The Key to Peace

That peace in the Holy Land is “the key to peace in the Middle East” was affirmed by His Beatitude Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem in his homily on Holy Thursday while condemning the violence in Syria. “Our Middle East is suffering cruelly in its innermost being. And I say, that politicians will continually fall short in bringing about democracy and justice while our Holy Land is in the state of conflict that is tearing it apart…”, he added.

In his Easter homily, the Patriarch also affirmed that the international community must “make concrete and effective decisions” for the Middle East. Although a few paid attention to the “gestures” of the President of the United States, his Middle East tour ended in March with no tangible progress. Barack Obama prefaced that his visit was not intended to propose a new peace plan for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This more laborious task would be delegated to his Secretary of State John Kerry, who will visit Jerusalem and Ramallah on the 8th and 9th of April. Will the United States propose a plan of action for the resumption of peace negotiations (stalled since 2010) between the Israelis and Palestinians in the coming months? In any case, John Kerry’s stint in the region offers food for the thought. Meanwhile, a few days before his arrival, the storm was rising in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. Early April saw Israeli tanks bombard Syrian territory in response to shots fired against its deployed troops on the Golan Heights. The tension is also palpable on the Gaza strip, where new rockets were fired around that time. In the Territories, Palestinians buried a sixty year old prisoner who died in Israel and two youths killed by soldiers in a climate which breathes tension.

Trip

The new Pope Francis was not indifferent to the volatile situation in his Easter message: “Yes, Christ is our peace and through him we implore peace for the whole world!” Such was his call in his message Urbi et Orbi. He wished for prayers for the Middle-East (of course in Syria) and in particular between Israelis and Palestinians in the hopes that they “who struggle to find the road of agreement, that they may willingly and courageously resume negotiations to end a conflict that has lasted all too long.” Only just had the Pope been elected when the Latin Patriarch invited him to the Holy Land. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority did likewise and expressed his hope that he might contribute to peace in the Holy Land. Israeli President Shimon Peres also urged him: “We need, more than ever, a spiritual leadership and not just a political one. Where political leaders may divide, spiritual leaders may unite.” Such a trip may be set up for 2014…Before leaving Rome after the installation of Pope Francis, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew proposed the idea of a meeting in Jerusalem in 2014, a year which marks the 50th anniversary of the historic meeting of Pope Paul VI and the Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras for the first time since the 15th century.

Christophe Lafontaine
**Pope Francis: anticipation of Easter at the Holy Sepulchre**

At the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre there arose a deep and sincere gratitude for the election of Pope Francis as Bishop of Rome and successor of Saint Peter. The Mass was celebrated by His Beatitude Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, with his vicars, priests, religious communities, and the faithful of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem welcomed the newly elected Pope Francis.

As the Mother Church of Jerusalem, we are profoundly delighted with the election of the new Pastor of the Catholic Church, chosen by the cardinals in conclave, and above all by the Holy Spirit. We bless the Lord and let flow from our hearts a fervent “Deo gratias!”

To our new Pope, we extend our congratulations “Alf Mabrouk,” with a pledge of our full support and assurance of our fidelity, affection and prayers.

There is depth in our communion. Holy Father, it is with gratitude and great hope that we look forward to all that you will do for the Church, the world and the pastoral solicitude that you will have for our Latin Patriarchate during your Pontificate. We also hope and trust that you will continue the work for peace and justice in the Middle East, especially in the Holy Land. We express our commitment to work with you as we did with your predecessors, to bring about significant progress in inter-religious dialogue in our region.

Dear Holy Father, the Holy Land awaits you. It will be an honor, a joy and our pleasure to welcome you to the land of our salvation. Welcome: “Ahlan wa sahlan!”

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**Diocese: Holy Land News**

**Habemus Papam!**

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**Patriarch ordains new Archbishop of Tunis**

On Saturday, March 16, His Beatitude Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, ordained the Reverend Ilario Antoniazzi, as the new Archbishop of Tunis, named on February 21, 2013 by Pope Benedict XVI. The ordination took place in the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth in the presence of many bishops, priests, religious and faithful.

“Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.”

It was in meditating on these words of the Gospel of John that the Patriarch in his homily urged the new Archbishop Ilario Antoniazzi, to “go with confidence and boldness” to his new mission. A mission that Patriarch Twal knows well, having also been the Archbishop of Tunis between 1992 and 2005. The Patriarch did not hesitate to mention the “time of great challenges” that await Archbishop Antoniazzi in Tunisia, which is in the throes of a precarious political balance. In this difficult context of the Arab Spring, His Beatitude appealed to the new Archbishop to “constantly renew dialogue with our Muslim brothers.”

Concluding his homily, he conferred his blessing upon Archbishop Antoniazzi, asking God through the intercession of the Holy Spirit to grant him special “apostolic zeal in this Year of Faith.”

