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News Letter

ORDO EQUESTRIS SANCTI SEPULCRI HIERSOLYMITANI

The Order in Union with the universal Church

THE ORDER PRAYS FOR PEACE IN THE HOLY LAND

The prayer meeting attended by Israeli and Palestinian presidents with the Pope and the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople at the Vatican, on 8 June, was "the true conclusion of the journey of Francis to the Holy Land", as described on Vatican Radio by the director of the Press Office of the Holy See. In this Newsletter we return to this prayer meeting to which the 30,000 members of the Order in the world are intensely united.

It is in his residence at the Domus Santa Marta that the successor of the Apostle Peter welcomed the Presidents of the two peoples that have opposed each other for nearly 70 years in the land of the prophets. After an informal greeting, the two Presidents, with the Pope, the Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, and the Guardian of the Holy Land, all entered a minibus to go to the place of prayer. At that moment the Church then appeared to fully assume her role as a mother, trying to gather together the children of God, the Father of all.



THE ORDER IN UNION WITH THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

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IMPRESSUM

GRAND MAGISTERIUM
OF THE EQUESTRIAN ORDER
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The Israeli and Palestinian Presidents with Pope Francis at the Vatican on 8 June last.

Smiles exchanged in the minibus were a telling sign of how Francis's pilgrimage to the Holy Land helped forge bonds of friendship, bearers of universal brotherhood.

It was the Jews who commenced the meditation with readings of praise to the Creator, accompanied by violin music. The faces of the Israeli and Palestinian presidents reflected the intensity of inner emotions felt by all participants. The sweetness of the setting sun enveloped the gardens in a cloak of peace, while an invocation was sung, addressed to the God of Mercy, also known as "Our Father" in the Hebrew religious tradition. Then came the Christian prayer read by the Orthodox Patriarch, followed by the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Fouad Twal, to the music of a harp. Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, continued by begging God's forgiveness for all fratricidal wars fomented in the Holy Land for centuries in the name of false religious beliefs. The prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, in Arabic, appeared to be the focal point of the evening, with the words inti-

mately touching all spiritual sentiments: "Where there is discord, harmony, where there is darkness, light" ... Even if the reality of the current conflict is such that it will not be solved overnight, this initiative of prayer for peace, broadcast by the media around the world, may contribute to awaken consciences and will be an example to all Abrahamic communities.

During the third stage, continued with background music, Muslims thanked the "Lord of the Worlds". with the resounding verses from the Koran in the holy of holies of the Catholic Church, in the hope that one day Mecca

may also be capable of such reciprocity. True to the spirit of the one of whom he bears the name, the Pope spoke at the end of the ceremony, expressing the hope that the

“ **Peacemaking calls for courage, much more so than warfare** ”

(Pope Francis 8 June 2014)

children of Abraham may break down the walls of enmity, moving towards the dawn of peace with courage and perseverance: "peacemaking, calls for courage, much more so than warfare...". In conclusion the Pope addressed the God of

Abraham, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, daughter of the Holy Land, asking Him to support the peacemakers, ensuring they are inspired by a single word "brother", and that they may recognize each other as children of one Father.

On this day of Pentecost, drawing a truly prophetic picture of the new humanity, the Heads of Churches of East and West, Francis and Bartholomew, and the two presidents, Shimon and Mahmoud, each with shovel in hand, finally symbolically planted an olive tree, surrounded by members of their delegations mingling freely.



FRANCIS IN THE HOLY LAND: A PILGRIMAGE OF UNITY AND PEACE

A delegation of the Grand Magisterium of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, led by Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, Grand Master, Archbishop Antonio Franco, Assessor, and Professor Agostino Borromeo, Governor General, participated in the pilgrimage the Holy Father to the Holy Land. Several Knights and Dames came especially from the United States and Europe. From 24 to 26 May 2014 they accompanied Pope Francis and his closest collaborators to Jordan, the Palestinian Territories, and Israel, especially during major liturgical celebrations and the deeply moving evening prayer for Christian Unity which took place at the Holy Sepulchre in the presence of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I and many Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Patriarchs.

