
HOW THE PROJECTS
STAND IN 2004

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THE LANGUAGES
OF THE BIBLE

News Letter

ORDO EQUESTRIS SANCTI SEPULCRI HIERSOLYMITANI

The Holy Father speaks on peace

*On 18 September, the new Egyptian Ambassador to the Holy See,
H.E. Mrs. Nevine Simaika Halim Abdalla,
presented her credentials to Pope John Paul II.*

*This provided The Holy Father with the opportunity to emphasize
that negotiations were the only way out of the conflict in the region.*

Here are a some extracts from his address:

“... As the Holy See never ceases to recall in these troubled times, there can be no lasting peace in international relations unless the desire for dialogue gets the better of the logic of confrontation ...

... I once again remind the International Community of its responsibility to encourage the return to reason and negotiation, the only possible way out of conflicts between human beings, because all peoples have the right to live in serenity and peace ...

Religions have an important role to play in achieving the construction of peace. This mission is essential for humanity's future ...

... Egypt's prestigious al-Azhar University, which I have had the opportunity to visit, fulfils an essential function in the Muslim world and provides an opportunity for interreligious dialogue, especially between Christians and Muslims, to be continued and intensified ...

... With greater mutual esteem, Christians and Muslims will be better able to work together to serve the cause of peace and a better future for humanity.”



Interview with Cardinal Furno in “La Stampa” – 19 July 2004 – Vatican City

“It would be a weakness to eradicate our Christian roots”

Cardinal Furno:

“the lay nature of the States has not been discussed”

To eradicate our Christian roots from the new Constitution would be a glaring oversight and proof of Europe’s weakness. It’s like turning a blind eye and denying a fact that is obvious to the whole world”. This reiteration of the Holy See’s opposition to a European Charter that fails to mention Christianity comes from Turin-born Cardinal Carlo Furno, an authoritative voice in the Sacred College and career diplomat, who has served as Papal Nuncio in the Middle East, South America and Italy and is now Grand Master of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

Following his meeting on Monday with Premier Luis Zapatero, the Pope, in addressing the new Spanish Ambassador to the Vatican, again appealed to Europeans

not to forget the continent’s religious roots. What does his message mean?

“The Pontiff has repeatedly spoken out, saying that a Europe with 25 member States must not eliminate – but must rediscover – her own spiritual origins in order to be capable of confronting the enormous challenges of the third millennium: peace, dialogue between cultures and religions, safeguarding humankind. The peoples of the Old Continent cannot be united only by economics and politics. The lifeblood of the Gospels is needed to ensure that Europe will develop in a way consistent with her identity, that is to say, in freedom, solidarity, justice and peace. Unfortunately, however, laicism has been widely misinterpreted. Take French President Jacques Chirac, for example, who

put down the debate on religions in the EU Charter as nothing but an “outdated squabble”. On the contrary, anyone with common sense can see that position is untenable. It’s a misguided view. Recognising an undeniable historic fact doesn’t mean refusing to recognise today’s need for a fair kind of laicism in the States and thus in Europe.”

Not even if it were to present an obstacle to future partners?

“Cathedrals and convents are not a sign of exclusion and Europe’s Christian origin cannot be kept quiet for geopolitical motives. It is obvious that Christianity has been the religion that helped to shape the institutions of Europe. There are facts no one can alter, for instance that it was monks who originally founded



many of the schools and universities. Therefore it is profoundly unreasonable and erroneous to do away with our own history on the pretext of wanting to leave the door open to potential new member countries. The more so as mentioning Christianity in the introduction to the Charter certainly does not constitute a barrier to the entry of other nations such as Turkey, Israel or the Palestinian State. The past cannot be reinterpreted. Referring to these roots is the same as explaining the values that underlie the construction of Europe and describing her cultural and religious character. The Pope has always spoken of a Europe faithful to her Christian roots, not closed in on herself but open to dialogue and co-operation with the other peoples of the earth. A Europe aware of her calling to act as the beacon of civilisation and a stimulus to progress for the world.”

What risks do you see?

