

News



Letter

ORDO EQUESTRIS SANCTI SEPULCRI HIERSOLYMITANI

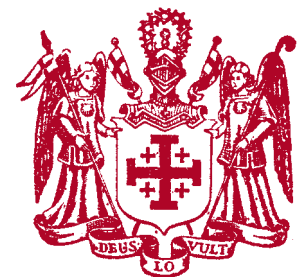
MESSAGE FROM THE
PRO-GRAND MASTER

It is my pleasure to respond to Dr. Otto Kaspar's invitation to introduce myself in these pages of our Order's Newsletter. As I do, I must first express my gratitude to Dr. Kaspar both for his ten years of editing these very attractive pages, but also for his many other imaginative initiatives on our behalf in keeping up with the ever-expanding developments in the world of communications. He has expressed his desire to retire from these responsibilities but has promised to assist in a smooth transition as he departs.

I am most grateful to our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, for entrusting me to provide the direction of this noble Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. It is my hope and prayer, as it will be my whole-hearted effort, to strengthen every member of our Order in the practice of the Christian life. Only by pursuing this goal will the Order find success in supporting the Latin Patriarchate in building up the faith in the Holy Land and in preserving those places there that mark the Life, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord.



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IMPRESSUM
GRAND MAGISTERIUM
OF THE
EQUESTRIAN ORDER
OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE
OF JERUSALEM
00120 VATICAN CITY

MESSAGE FROM THE PRO-GRAND MASTER

In his Apostolic Letter, the Door of Faith, the Holy Father has declared a universal “Year of Faith” commencing from October 2012 through November 2013 in order that all of us might “rediscover a taste for feeding ourselves on the word of God faithfully handed down by the Church, and on the bread of life offered as substance for his disciples.” This is a special call for all of us and all our Lieutenancies to join in the New Evangelization and so to strengthen and nourish our efforts on behalf of the Holy Land.

As I write these words I remain the Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Premier See of the United States. I will remain in this role until my successor is appointed and installed. Meanwhile I am grateful to Archbishop Joseph De Andrea for his willingness to continue as our “Assessore”, to our Governor General and our fine staff for continuing to guide the day to day affairs of our Order. I am in constant communications with them directly and through my assistant, Monsignor Adam Parker, and I plan to conduct regular visits to Rome to meet with them.

I cannot close without words of tribute to our past Grand Master, His Eminence John Cardinal Foley, both for his sterling guidance on behalf of our worldwide Order and for his continued support and encouragement of me personally as I take on this new role. He knows well and is deeply appreciative of our prayers that accompany him at this time of grave illness.

And my thanks to all of you for your words of congratulations; pledge of support and inspiring witness to love of the Lord, his Church and to the Land still holy to him.

+ Edwin F. O’Brien

Pro-Grand Master
Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem



News from the Grand Magisterium

The fall meeting of the Grand Magisterium took place from 8 to 9 November 2011, presided over for the first time by the new Pro-Grand Master, Archbishop Edwin Frederick O'Brien, who had traveled from the USA for the occasion. The participants gave him a warm welcome and promised him their full loyalty and support.

H.B. the Patriarch Fouad Twal reported on the situation in his area of jurisdiction and on the conditions of the Christians. Political actions could not be ignored, nor could contempt for human rights or violence against religious institutions, such as the burning of a mosque and the desecration of Christian or Muslim cemeteries.

Some developments one might find astonishing have a direct influence on the Order's activities: the number of Christians in the Holy Land is increasing. In Israel the labor force includes at least 220,000 foreign workers (from the Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, Eastern Europe and Latin America, for example) and there are around 30,000 asylum seekers (from Eritrea, the Sudan, the Ivory Coast, Somalia, Congo, as well as Russian immigrants). Many of these people are Christians. They are in urgent need of pastoral care. You can find more about the Church's response below, in the article on the Bishops' Conference in Amman.