Archbishop Antoniazzi celebrated his first Pontifical Mass the day after his Episcopal ordination, on Sunday, March 17, in the Latin parish of St. Anthony of Padua in Rameh, where he has been pastor since 2007.

Amélie de La Hougue
Diocese: Holy Land News

Ninth Meeting
of the Migrant Pastoral Coordination

On Tuesday, March 5, 2013, those involved in the Catholic Church’s pastoral with migrants met in the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Present at the ninth meeting were those working among the Filipino, Indian, Eritrean/Ethiopian, English and French speaking African migrants as well as those working with NGOs who serve among the asylum seekers and two representatives of the Prison Chaplaincy. Also present was the parish priest of Jaffa. The first part of the meeting was an exchange of news about the past three months, since the last meeting. This is a special moment of sharing: the joys and the pains of the work among the most marginal of the Church’s children.

The discussion then focused on a series of themes:

- the deportation and/or arrest of many Africans and the heavy atmosphere in the African communities,
- the criteria for discerning the pastoral work among migrants: living poverty, inculturating, serving all without ethnic and linguistic distinction, and working in coordination,
- the Pope’s resignation and prayers in the migrant communities for the new Pope,
- a discussion of the preparations for Easter,
- a report from the communities on the Year of Faith and the activities that are being organized in the different communities,
- the continuing efforts to give catechism classes to the children of the migrants, completely integrated in secular Jewish, Hebrew speaking, Israeli society,
- promoting confirmation classes for adults who were never confirmed,
- promoting an awareness of the sacred nature of matrimony and preparing those who seek the blessing of the Church for their marriages.

The next meeting was fixed for the month of June.

At the end of the meeting, each of the more than twenty participants prayed the Lord’s Prayer in his or her own language, a beautiful harmony in diversity rising up to the Lord.

St James Vicariate for Hebrew Speaking Catholics

New Patriarchal Vicar for Cyprus

His Beatitude Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, announced in early March the appointment of Father Garret Edmunds, ofm, as the new Patriarchal Vicar for Cyprus. He succeeds Fr. Evencio Diaz Herrera, ofm.

Born on October 16, 1950 in San Francisco (USA), Fr. Edmunds entered the Franciscan Province of Santa Barbara in California in September 1977. He was ordained a priest on September 11, 1982 and entered the service of the Custody of the Holy Land in 1998. He was appointed Patriarchal Vicar on January 23, 2013. The Vicariate of Cyprus consists of about 7,000-8,000 Catholics of the Latin Rite comprised of 1,700 Cypriots and 6,000-7,000 foreigners whose majority is made up of migrant Filipinos, Indians, Sri Lankans and Africans. The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, his Auxiliary Bishops and Vicars, all the clergy and faithful of the Diocese of the Holy Land express their congratulations to the new Vicar, with the assurance of their prayers and best wishes for his new mission in the service of Christians on the island of Cyprus.
Pastoral and Liturgical Life

New Tool from the Catechetical Center:
“Who do you say that I am?”

On February 21, to 23, the Catechetical Center of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem undertook a new educational tool for catechists and students to help them concretely advance in this Year of Faith.

In response to the Church’s directions in dedicating the “Year of Faith,” to entering more deeply into our Christian faith, the Catechetical Center of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem prepared an educational instrument (dossier) to help catechists and students take an effective role in this communal journey of faith. The dossier invites the catechists and students through ten encounters to develop a personal faith in Jesus Christ and to adopt a particular and personal attitude and response to Jesus’ question: “who do you say that I am?” In turn, they will express this in their daily lives within the Christian community, which is the Church, and bear witness to it in society.

The dossier follows an active method of exploration of given bible passages and in the light of these experiences, the students are invited to express, pray and declare their personal encounter with Jesus in their daily living in the church and society.

The Catechetical Center organized three meetings for catechists in three regions (Bethlehem, Ramallah, Jerusalem) on February 21-23, at which the dossier was distributed with an explanation of how to use the program. The majority of the Christian schools in these regions participated at the meetings, and catechists expressed a deep appreciation for this educational instrument.

Sr. Virginie Habib, Director

Inauguration of the General Library and Archives of the Custody

The General Library and Archives of the Custody of the Holy Land in the Convent of St. Saviour in Jerusalem was inaugurated on Thursday, February 28, 2013.

The archives of the Custody of the Holy Land are among the most important in the Catholic world of the Middle East. By reason of age, they represent “the historical memory of the life of the Franciscans in the Holy Places and their guardians,” in the words of Father Narcyz Klimas, the Custodial archivist. The Custody archives actually tell the story of the Franciscans from the time of the Crusades until the present time. Father Marcello Badalamenti, custodial librarian, explained, how, from the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Franciscans already had books when they settled in the Holy Land. The first library probably existed in the mid-fourteenth century.

