal made by Mgr. Wilton Daniel Gregory, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Bishop of Belleville, in a letter sent to U.S. President George W. Bush on 16 April.

The Bishops deplore the “violence and repression, suicide bombings and aggressive responses”. The letter goes on, “Palestinian attacks on innocent civilians cannot be tolerated”, nor is there any justification for “the Israeli occupation of the Territories and the repressive measures adopted”... “U.S. engagement is [essential] in order to help both sides take the neces-

sary steps to rebuild hope that peace is possible and pursue the aims of the Road Map”. Further, “Christian leaders in the Holy Land are especially concerned about the security wall, which is ‘a grave obstacle’ to peace”. The Bishops say they know that “both peoples want peace and reconciliation” and for this “they need strong support from the international community,

especially the United States”. Taking a firm stance against the “unilateral” plan for withdrawal from the Territories finalised by Israeli Premier Ariel Sharon and recently agreed with Bush during a meeting at the White House, the letter states, “A just and lasting peace will not be possible if the United States acquiesces in unilateral initiatives that undermine these goals”.



HUMANITARIAN AID – HAND-OUTS OR HUMAN DIGNITY?

*Address by Father Pietro Felet
President of the Secretariat of Solidarity
of the Jerusalem Apostolic Delegation
at the meeting of the ROACO, giving a brief illustration
of the dramatic situation of families in the Holy Land
and the way that must be taken to help them,
our brothers and sisters in Christ*

Governments, associations and foreign benefactors sent material or financial aid to buy food for Palestinians who have no work. Tons of food have been distributed. Often the food that is donated is chosen according to the eating and cultural habits of the donors or the calorific needs of countries with different climates.

Palestinians have their own culture and their own culinary traditions.

At breakfast, a European will consume bread, butter, jam, a brioche, coffee and milk. A Palestinian will eat zaatar, falafel, zeit, zeitoun and will drink tea. The choices made by our local

organisations and by many diocesan or religious communities tend more toward the need to provide an unemployed person with work so that he can earn his own bread in a dignified manner, or else to supporting small projects that will involve the Christian population in their implementation.

Dioceses, religious houses, schools, all use the money they receive not as hand-outs to be distributed, but to create work. This line of action must not be considered an improper use of the aid received. An action that creates the opportunity to work is an action supporting human dignity.

Hand-outs are soon spent and condemn a human-being to laziness and idling, obliging him to become dependent on aid. A worker values the money he has earned through his own sweat more than that received in hand-outs; it lets him feel independent, it maintains his dignity and gives him some assurance for the future.

So, let's have less hand-outs and more work.

A little less bread, but more money to invest in activities that will help to lead to a more dignified life.



THE ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM AND HUMANITARIAN AID IN THE HOLY LAND

Since the beginning of the second Intifada, the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, the first of all the Catholic organisations in the Holy Land to intervene in order to help Christian families in difficulty, has carried out a project aimed at identifying the most urgent needs of the moment. In the past three years, tourism has been virtually non-existent. The Intifida and lack of tourists are amongst the factors contributing to the poor economy and income generally being on the poverty line. In these conditions, how can families with no income continue to pay their rent or afford medical aid and attention? How can they buy food and water, utilities and other living essentials?

As soon as the other Catholic and Christian institutions also organised themselves to provide humanitarian aid to the communities as well as to the needy-families, a Commission was created to co-ordinate their efforts. Headed by the President of the Secretariat of Solidarity of the Apostolic Delegation of Jerusalem, the participants include representatives from the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem,

Caritas Jerusalem, the Pontifical Mission, etc. It is this commission's duty to identify the most urgent needs and to define priorities for the assistance provided through the humanitarian organisations and the parishes of the Latin Patriarchate, which are efficient advisors on meeting the families' needs. To date, our Order has distributed over US \$2 million to cover the primary needs of the families, to create jobs, even if only temporary ones, allowing unemployed people to earn a salary rather than assisting them by way of financial aid that humiliates the recipient or accustoms them to relying on aid. As well as the kinds of assistance already mentioned, free medicine, provision of hospital treatment and surgical operations all allow Christian families in difficulty to survive in a dramatic situation rather than being forced to abandon their homeland. We would like to highlight a few cases of medical assistance that we think represent real help, over and above the financial aspect.