On the other hand, the Patriarchate must also get to grips with emigration. Even more Christian Arabs are now living outside their homeland (about 350,000 in Chile, over 200,000 in North America and several thousand in other Latin American countries). The Patriarch himself and bishops from the Patriarchate have visited Arab Christians in the diaspora.



The Patriarch again referred to the importance of pilgrimages to the Holy Land by Members of the Order and what a positive sign these represent to the local Christians.

Other items on the meeting's agenda are covered elsewhere in this Newsletter: the report by the Holy Land Commission and the excellent results from the patriarchal schools.

With the approval of the Grand Magisterium on 26 October 2011 the Lieutenancy of Australia - New South Wales founded our first Section in New Zealand.

On 2 and 3 July, the Magistral Delegation of the Russian Federation held its first-ever Investiture. The event took place in Moscow.

Finally, the list of Lieutenancies on the Order's homepage now includes the new Lieutenancy of Venezuela. H.E. Ramón Eduardo Tello, KCHS, from Caracas has been appointed as the first Lieutenant. The Grand Prior is His Eminence Jorge Liberato Cardinal Urosa Savino.



REPORT BY THE HOLY LAND COMMISSION

The latest visit to the Holy Land by three Members of the Commission took place from 9 to 16 October. They visited the current Projects and saw personally how construction was progressing.

The initial difficulties with the authorities in regard to placing contracts for the extension of Rameh School with local firms had been resolved. Work began in May and completion is scheduled for April 2012.

Construction of the church in Aqaba is going ahead well. So far, around 27% of the planned works have been completed, apart from the electrical and technical installations.

The American University in Madaba opened at the start of term and lectures have commenced.

In Rafidia the youth centre and garden on the site of an abandoned house behind the parish church have been built. The area is now popular with families as well as young people.

At the patriarchal seminary in Beit Jala the Commission viewed the renovated restrooms and guest bathrooms. The work has been done well and the effect is a marked improvement on the earlier facilities.

There was plenty of contact with Christians too. Dr. Christa von Siemens shocked us all with the story of a 9 year old girl from Aqaba who is suffering from an eye disease that leads to blindness and who currently attends the ordinary school run by the Sisters of the Rosary. The girl's parents hope she will be able to get treatment in Europe.

The Patriarchate submitted nine Projects to the meeting of the Grand Magisterium at the beginning of November. Two concerned the continuation of Projects already started (Rameh und Aqaba). A decision has yet to be made on the choice and priority of the others. A total of approximately € million is available.



EXCEPTIONAL GRADES!



At the end of their Junior High School education in Jordan and Palestine students take a leaving examination, called Tawjihi. Everyone who passes is considered university material. The examinations are standardized so all the results can be compared nationwide.

The 2011 report on the patriarchal schools commented proudly on the students' exceptional examination results:

In Palestine a Catholic student from Gaza gained 99.1 of 100 possible marks in Natural Sciences, ranking second of all the students in Palestine. As a reward, H.B. the Patriarch Fouad Twal made him a grant to attend Amman University in Jordan, where he is now reading

pharmacy. Another nine patriarchal students gained more than 96.6% and their classmates achieved outstanding results in all the other subjects too.

In Jordan a girl from a Catholic parish who went to school in Hoson gained the Patriarchate's best grade, with 98.6%. In fact, the top twenty students from "our schools" in this country all had more than 96.6%.

In the Holy Land especially, a good education is the best way to escape unemployment and, therefore, poverty, so all the educational support provided by the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem produces a rich harvest.





Top photo: Graduation Ceremony in Beit Jala

Bottom photo: Graduation Ceremony in Beit Sahour



POPE RECEIVES MEMBERS OF ISRAELI RELIGIOUS COUNCIL



No violence in the name of religion

VATICAN CITY, 10 November 2011 (ZENIT.org/KAP). – At the Audience for the delegation from the “Council of Heads of Religious Communities in Israel” Pope Benedict XVI appealed to the religious leaders to foster a climate of trust and dialog in the Holy Land. They had a grave responsibility to urge the members of their communities to respect each other and to develop mutual openness and cooperation, the Pope said.