Upon his return to Rome the Pope wished to give thanks to the Virgin Mary at the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, and during his general audience on Wednesday 28 May in Saint Peter's Square, giving thanks to God, he highlighted the essential elements of his visit: "I prayed together with His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew at the place of the Holy Sepulchre and we expressed our desire to continue with tenacity on the journey to full communion. Another purpose of this pilgrimage was to encourage in that region the path to peace, especially in Syria. In Jordan I thanked the Authorities and the people for their efforts in welcoming the many refugees. I invited the President of Israel and the President of Palestine, to come to the Vatican to pray together

with me for peace. This pilgrimage to the Holy Land was also the occasion to confirm in faith the Christian communities, who suffer so much, and to express the gratitude of the entire Church for their presence and courageous testimony in that region".

For memory and historical record, the *Newsletter* of the Grand Magisterium of the Order offers a report of this event in the form of "travel notes" in its early-summer issue.

"To prepare the path of peace and unity"

"You have become the conscience of the world" declared the King of Jordan, Abdullah II, a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, welcoming Francis on Saturday 24 May to the Royal Palace in Amman. Faithful to the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi, who managed to enter into dialogue with the sultan of Egypt during the Crusades, the Pope responded to the Hashemite sovereign, hailing him as the "peacemaker" who allows Arab Christians, full Jordanian citizens, to live in their territory, in full "coexistence" with their Muslim brothers. He thanked Jordan "for encouraging various important initiatives of interreligious dialogue, and for having promoted, within the UN, a Week of harmony among religions.

During the Mass at Amman Stadium, Francis, surrounded by all the Eastern Catholic Patriarchs, was presented with a pastoral staff of olive wood, symbol of both the simplicity to which he calls the entire Church, and of the peace he came to proclaim for three days in the Holy Land. In a very oriental atmosphere, the chant of the muezzin resounded after his outdoor homi-





Francis Vayne

ly. "Today, with a burning heart I invoke the Holy Spirit, asking him to prepare the way of peace and unity," summed up the Holy Father during his homily centered on Christ's baptism in the Jordan. "You are the John the Baptist of our time" exclaimed the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Fouad Twal, of Jordanian origin, at the end of the celebration, referring to his prophetic testimony.

Immediately after the end of Mass he went to the banks of the Jordan to meet with refugees from the Middle East - Palestinian, Iraqi and Syrian - victims of regional destabilization orchestrated since the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. "I ask myself: who is selling arms to these people to make war? Behold the root of evil! This should make us think about who is responsible for this situation!" exclaimed Francis about the fratricidal conflict that is tearing Syria apart for the past three years. Then, turning to the international community: "I urge the international community not to leave Jordan, which is so welcoming and so courageous, alone in the task of meeting the humanitarian emergency caused by the arrival of so great a number of refugees, but to continue and even increase its support and assistance".

"In this place was born the Prince of peace..."

On the morning of Sunday, 25 May, for the first time a Pope entered directly into

Palestinian territory, without first passing through Israel, flying by helicopter from Jordan to Bethlehem. There he was greeted by a cheering Arabic crowd, where Christians and Muslims mingled happily. "The time has come for everyone to find the courage to be generous and creative in the service of the common good, the courage to forge a peace which rests on the acknowledgment by all of the right of two States to exist and to live in peace and security within internationally recognized borders", said Francis before the Palestinian Authorities - in the first row of which was President Mahmoud Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen - before concluding his speech with a warm "Salam".

For Sunday Mass in Manger Square, the Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre stood at the foot of the altar, wearing their cape, publicly demonstrating in front of the world media the spiritual communion of all Member of the Order mobilized in prayer for weeks beforehand, for the success of the pilgrimage.