PROGRAMME TO SUPPLY MEDICINES

In co-operation with the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the German Lieutenancy and Mr. Michael Wirtz, a Knight Commander in the Aachen section and Chairman of the well-known German pharmaceutical company, Grünenthal, a new fund was created to distribute medicines through eight pharmacies in Ramallah, Beit Sahour, Jericho, Bethlehem, Beit Jala, and Jerusalem. Many centres (Latin Patriarchate, Caritas Bethlehem and Jerusalem, Sisters of Charity and Sisters of St. Joseph in Bethlehem and the different parishes) are authorised to give poor patients a form that allows them to go to one of the above-mentioned pharmacies and obtain free medicines. "The medicines are given for one month, renewable as long as is necessary. If the prescription is expensive, the patient is advised to go to an insurance company. The pharmacies taking part in this programme expect to receive the minimum cost. To date around 6,500 patients have taken advantage of this programme.



HELP FOR SURGICAL OPERATIONS AND HOSPITALISATION

Hundreds of human lives were saved thanks to the help of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre. One of their funds covered hospital expenses for poor patients.

Just a few examples may help to appreciate what has been done:

Nathirah, a 60-year-old lady from Beit Sahour, had a painful operation: the removal of a brain cyst. She was unable to walk and had cognitive disorders such as poor short-term memory and concentration. She received rehabilitation services at the Bethlehem Arab Society for Rehabilitation. She was helped because she is a widow and her two sons are unemployed.

George is a 42-year-old man from Bethlehem. He had suffered eye problems since 2001. He was treated at the Bethlehem Arab Society. After several courses of treatment and many examinations, a brain tumour was found and has been treated in St. Petersburg, Russia, with the help of the Knights.

Faris was a 11lb 12oz premature baby born to a loving family in Bethlehem. He stayed in one of the incubators for the Hospital of the Family/Bethlehem for 90 days. He is fine now.

Anton, a ten-year-old boy, is one of four children in a family from Ramallah. He was diagnosed with leukaemia after a bone marrow examination and received intensive chemotherapy. The treatment cost \$4,000.

Elias is an unemployed 68-year-old man with cancer of the lung. He lives in Beit Sahour with his wife and two daughters who are students. His surgery was performed at the Makassed Islamic Charitable Hospital, Jerusalem. He needed radiation and chemotherapy. It was done in the Italian Hospital in Haifa. Accompanied by his wife and daughter, they were hosted during the duration of the treatment in the Saint Charles Hospice in Haifa.

Saydeh is a lovely girl from Bethlehem who is from a devout Christina/Syrian Orthodox family. She had a successful kidney transplant in Egypt, which cost \$27,065. Her father, a teacher, was assisted by another agency but there was a balance of \$11,000. The Order paid the \$11,000.

Karimeh is 45 years old and lives in the West Bank village of Beit Jala with her husband and four children. She has battled against thyroid cancer since 1992, when she underwent both chemotherapy and remedial surgery. Karimeh was physically weak and required regular examinations and long-term medication. Her doctor recommended a one-off radioactive iodine treatment instead of continuing Thyroxin medication. Karimeh's husband works at a small factory in the village where he receives less than \$225 per month. This meagre income is gravely insufficient for a family of six. The Order paid for Karimeh's treatment.

Mishleen is a 39-year-old mother of three from Bethlehem. Since the start of the Intifada, she has worked outside the home as a teacher in order to supplement her husband Rubi's steadily declining income. Formerly very busy, he now finds very little work in Bethlehem as a taxi driver. The family lives in a small, two-roomed house. In addition to his own household expenses, Rubi supports his elderly parents who are ill and require full-time care and regular medical attention. These financial restrictions were further challenged by the discovery of an enlarged tumour in Mishleen's brain. One year ago, she experienced convulsive seizures which were successfully controlled by medication. However, her condition necessitated a



full anaesthetic and ventilation. An operation was recommended. The cost of surgery was \$9,250. A good part was covered by the Order.

Ricardo lives in Bethlehem. He is 47 years old, a husband, and the father of two school-aged children. Ricardo is the sole breadwinner for his family. Prior to the Intifada, he worked as a day labourer in Jerusalem, but has been unemployed for over two years due to the closure of Bethlehem. Ricardo suffered from a cancerous bladder tumour for which he has been treated for two years. Tests showed that the tumour was spreading towards the kidney. Doctors recommended operation as soon as possible. The total cost \$2,676 at St. Joseph Hospital, Jerusalem was paid by the Order.

o Issa returned to Bir Zeit, Palestine in 1990 after the Gulf War. He lost all his property due to unstable conditions and decided to return home and start from scratch. But since 2000 he has been unemployed. Issa's wife had four children. Two of them died because of anaemia. Juana passed away when she was 14 and Christina when she was 8. Both were born with blood disorders. Their third daughter, Jiana, a lovely 12 year old was in hospital with the same problem. She urgently needed injections to save her life. Those injections helped her build up stronger immunity. The father could not afford to pay for these expensive injections as they cost \$341 each.