In today’s troubled times dialog between religions and commitment to justice, truth, love and freedom were fundamental and required courage and vision.

This was particularly true in the Holy Land, where life in places with sacred traditions and memories was full of daily problems, the Pope emphasized. He warned strongly against any violence in the name of religion, but even more against violence that denied the existence of God.

Present at the Audience were 25 or so leading Jews, Muslims and Druze, as well as representatives of several Christian commu-

nities. The Israeli Religious Council includes the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Fouad Twal, the Israeli Chief Rabbi, Yonah Metzger, the Head of the Israeli Conference of Imams, Sheikh Mohammed Kiwan, and the leader of the Druze community in Israel, Sheikh Moufak Tarif, amongst its members. The delegation also had talks with the Vatican Congregation for the Oriental Churches, the Councils for Ecumenical Affairs and Inter-religious Dialog and the Council for Religious Relations with the Jews.

In the midst of the current crises, dialog between different religions was becoming ever more important “in order to create an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect that could lead to friendship and solid trust in each other” the Pope stated in his address. Unfortunately, he reaffirmed, the real situation in today’s world, including the Holy Land, was “disjointed and imperfect”. “We must all engage in a new call for more justice and dignity in order to enrich our world and give it a fully human dimension”, Benedict XVI declared.



BISHOPS' CONFERENCE IN AMMAN



CHURCH STRENGTHENS COMMITMENT TO PASTORAL WORK WITH MIGRANTS

*Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land
hold full Assembly in Amman -
Episcopal Vicar for Hebrew Speakers outlines
new efforts to co-ordinate pastoral with migrants*

Jerusalem-Amman, (KAP) In October the full Assembly of Catholic Bishops of the Holy Land met for two days in Amman. According to the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, much of the first day's discussion was centered on pastoral work with migrants, as well as the dialog with Judaism and with Islam. Bishops and Episcopal Vicars from the various Catholic-Rite Churches in Israel, Jordan, the Palestinian Territories and Cyprus took part in the meeting.

The statement announced that a new Commission with three sub-commissions would be created for relations with Judaism and Islam. In Israel, the Bishop of Nazareth, Patriarchal Vicar Giacinto-Boulos Marcuzzo, and the Melkite Catholic Archbishop of Akko (Acre), Elias Chacour, will be responsible for contacts with the Jews and Muslims.

The Episcopal Vicar for Hebrew Speaking Catholics, Fr. David Neuhaus, presented the new efforts to co-ordinate pastoral work with Catholic migrants from Asia, Latin America

and Africa living in Israel. This is currently one of the greatest challenges facing the Vicariate, Fr. Neuhaus said.

According to the Latin Patriarchate, there are approximately 230,000 mainly Christian foreign workers in Israel alone, as well as 30,000 or so refugees and asylum seekers; all need targeted pastoral work so that they can be better integrated into local communities. At the same time, migrants should receive more information about their rights.

In the Palestinian Territories dialog with the Muslims is in the remit of the Bishops under the jurisdiction of the Suffragan Bishop of Jerusalem, William Shomali; in Jordan Christian-Muslim relations are in the care of the Melkite Archbishop of Petra, Yasser Ayyash, and the Roman Catholic Bishop of Amman, Selim Sayegh.

Christian education and the school situation in the Holy Land also figured on the Agenda of the two-day meeting.



OESSH WEBSITE: MORE ON OUR SHORT ADDRESS

In Newsletter No. 23 we announced that there was a shortcut (link) to the Order's homepage. Unfortunately, a number of our Members have been unable to reach the homepage. The problem arises from a misunderstanding:

Some Members have entered the address given – **info.oessh.va** – in the Google search box. This does not work because the short address is only a link and not an autonomous domain.

Therefore:

1. Please enter the address directly into the URL box at the top left of your browser screen (not via the search engine);
2. Do this without the “www”.

Good luck! We hope you find much to interest you on our website.