The Pope spoke of the "sign" which the Infant of Bethlehem represented for the shepherds, inviting everyone to find in themselves "a new kind of lifestyle where our relationships are no longer marked by conflict, oppression and consumerism, but fraternity, forgiveness and reconciliation, solidarity and love". He rekindled hope in this region during this Mass, attended by President Abbas, when he invited the Presi-



dents of Israel and Palestine to join him in the Vatican to pray for peace.

"The spirit of Assisi", in reference to the great prayer meeting of Religions for Peace on 27 October 1986, continues more than ever to blow, assuming a particular geopolitical dimension related to the urgent context which now characterizes the Middle East. The time is short, Israeli President Shimon Peres – whose successor should be elected in early summer – quickly accepted the invitation, which was announced during the recitation of the Regina Coeli, "in the place where the Prince of Peace was born" among Palestinian Christians from throughout the Holy Land, including Gaza and the Galilee. The Palestinian president, who had ascended to the altar to shake hands with Francis at the time of the kiss of peace, also willingly agreed to this exceptional event of a spiritual nature.

The good will of the Holy Father, however, must be patient, as when the muezzin of Bethlehem boomed out its call to prayer in the loudspeakers at the same time as the papal blessing, raising whistles of disapproval from the crowd, soon wisely replaced by enthusiastic "Viva il Papa" ...

Before going to Jerusalem in the evening Francis went to a refugee camp where he heard the accounts of the suffering endured by those who have lost their land during 66 years of occupation, and urged these people, especially children, to go beyond the wrong endured "Don't ever allow the past to determine your lives. Always look to the future ... violence cannot be overcome by violence. Violence is overcome by peace!"

**"So that they may all be one...
that the world may believe"**

On this Spring Sunday afternoon, Francis spontaneously asked for his car to be stopped for a few moments to pray before the Separation Wall, or "security barrier" as defined by the Israeli Authorities. The photo

of this unexpected incident which will be remembered as significant, suddenly generated comments from the social networks, while the Pope continued on his way, travelling in a "normal" car, refusing the armoured Popemobile, accompanied on this trip by a Rabbi and a Muslim professor, two of his Argentinian friends. The holy city was deserted for "security reasons" at the time of the arrival of the Holy Father, who came specially to meet the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople at the Holy Sepulchre. Unease related to identity issues was at its height and the tension was extreme, the extremist Price Tag Jewish Movement having been particularly aggressive in recent weeks against Arab Christians. Faced with this situation, Francis, during the welcoming ceremony in Israel, stated to the officials of the "Jewish State" so designated by the UN in 1947: "I express my hope and prayer that this blessed land may be one which has no place for those who, by exploiting and absolutising the value of their own religious tradition, prove intolerant and violent towards those of others". Later in the day, guided by the Franciscans, under police escort, the Vatican delegation and the few guests entered the Holy Sepulchre with intense emotion to attend the historic meeting at which the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Bishop Rome, expressed their prophetic wish for unity, in accordance with that which Paul VI and Athenagoras had initiated fifty years previously in Jerusalem, ending a thousand years of separation.

At the forefront, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, Grand Master of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, joined in the ecumenical prayer together with many other cardinals, bishops and patriarchs. The entourage of the Pope included Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of the Holy See, Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, Cardinal Kurt Koch, and President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian



Unity, and Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue. According to the status quo established under the Ottomans, they were welcomed by Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Franciscan Guardian for Catholics, by His Beatitude Theophilos III for Greek Orthodox, and by His Beatitude Nourhan Manoogian for Armenian Orthodox. The two leaders of the Eastern and Western Churches embraced, each displaying a truly Marian solicitude towards one another, a clear sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit in an atmosphere of total self-abandonment where only love reigns.