Nicolas from Beit Jala is now 9 years old and the only boy among six sisters. Five years ago, he was a student in the Latin Patriarchate Kindergarten when he was hit in the hand by an Israeli bullet and had a seven-hour operation to save his hand. After several days, gangrene set in and Nicolas had to have his hand amputated. Life will never be the same again for this little boy. He was helped by the German Lieutenancy, which paid for an artificial hand and makes a regular donation to the family.



BUILDING PROJECTS APPROVED BY THE GRAND MAGISTERIUM FOR THE YEAR 2004

At the meeting of the Grand Magisterium on 20 April 2004, His Eminence Carlo Cardinal Furno decided to reduce to a minimum the building projects of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem in order to give preference to Humanitarian Aid.

Only eight schemes will now be carried out.

A list with further details is given below.

As you can see, the German Lieutenancy has already stated that it will adopt two projects. All Lieutenancies are requested to examine their resources and invited to share with the Grand Magisterium in covering the costs of a project (or a specified part of such costs).

Please, contact the President of the Holy Land Commission of the Grand Magisterium,

Mme. Elisabeth Verreet,
Lady of the Collar
Forsthausweg 1,
D-40667 Meerbusch,
Tel. *43-213-22013,
Fax *49-213-24601.

1. Rafat (Israel)

Estimate:

US \$40,000

In Rafat there is a large piece of real estate in the possession of

the Latin Patriarchate (5 kms from Tel Aviv airport). On this land there is the sanctuary of "Our Lady, Queen of Palestine"; next to it a presbytery, a convent and a primary school for girls. Earth movement had caused many cracks to appear in the walls of the buildings. The foundations were strengthened. Cardinal Furno, Grand Master of our Order, would like to create a centre for the Order in Rafat. The Patriarch would like to set up a youth centre there too.

2. Hosson (Jordan)

Renovation of presbytery

Estimate:

US \$69.850

There is an urgent need for renovation. A new priest is now in charge of the parish.

Considering the fact that no organisation finances the presbyteries or convents for the sisters, it is left to the Order of the Holy Sepulchre to ensure fitting and sound accommodation for the priests and nuns. The Lieutenancy in Germany has taken over the financing of this project.

3. Old Kerak

(South Jordan)

Restoration of convent

Estimate:

US \$24.200

Renovation includes repairs to the roof, repair of damage caused by water, replacing windows, electrical wiring and sanitary installations. The Lieutenancy in Germany has taken over the financing of this project.



4. Salt

Estimate:

US \$20,000

Construction of an elevator for elderly nuns in a building with four floors.

5. Jifnah (Palestine)

Convent

Estimate:

US \$27,000

Repairs to the roof, new sanitary installations and further modernisation are urgently required.

6. Nazareth (Israel) –

Building containing

office for the

administration of

the diocese (next to the

Bishop's house)

Total costs:

US \$180,000

A recently purchased house next door to the Bishop's house in Nazareth is to be converted into an administration centre.

Further financial participation on the part of the Order

US \$13,000

7. Ajloun (North Jordan)

Multi-purpose hall

Estimate:

US \$210,000

We should not forget that the Christians in the Holy Land are living in a Muslim or Jewish environment. It is, therefore, urgently necessary that the parish priest has access to a hall in which pastoral activities with the young people of the parish can be developed.

This project is highly recommended.

8. Jaffa de Nazareth

(Israel)

Application:

US \$50,000

It should be noted that the State of Israel covers follow-up costs for Catholic kindergartens and schools.

In Jaffa de Nazareth the kindergarten and the school are in urgent need of enlargement.

The Order's participation in this project in 2004 is US \$50,000

Total amount for the Order of the approved projects:

US \$454.050



FROM THE HOLY LAND

*Extracts from the report of H.B. Michel Sabbah
presented to the Grand Magisterium at its session
on 20 April 2004:*

PILGRIMAGES

Over the last year, with the visits by Bishops' delegations from France and then from Italy, pilgrimages have recommenced, but they have not reached their usual scale. Most groups, often accompanied by their bishops, came from France and Italy, though there were a few from elsewhere.