“The risks of a Europe that is looking to the future with an altered perspective of her Christian identity; in other words, the cement she needs to be and to remain truly united. Either Europe is Christian or she is not. As John Paul II pointed out, the values on which the countries of Europe are founded that constitute their spirit, it is these values that provide creativity and solidity at times of difficulty and in adversity. It is an error to allow them to be

neglected at exactly the moment when a new political system is coming into being in the old Europe. The leaders of the European Union have an enormous responsibility. They are dealing with the cultural and religious humus that gave birth to the continent. At the time when an enlarged Europe is acquiring new political instruments, we cannot obliterate the foundations which, down through the centuries, developed the humanism of which we are all proud and a noble concept of the human being. They are a decisive factor in integration and universality. This is not a minor problem, something symbolic or just a matter of flag-waving; it is a decisive question in giving the EU a spirit of its own. Reference to the Christian roots of the [member] States does not mean renouncing their laicism. It is the history, the roots and traditions of the very

great majority of the European peoples that are at stake. If a Europe of States and peoples is to exist it would be a serious matter if there were to be no room in the Charter for principles, ideals and values. That is why the Pope does not cease his exhortations to Europe, crying out to her in a voice full of love to remember her rich and fruitful Christian roots: Europe be yourself, find yourself once more, revive your roots”.

The Order's new Internet Site

The Vatican has recently assimilated our Order into its website. All the current information previously contained in the Order's website (history, Grand Magisterium, Lieutenancies, organisation, Constitution, headquarters, activities in the Holy Land, publications and events) now appear at the following address:

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/institutions_connected/oessh/subindex.html

This website is in Italian.

As well as the professional maintenance of the Internet presentation, being included in its official site is a public demonstration of the value that the Vatican places on our Order. We invite all members of the Order to visit this new website.



[From the Holy Land:]

How the projects stand in 2004

The sum the Grand Magisterium prudently set aside for projects was approximately \$480,000 thanks, on the one hand, to the needs of humanitarian aid and the schools and, on the other, to the fact that funding for the school at Jaffa (Nazareth) was not completely covered.

The Grand Magisterium guaranteed that it would not leave the Latin Patriarchate in the lurch if Jaffa could not be fully funded.

Insgesamt handelte es sich 2004 um acht Projekte.

1. **Jaffa (Nazareth):**

The project consists of two new kindergarten units and some 6 elementary classrooms to replace those that failed to meet the demands of the Israeli Ministry of Education. Work on the elementary school is finished and the other work will be completed by the end of the year.

Results are satisfactory and the number of pupils is rising perceptibly.

2. **Deir Rafat:**

renovation of the foundations.

Consolidation of the foundations of the Youth Centre mean that it no longer has to be demolished, but only needs refurbishment. This project has saved a building worth \$900,000.

(Project completed)

3. **Hosson:**

restoration of the presbytery.

The priest's house had not been restored for 40 years. The results are most satisfactory.
(Project completed)

4. **Kerak:** **restoration of the sisters' residence.**

(Project completed)

5. **Salt:**

elevator. The work is at the half-way stage. The external structure is presently being completed and the installation itself has already been ordered.

The elevator will serve the priest and the nuns who live on the 4th floor.

6. **Jifna :** **restoration of the nuns' residence.**

The sisters are satisfied. Thanks to site alterations, the number of stairs has also been reduced.
(Project completed)

7. **Nazareth:** **pastoral centre.**

This project has resulted in new facilities for the young people, for the ecclesiastic tribunal and the schools, as well as new guest rooms for the vicariate and a larger room for parish meetings.

8. **Ajloun:** **parish hall.**

Work has only just begun. Plans have had to be redrawn in order to stay within the budget of \$210,000.

Our thanks go to the Grand Magisterium, the Lieutenancies and the Holy Land Commission for their continual co-operation which makes these projects possible.