Bartholomew aided the Pope, who suffers from osteoarthritis, as they entered together the Sepulchre where Christ was laid after his crucifixion, and from whence he resurrected. They laid their foreheads on the tombstone, under the gaze of an icon of the Virgin Mary who seemed to envelop them in a cloak of divine tenderness, before each lit a candle, the symbol of the sweet eternal light which triumphs over darkness.

"Each one 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 the One who is the First-born of all creation; we were buried together with him, so as to be raised up with him and to walk in newness of life", noted Francis in his address, desirous that Christians should be "men and women of resurrection, and not of death", and that they may experience the sufferings of their Church and of the whole world in the light of Easter morning. For representatives of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre present in this place that night, the reference the Pope made to the "open wounds" of Christ also evoked the membership insignia embroidered on the capes of the Knights and Dames as a program of daily life: "His open wounds are like the cleft through which the torrent of his mercy is poured out upon the world. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the

basis of our hope, which is this: *Christòs anesti!* Let us not deprive the world of the joyful message of the resurrection!"

The Pope also clearly reiterated the hope "aimed at finding a means of exercising the specific ministry of the Bishop of Rome which, in fidelity to his mission, can be open to a new situation and can be, in the present context, a service of love and of communion acknowledged by all". He concluded by recalling the Testament of Jesus delivered on Holy Thursday "that they may all be one... that the world may believe" (*Jn* 17:21).

"May we learn to understand the sufferings of others"

The following day, Monday 26 May, on the Esplanade of the Mosques in Jerusalem, in the presence of the Muslim Authorities, Francis made a heartfelt plea to all people and to all communities who look to Abraham: "May we respect and love one another as brothers and sisters! May we learn to understand the sufferings of others! May no one abuse the name of God through violence! May we work together for justice and peace!". Like his two predecessors, the Holy Father went to pray at the Wailing Wall to honour the Jewish people terribly persecuted throughout history, then he was taken to Mount Herzl - according to the new protocol imposed for the past three years - at the tomb of the founder of Zionism, before paying tribute to the victims of Nazi genocide, at Yad Vashem. Greeting survivors, he listened to them with loving care, kissing their hands as a sign of compassion and deep respect. "Never again, Lord, never again!" he declared with passion in a moving prayer. "Here we are, Lord, shamed by what man, created in your own image and likeness, was capable of doing", he added. After planting an olive tree with the President of the State of Israel, Shimon Peres, 1994 Nobel Prize winner for Peace, Francis renewed



his plea "that all parties avoid initiatives and actions which contradict their stated determination to reach a true agreement and that they tirelessly work for peace, with decisiveness and tenacity", finishing his address with a deeply fraternal "shalom". The same day, however, the government of Binyamin Netanyhaou authorized the construction of fifty new homes in a settlement between East Jerusalem and Bethlehem, wishing probably to indicate the irreversibility of his policy of expansion into Palestinian territory.

The Papal pilgrimage to the Holy Places was followed by a meeting with priests, religious and seminarians in the Church of Gethsemane near the Mount of Olives, where the Holy Father, radiant and visibly tired but very happy, designated the safest way to avoid "the duplicity, the deceitfulness of the one who betrayed Jesus": despite our failings and our errors, "let us imitate the Virgin Mary and Saint John, and stand by all those crosses where Jesus continues to be crucified. This is how the Lord calls us

to follow him: this is the path, there is no other!".

A special Mass presided over by Francis at the Upper Room, the first Church of the Apostles claimed by the Jewish extremists as the cenotaph of King David, brought together the Ordinaries of the Holy Land and the Papal entourage. "From here the Church goes forth, impelled by the life-giving breath of the Spirit. Gathered in prayer with the Mother of Jesus, the Church lives in constant expectation of a renewed outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Send forth your Spirit, Lord, and renew the face of the earth", the Pope prayed, carried by a supernatural force at the end of this true spiritual marathon.

The whole Order may be renewed now by seeking a way to put into practice the example given by the successor of Peter, from Bethlehem to Jerusalem, so that the night of this world may turn into day, in the light of the Nativity and the Resurrection, in the service of unity and peace.