Ecumenical delegations also visited, mainly from the United States of America and Scandinavian countries.

Members of the Order also came, either as part of a diocesan group or on a pilgrimage arranged by the Order.

We received members of the Order from Strasbourg in France, another group from the Auvergne, and a third group that included Philippe Husson, Member of the Grand Magisterium.

A group from England came with the Lieutenant, Michael Whelan and there was a group from Scotland with their Lieutenant, John Maguire. A group from the USA Northwestern Lieutenantcy came from San Francisco with their Grand Prior William Levada and

the Lieutenant John H. McGukin, Jr., and there was also a small group from Germany with H.E. Prof. Dr. Paul Oldenkott.

The Austrian Ambassador to the Holy See, Walter Greinert (who received the Pilgrim Shell) was accompanied by Monsignor Walter Brandmüller, President of the Papal Commission for Historical Sciences) and the Austrian Ambassador in Tel Aviv.

SCHOOLS

The financial situation remains difficult. The "adoption" scheme has already borne fruit, but not yet enough to cover the total deficit. The shortfall resulting from the first year of the Intifada (2000/2001) took us by surprise and was repeated in the following year, so we are still in deficit. We have used up all our savings and reserves (even the employee benefit funds...). We are in deficit and we have no reserves left.

I would like to add a more optimistic note. The number of students in the schools of the Latin Patriarchate has increased noticeably this year, as we have given instructions that no student should be refused because he or she cannot pay the fees. The latest statistics, at 1 September 2003, were as follows:

In Israel: 2,226 students, an increase of 82. Over 80% of the students are Christian.

In Jordan: 10,593 students, an increase of 857. Over 75% are Christian.

In Palestine: 4,945 students, an increase of 31 new arrivals.

The schools in Palestine (except Nablus and Gaza, which are towns with a Muslim majority, where the Christians are less than 2 in 1000) have 64% Christian students. The percentage drops if the two schools mentioned are included. The Christian presence in these towns is important for Christian witness and to promote harmony between the two communities. That is also the reason why we have agreed to build a kindergarten in Jenin.



WHERE DOES THE NAME “PALESTINE” COME FROM?

The name Palestine refers to the people of the Philistines, who lived on the coast of the Mediterranean around 1000 BC. That's why the southern coast (now the Gaza Strip) was called "Pilaschtu" in the Assyrian texts of the 8th century BC. From the Greek historian Herodotus it transpires that the concept of "Palestinian Syria" covered the whole length of the coast between Phoenicia (modern Lebanon) and Egypt. The Greek concept of "Palaistine" was then transformed to the Latin "Palaestina". After 135 AD the Romans extended the Latin concept to the whole province in order to obliterate memories of the Jews following the Jewish uprising against the Roman Empire. The name of Jerusalem was also changed, to "Aelia Capitolina". Jews were forbidden to enter the city or its surroundings.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

At the time of Christ's birth, Palestine was a province of the Roman Empire. After the latter fell, it became part of the Byzantine Empire. In 638 Jerusalem was conquered by the armies of the second Caliph Omar Ibn al-Hattab. In 691 the Moslems erected the Dome of the Rock on Temple Mount. Around the year 1000, the conflict between Islam and the states that succeeded the Western Roman Empire was carried into Palestine by the crusades and the creation of the crusader states. From 1516 until the end of the First World War the region formed part of the Ottoman Empire. After the fall of the Ottoman Empire England and France took possession of the areas they had negotiated in the Sykes-Picot Settlement: France took the Lebanon and Great Britain Palestine. At the League of Nations Conference in San Remo in 1920, Palestine was officially handed over by Great Britain, the victorious power, as a mandated territory. On 26 May 1923, Abdullah Ibn Hussain, a son of the Sharif

of Mecca, founded the Arab Kingdom of Trans-Jordan east of the River Jordan – now the State of Jordan. After the end of the Second World War the question again arose as to the future status of Palestine. In 1947, the UN suggested a partition plan to divide the territory and create a Jewish State and a Palestinian State. The State of Israel as we know it today was founded in 1948.



ACTIVITIES OF THE SCHOOLS COMMISSION

The Schools Commission met in Rome, at the seat of the Grand Magisterium, from 26 to 28 February 2004. Amongst the matters they discussed, paid particular attention was given to:

- finalising the programmes aimed at improving the professional formation of teachers;
- preparations for the convention

to take place in Jerusalem when possible, which will deal with issues relating to future prospects for Christian education in the Holy Land;

- the particular importance of Christian education for the peoples of the Holy Land.
- Professor Bart McGettrick, the President of the Commission,

then spent some time in the Holy Land in order to collect information and make the necessary contacts to implement the proposed schemes. During the subsequent meeting of the Grand Magisterium, which took place in Rome on 20 and 21 April 2004, Professor McGettrick reported on the Commission's activities.