Jerusalem
Interview with the Nuncio
Monsignor Sambì

Christians in the Holy Land Builders of Peace

*“Jerusalem is the city chosen by God
to bring peace to mankind, but mankind is betraying this gift”.
Nonetheless, there are signs of a new presence.*

by **Giorgio Paolucci**

Will Christians disappear from the land in which Christianity was born? It is not a pointless question if one considers demographic trends and the political situation of the region. According to a study by Bethlehem University, since the 1967 war a third of the Christian population has left the Holy Land and Christians now account for only about 2% of the country: 150,000 people altogether. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict claims victims from both sides and makes the situation of this small community that has followed in the footsteps of Jesus for 2000 years ever more precarious. The Pope keeps on repeating (though no one listens to him) that there will be no peace in the Middle East until the knotty problem of the Holy Land is

solved. On the terrace of the Papal Nunciature looking out onto the Mount of Olives the Nuncio, Monsignor Pietro Sambì, sighs, “Jerusalem is the city chosen by God to bring peace to mankind, but mankind is betraying this gift. The key to coexistence for the believers of three religions lies here, the key that can become a sign of reconciliation for the whole world: that is why the Pope calls on us unceasingly to pray and asks the international community to intervene to confront the problems that the two parties at odds cannot resolve. There will be no peace whilst each of the opposing parties claims to be always right and puts all the blame on the other. Peace begins when truth emerges, when people recognise that there is something more impor-

tant than their own point of view and each side plays its part with an awareness of its own responsibilities.

Tourism halted

The unstable political situation, terrorist attacks and construction of the wall, which has blocked attacks by suicide bombers but at the same time complicated daily life for hundreds of thousands of people, have lately slowed down the economy in the Palestinian Territories. But for the little Christian population things are still worse: the second *Intifada*, which began in September 2000, with its spiral of attacks and military reprisals, has provoked a steep drop in pilgrimages to the Holy Land, its former main



source of income. Hotels closed, restaurants half empty, no work for the craftsmen in Bethlehem who specialise in producing religious artefacts, and the hundreds of souvenir shops in Jerusalem and Nazareth facing a crisis. “Fear has halted religious tourism, but in the seven years I have been here I have never heard of a pilgrim becoming a victim of the violence”, explains Monsignor Sambì. “For several months now there have been signs that things are starting up again, but it is not enough. The presence of pilgrims supports the economy of the areas where there is a concentration of Christians and is a check on emigration. It helps them to feel part of a big family that has no geographical limits – the Church – and to preserve *its* roots in the land where Jesus was born. Unfortunately, after the beginning of the second *Intifada*, whilst the international Jewish world displayed great solidarity towards the Jews in Israel and the Islamic world did the same towards the Muslims who live here, the Christians, who previously came in large numbers to visit the Holy Places, disappeared into thin air. It is not a question of defending the particular interests of one of the three parties involved, but of helping to support an element essential to coexistence: the Christians have vital relationships with the other two religious communities and demonstrate a view of life that places human dignity at its centre, so they can assist

in building bridges (rather than walls) by spreading a perception of reconciliation that could help to put an end to the spiral of mutual retaliation. If they are weak it is a net loss to everyone”.

The gift of pardon

Supporting the Christian presence means contributing to the peace process and Monsignor Sambì expressed his congratulations on the inauguration of the headquarters of the *Compagnia delle Opere a Gerusalemme* (from which he received a delegation in September). This organisation has laid the foundations of a presence noted above all for its financial co-operation with Israeli and Palestinian businesses and its support for educational enterprises. For instance the House of Lazarus in Bethany, the only orphanage for girls in the Territories administered by Arafat, where 32 young Muslim girls are cared for by Samar Sahhar, one of the town’s few Christian women. The girls (who have no parents or whose parents have abused or ill-treated them) think of her as their real mother and she, a member of the *Memores Domini*, treats them like daughters. “Virginity is the fruitfulness of God”, she smiles, quoting *her founder* Don Giussani. Samar’s example is catching, as she helps her “daughters” to face life with a positive outlook, even when it brings them unspeakable suffer-

rings. “Like what happened to Fatima”, she says, “whose mother ill-treated her for years before abandoning her on the street and who has been living her only a few months. A while ago she came with us to the church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and said she wanted to ask Jesus for a present. When we came out she told me, ‘I asked him to forgive my mother’”. Inside the House of Lazarus a new coexistence between Arabs and Israelis is putting out shoots. In Bethany, two thousand years after the resurrection of Lazarus, miracles are still happening.