François Vayne
(Back from the Holy Land)

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Proceedings of the Grand Magisterium

MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN LIEUTENANTS AT THE GRAND MAGISTERIUM

For scheduling reasons, the annual meeting of the European Lieutenants was held before the meeting of the American Lieutenants on 21 and 22 May 2014 (1). Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, Grand Master, opened the meeting at the Palazzo della Rovere, by emphasizing the need for members of the Order to become more and more attentive to the will of God by giving priority to the spiritual life. In this regard, he expressed his wish to gather the Grand Priors on all continents in order to further strengthen the ties between the Order and the Bishops.

Governor General Agostino Borromeo then presented the various projects of development of the Order in various European countries such as Latvia, Croatia and the Czech Republic, and in Latin America, Brazil and Chile, for example, emphasizing the increasing interest for an ecclesial institution that is dedicated to the service of the Catholic presence in the Holy Land.

In this regard the Consultor Pier Carlo Visconti, in charge of the accounts of the Grand Magisterium, reported on the financial situation, explaining that despite a relative decline in revenues in 2013 (back to the situation of 2010, with about 10 million euros, following a period of two years which was more affluent), the Order continued to send on average € 600,000 per month to the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Thanks to sound management, the reserves were used to honour payments due to cover, notably, the running costs of the 44 schools, and the deficit of various institutions of the Patriarchate (parishes, seminary...). Professor Pierre Blanchard, member



of the Grand Magisterium, completed the presentation of the Accounts for 2013, which show a positive result, by pointing out, among the expenses, the one million Euros for the future library of the "the American University" in Madaba, an establishment in Jordan desired by Patriarch Twal.

Besides the expenditure which needs to be constantly reduced, such as the end of service settlements for staff in schools, a new need is emerging: to give pastoral assistance to Catholics in Jewish territory. It concerns the second generation of immigrants who have been educated in Israel. The Order helped to fund a building for pastoral services for them.

Extraordinary contributions were also discussed, such as that of a first instalment of 100,000 Euros in relation to the Pope's visit to the Holy Land, as well as the participation in the running costs of the University of Bethlehem wished for by Paul VI in coordination with the Congregation for the



Oriental Churches. The problem of Hotel Columbus, whose tenants have been in litigation with the Grand Magisterium for several years, should soon be resolved in the courts. Further information on this issue will be available soon.

The works planned in 2014 were also on the agenda, with the intervention of Professor Thomas McKiernan, who chairs the Commission on projects. He paid tribute to the work of his predecessor, Dr. Christa Von Siemens, by recalling what was done in 2013 in Ajloun, Fuheis, Amman, Naour, and Taybeh, before talking about future works: a priestly residence in Irbed, the renovation of a school in Ashrafieh, a rehabilitation in Jenin, repairs in the Parish of Zarka, and the renovation of a school in Marfag. Then the issue of the revision of the Constitution of the Order, fruit of the Consulta, was raised. Archbishop Antonio Franco, Assessor of the Order, reported that the work of the Commission was coming to an end, highlighting everything which relates to the sanctification of the members and their insertion in the local Churches, for a presentation of the

final text at the end of June.

An important moment in the meeting was the presentation of the Vice Governor Patrick Powers related to the creation in the USA of a company empowered to receive bequests in favour of the Order. "The passion for the Order can be expressed by an end of life donation, activated after death, in the great tradition of chivalry updated in a modern way", the Vice Governor explained, adding that Masses are then celebrated regularly for these donor members whose names are also honoured during the pilgrimages in Jerusalem. During the discussion which followed, many proposals were put forward to assist the Order in finding funds, such as the creation of a World Day for Peace in the Holy Land, to be hosted by the Knights and Dames. The revamped communication service of the Order will contribute to this movement for universal action.

(1) Our next *Newsletter*, in September, will report on the meeting of the American Lieutenants which was held this year after that of the European Lieutenants.