US NORTHWESTERN LIEUTENANCY PILGRIMAGE

From March 2-12, 22 members of the Northwestern Lieutenancy (USA) participated in the Lieutenancy's first official pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 15 years. Responding to a call to pilgrimage by the Lieutenancy's Grand Prior, Archbishop William J. Levada of San Francisco, at the 2003 Annual Meeting in Portland, H.E. John H. McGuckin, Jr., the Northwestern Lieutenant, organised a Pilgrimage of Faith which included the Holy Places in Israel, the Palestinian Territories and Jordan. The youngest pilgrim was 12 years old, the oldest 80. The Grand Prior, the Lieutenant, the Chancellor and Ecclesiastical Master of Ceremo-

nies of the Lieutenancy accompanied the group to the Holy Land.

The purpose of the pilgrimage was twofold. First, the pilgrims prayed at many of the Holy Places, celebrating the Holy Eucharist in Bethlehem, Nazareth, the Holy Sepulchre and the Garden of Gethsemane. At a Mass held at the Empty Tomb before dawn, the Knights and Ladies renewed the vows they had taken at their investitures to defend the Faith, sustain the Christian Community in the Holy Land and lead exemplary lives. At many of the liturgies, the pilgrims were joined by representatives of the Palestinian Christian Community, inclu-

ding children's choirs who sang in Arabic at the Masses.

The pilgrimage's second purpose was to meet with Palestinian Christians and assure them of the love and support of the Equestrian Order. Beginning with an audience with His Beatitude the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem, the American pilgrims met, ate and talked with Palestinian students at Bethlehem University, nurses and doctors at St. Joseph's Hospital in East Jerusalem, and Christian grade school students at the Order-supported school in Jaffa of Nazareth. The group stayed at the Notre Dame Center in Jerusalem and used Christian



guides and bus drivers, ate at Christian restaurants and shopped at Christian stores. In addition, the pilgrims listened to distinguished speakers presenting a variety of perspectives on the current turmoil in the Holy Land.

For the first time, a pilgrimage of the Order visited the Christian communities in Jordan. After being welcomed by official representatives of the Jordanian government, the West Coast pilgrims visited Our Lady of Peace

Center in Amman, which aids the handicapped of the Kingdom, before proceeding to a joyous celebration at the high school of Wassieh and the Church of St. Joseph at Ader in southern Jordan. The school faculty, both Christian and Moslem, prepared an enormous feast for the American visitors, who toured the new school which was built with contributions from the Equestrian Order. The entire parish community at Ader attended a special Mass celebrated by Archbishop Levada and welcomed the

pilgrims individually in the church courtyard after the Mass.

At every stop on the pilgrimage, the Northwestern Knights and Ladies were welcomed with great hospitality and generosity. They never felt concerned about their safety. The pilgrims received continual assurances of the reliance which the Christian Community in the Holy Land places on the Equestrian Order and were urged to return.

SPECIAL POSTAGE STAMP FOR THE AUSTRIAN LIEUTENANCY'S GOLDEN JUBILEE

In 2004 the Austrian Lieutenancy will celebrate the 50th anniversary of its restoration after World War II and the Austrian Post Office has issued a special stamp to mark the occasion! The stamp bears a colourful drawing of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, surmounted by the symbol of the Order, the five-fold Cross (the Cross of Jerusalem) in red.

NEWS IN BRIEF

IMPRESSUM

GRAND MAGISTERIUM
OF THE
EQUESTRIAN ORDER
OF THE
HOLY SEPULCHRE
OF JERUSALEM
00120 Vatican City

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HUNGARY BECOMES A MEMBER OF THE EU MEMBERS OF THE ORDER MEET AT THE FRONTIER

The Hungarian Lieutenancy invited members of the Order in Hungary and Austria to a meeting on the day of the country's entry into the EU. Knights and Ladies from both nations met at Apátistvánfalva, near the frontier town of Szentgotthard on 1 May. The joyful meeting took place in an atmosphere of brotherhood and some new personal bonds were sealed. The highpoint was reached at 3 o'clock, when all the participants celebrated the Eucharist and gave thanks for the abolition of a border that had long acted as a barricade.