Vice-Governor General George T. Ryan submits his resignation

*At a meeting in Rome of the Grand Magisterium
of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem,
on 19 October 2004 H.E. George T. Ryan,
noting the end of his term as Vice-Governor General and member
of the Grand Magisterium, submitted his resignation.*

Er He expressed his gratitude to His Eminence Carlo Cardinal Furno for his appointment and the opportunity together with all the members of the Grand Magisterium to help maximize the potential of the mission of the Order. His Excellency expressed his pleasure at having worked with H.E. Knight of the Collar Ludovico Carducci Arsenio and H.E. Pier Luigi Parola, as Governors General, with His Beatitude and Monsignor Shomali and all the members of the Grand Magisterium.

His Eminence Cardinal Furno thanked H.E. George T. Ryan for his service to the Order and announced that he would appoint him Vice-Governor General of Honour

H.E. George Ryan, who served as Lieutenant of the Northeastern Lieutenancy, was an advocate for the establishment of the Justice and Peace effort of the U.S. Lieutenants in 1998 and was responsible in 2001 for the establishment of the Annual Meetings of the North American Lieutenants. The North American Lieutenants are now in active communication regarding programs and progress. The Lieutenancies have their own websites and are linked to a central site. H.E. George Ryan promoted the program now in place for annual financial audits for the Rome office and for the North American Lieutenancies. He also has been a strong promoter of additional sources of revenue to more fully support the schools and the works of the Order in the Holy Land.

IMPRESSUM

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Editor:
AGOSTINO BORROMEO
Co-Editor:
OTTO KASPAR



North American Lieutenants meet in Chicago

*The Lieutenants from North America
held their fifth annual meeting in Chicago, Illinois,
on May 12 - 14, 2004.*

*Presiding at the meeting was H.E. George T. Ryan,
Vice-Governor General.*

*Also attending was H.E. James T. Miscoll a member of the
Grand Magisterium from San Francisco,
California.*

Eight of the nine United States Lieutenants attended: H.E. John C. Piunno (Middle Atlantic), H.E. Dennis J. Looney, Jr. (Northeastern), H.E. Vincent E. Shaw (Northern), H.E. Thomas J. McCabe (North Central), H.E. John H. McGuckin, Jr. (Northwestern), H.E. Robert B. Acomb, Jr. (Southeastern), H.E. Michael R. Earthman (Southwestern) and H.E. Patrick D. Powers (Western). The Order in Canada was represented by Magistral Delegate J. Stewart LeForte (Atlantic), H.E. Jean-Marc Allard (Montreal) and H.E. Declan P. Lawlor (Vancouver). Reverend Monsignor Archimandrite Robert L. Stern, Secretary General of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, provided invaluable insights during the Lieutenants' discussions and celebrated Mass for the participants on Friday morning.

The Agenda of the meeting followed the agenda of the 2003 Consulta held in Rome and the recent Conclusive Document issued by the Cardinal Grand Master provided important guidelines of the discussion. The meeting also had the opportunity to review the recent Report from the Order's Schools Committee, presented to the Grand Magisterium in April, and the current list of approved projects. According to Vice-Governor General Ryan, "The Order knows where our mission is - in the Holy Land schools. We're doing all we can to support them."

The participants discussed many topics relating to membership, spirituality, event planning, fundraising, Justice & Peace efforts, planning and reporting and communications. These annual meetings have become important

opportunities for the North American Lieutenants to share ideas, perceptions and concerns with each other and representatives of the Grand Magisterium. Two Lieutenants, Jean-Marc Allard (Montreal) and John McGuckin, Jr. (Northwestern) reported on recent pilgrimages to the Holy Land, during which the pilgrims visited several projects supported by donations from members of the Equestrian Order.

One of the major topics on the Lieutenants' agenda related to the coordination of educational efforts within the United States regarding the current situation of the Christian Community in the Holy Land. The group decided to ask a small committee, under the leadership of Lieutenant Powers of the Western Lieutenancy, to propose a plan for joint action in the future.