TAILORING SUPPLIES



CAPES
MEDALS
ACCESSORIES

Barbiconi
Sartoria ecclesiastica



The Order and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem

PROJECTS APPROVED IN 2014 BY THE GRAND MAGISTERIUM

These projects are in design and tendering stage.

★ **IRBED: Presbytery**

Third largest city in Jordan. The presbytery needs major renovation, especially as regards a very old electrical system. Projected cost \$ 155,000.

★ **ASHRAFIEH: School and Hall reconstruction**

The pillars of this school on the outskirts of Amman are old and crumbling. Projected cost: \$ 576,000.



Professor Thomas McKiernan directs the Commission on projects of the Grand Magisterium. We see him here in the company of children in a school supported by the Order in the Holy Land.

★ **JENIN: Church, presbytery, Hall & External Facilities**

Renovation of part of the Presbytery to double the size of the present chapel and renovation of part of the adjoining building to create a new Presbytery. The parish serves 75 families. Projected cost \$ 400,000.

★ **ZARKA NORTH: Parish office and lounge**

Significant water damage to the parish offices and the lounge. Projected cost: \$ 85,000.

★ **MARFAK: School Compound**

Very near the Syrian border and first stop of many refugees. The church and school need significant renovation work including an extra floor to enable pupils to finish their Secondary School studies in the parish. The school also needs several laboratories and additional toilet facilities. Projected cost \$ 303,000.

The editors invite each Lieutenancy to send us any information it wishes to convey in our next *Newsletter*, scheduled for September 2014.

Contact: comunicazione@oessh.va



The life of the Order throughout its Lieutenancies

CARDINAL EDWIN O'BRIEN PRESIDED OVER THE INVESTITURE CEREMONIES IN SICILY

On 9 and 10 May, the Lieutenancy of Italy-Sicily had two very intense days. Thirty-two Knights, seven Dames and eleven Priests were knighted.

On 9 May, in the evocative setting of the Palatine Chapel, Cardinal Paolo Romeo, Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy and Archbishop of Palermo, presided over the Vigil of Arms and Prayer and spoke to the assembly, drawing attention to the values of membership in the Order and the importance of a life of testimony and consistency to the Gospel. The rite of the blessing of the flags and capes was particularly moving and was followed by the promise pronounced aloud by the newly knighted members. The next day, in the Cathedral, the solemn ceremony of Investiture was presided over by the Grand Master Cardinal Edwin O'Brien who, by attending in person, wanted to show his appreciation for the activity carried out by the Lieutenancy. At the end of his homily, the Grand Master, referring to the address of Pope Francis who wondered if Catholic communities really testified to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, wished to remind us of the true purpose of the Equestrian Order of the

Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. To become a member of the Order, he said, means cultivating one's personal holiness, enriching one's personal spiritual life and following Jesus more and more closely. In conclusion, he reminded us that Blessed John Paul II saw the Order as an "Guard of Honor" for the protection of the Holy Sepulchre of Our Lord and for proclaiming to the world, as the Angel did, that Christ has risen. At the end of the ceremony, Lieutenant Knight Grand Cross, Professor Giovanni Russo, thanked Cardinal O'Brien for agreeing to preside over the Investiture ceremony, and Cardinal Romeo, Grand Prior of the Lieutenancy, for the support he has always given to the Order. Then he briefly explained the meaning of the symbols specific to the Order, the Cross of Jerusalem, its flag and coat of arms, the cape as a sign of belonging, the spurs as a sign of encouragement to do good, and the sword a symbol of protection of the weakest. The initiative to offer all the new members a copy of the Gospel was particularly significant. By this gesture, the Lieutenant insisted that membership in the Order should not only be a great honour, but also an incentive to be a witness of the Gospel.

THE FRENCH LIEUTENANCY WISHES TO REMIND YOU OF ITS NEW ADDRESS:

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