Responsibility taken for school fees of Christian pupils in the Holy Land

On 29 July this year, the Governor General set up a new scheme to strengthen ties between individual Lieutenancies and the Holy Land: the dedication (of part) of the contributions of each Lieutenancy to a specified school or schools. The aim is to enable all Christian schoolchildren to attend a patriarchal school, even when their families cannot afford to pay the fees. In the present circumstances, this initiative means turning away from the Projects which, in the main, consist of physical construction or repair (and most would subsequently give rise to high maintenance costs) in order to give preference to taking responsibility for part of the running costs of the schools. This solution relates only to schools in Palestine and Jordan, as in Israel the State also assists private Christian schools, so the schools do not incur deficits.

New, targeted support

Let us stress immediately: this does not mean that additional exact sums are to be produced for individual schools on the basis of student numbers. It means that from the existing contributions sent to

the Holy Land via the Grand Magisterium, the amount calculated as needed to support the schools will be set aside straight away. As part of the scheme, each school will receive a plaque bearing the name of the Lieutenancy or group of Lieutenancies that support it through their contributions.

My contribution has a “face”

Anyone who knows where his money goes and what it is used for will not only feel good but will certainly be more personally involved and interested in how “his” or “her” aid project is progressing. Then, when groups of pilgrims from a Lieutenancy visit the targeted school, their aid acquire a “real, personal face” and may become even more aware of the enormity of need in the Holy Land and that we must do far more by way of support.

No separate projects

In any case, on such visits one is inclined to wonder whether the school has any other requirements. What school doesn't? But it is on this very point that all of us who

are members of the Order must ask for understanding. It is certainly not for us to say whether these additional needs should be rated as so important in an overall concept as they may seem then and there. The overview and assessment must be left to the Patriarchate, which then agrees with the Holy Land Commission of the Grand Magisterium as to how urgent needs and funding are prioritised. Hence the request to the Lieutenancies not to begin any separate, direct action is understandable.

However, the Holy Land Commission encourages and indeed welcomes any observations and suggestions.

Further personal contact

Let us make another suggestion: written contact between the Lieutenancies and the schools has additional positive effects. It lets the Christians in this area of the Holy Land know that there are other Christians in the world who think about and pray for them. Along with sufficient financial assistance, let us also give them the deep, personal support of feeling themselves part of the community of the great Catholic Church.



The Bible derives from three original languages.

The languages of the Bible

The Old Testament was written predominantly in Hebrew. Until Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem in 587 BC, Hebrew was the common language used by the Jewish people of Palestine for everyday speech and writing.

Like Aramaic and Arabic, Hebrew is also a main branch of the Semitic group of languages. During the exile, Aramaic, spoken in the North East of Canaan, increasingly displaced Hebrew as the common language. Eventually Hebrew was only used for religious services. So, in the Old Testament (Dan. 2:4b - 7:28 and Ezr. 4:8 - 6:18; 7:12-26) we find Aramaic alongside Hebrew.

Aramaic was the mother tongue of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Even in His time only a few isolated people were left whose mother tongue was Hebrew; the language was used only in religious books and prayers. Even in the Synagogues, the "reading" of the Hebrew text before the homily was translated into Aramaic.

Modern Hebrew (known as Ivrit) has met with a few changes and, above all, developments but is still fundamentally the language spoken by the Old Testament

Kings and Prophets. The Linguistics Academy in Jerusalem is always trying to create new, logical, useable words and phrases based on the language of the Old Testament.

The New Testament was written in Greek, not the classical Greek of the philosophers, but a later dialect, known as Koine. Following the conquest by Alexander the Great, Koine developed as the language used by all nations for trade and everyday communication, with rights equal to those of the former regional vernacular tongues.

One of the Old Testament languages may also have been used to compose a Gospel. On the basis of a note by Papias (d. 160 AD), it can be assumed that the Gospel according to Matthew was written originally in Aramaic and later translated into Greek; however, we have to this day no direct evidence of the original Aramaic text.

Today the Bible has been translated into around 2,300 languages, making it the most frequently translated book of all time

More and more people all over the world can read the Bible in their own language. In the past year more than 50 new translations have been made. Published in around 2,300 languages, the Bible is the most frequently translated book of all time.

The whole Bible exists in more than 410 languages, the New Testament in over 1000, and individual books of the Bible in more than 870 languages. Most of the new translations have been circulated recently in Africa.