After the inauguration of the Archives and General Custodial Library, we can now appreciate documents of great value, such as a *Firman dated 1247, papal bulls or the register of pilgrims since 1561. There is also the register of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, established since 1561, up until 1847, the year of the restoration of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Books as “Bridges for Peace”

One of the wishes of Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Custos of the Holy Land and those who worked on this project, is to ensure that the General Library of the Custody becomes more a meeting place and a window for researchers coming from different backgrounds. A wish that books can be “bridges of peace.” ATS Pro Terra Sancta,” an NGO of the Custody of the Holy Land, which supported this inauguration, and the cataloging and valuation activities of these archives, has also called this project “Books: Bridges for Peace.”

The General Library is open to the public and has two rooms dedicated to studying and consulting the volumes. On the site Bibliotheca Terrae Sanctae, it is possible to search online the Library Catalogue of the Holy Land General Library OPAC (online public access catalog).

A Cultural wave

Father Custos stated that “in the books, in the documents, and in the archives, that is to say our history, is also our future.” And the future of the Custody does not stop with the inauguration of the General Library and Archives. With the project, Terra Santa Museum 2015, the Custody envisions the opening of a museum of the Holy Land in 2015. The goal? Always to discover more of the rich artistic and archaeological heritage collected by the Franciscans during their eight centuries of presence in the Holy Land.

Amélie de La Hougue
Our Church in the Middle East

ACOHL’s Justice and Peace Commission sends letter to President Obama

A letter from the “Justice and Peace commission” of the Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land was sent to the US President Obama for his first visit in Israel, West Bank and Jordan. Barack Obama arrived in Israel on March 20, his first visit as US president.

Dear Mr. President,

We, the heads of the Catholic/Christian Churches in Jerusalem, welcome you wholeheartedly on your forthcoming visit to Israel and Palestine. On this occasion, we would like to draw your attention to some major problems that deeply affect the Christian presence in these countries.

This year, the Palestinian people will have lived 46 years under Israeli military occupation. The plight of the Palestinian Christians is the same as that of the Palestinian people as a whole, and as a consequence, everything that affects the Palestinian people also affects the Christians.

In the occupied Palestinian territories, among the numerous violations of international law by the Israeli authorities, we mention only a few: illegal Israeli settlements, a permit regime which severely restricts access to the Holy places for Muslims and Christians alike, expropriation of privately owned Palestinian land for settlement expansion and the construction of the separation barrier (like in the present case of the valley Cremisan), etc.

Statelessness, endless family unification procedures and the rejection of the registration of children as well as the limited possibilities to expand due to few granted building permits in East Jerusalem violate basic human rights of the Palestinians and force them into displacement, migration and exile.

As part of the Arab population in Israel, the majority of the local Christian population are as such subjected to an ongoing, hidden policy of discrimination and are treated as second class citizens in the fields of education, job opportunities, property ownership, local municipal services, etc.

The Christian Palestinian presence plays an important role in this Holy Land: in a large way in the fields of education, healthcare and social services, and the absence will have catastrophic consequences especially with the rise of fundamentalism on both sides. Thus every effort should be made to preserve the Christian presence in the Holy Land, and to have it flourish in the future so that hope is not lost. The oppressive and discriminatory policies by the Israeli government constitute a violation of the protection of a religious minority which is specifically underlined by international law.

We urge you, in your position as President of the United States of America, to require the State of Israel to respect international law and to stop all illegal policies targeting the Palestinian population of the Holy Land; this would be the best way of contributing to preserve and protect the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

Most Respectfully,

Yusef Daher
Secretary
on behalf of the Justice and Peace Commission

Patriarch Twal among the 180 concelebrants at the Inaugural Mass of the Holy Father

Thousands of people flocked to St. Peter’s Square for the Mass of the Installation of Pope Francis on Tuesday, March 19, six days after his election. His Beatitude Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, was among the concelebrants and one of those who greeted the new Pope.

Bishop Marcuzzo attends enthronement of new Coptic Catholic Patriarch

His Beatitude, Ibrahim Isaac Sidrak was enthroned on Tuesday, March 12, at the Cathedral of Our Lady Queen of Egypt in Nasr city. The Patriarch was elected by the Synod of the Coptic Catholic Church on January 15, 2013. Pope Benedict XVI formally welcomed the election of His Beatitude on January 18. Bishop Marcuzzo attended the ceremony in Cairo as the official representative of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem.
Projects of the Latin Patriarchate

Grand Magisterium visits Patriarchate Project Sites

From March 7-11, 2013, the Holy Land Commission of the Grand Magisterium of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre visited several projects of the Latin Patriarchate supported in the Holy Land by the Grand Magisterium. Father Humam Khzouz, General Administrator of the Patriarchate accompanied them to the sites.

They visited the new Church in Aqaba, the Convent of the Rosary Sisters in Sweifieh, the American University of Madaba. The three members of the Holy Land Commission were: Dr. Christa von Siemens, Professor Thomas McKiernan, and Dr. Michael Whelan, who through four days visited ten projects. Dr. von Siemens, President of the Commission, said she was “very impressed with the level of work and finishing.”

The choice of a project to be completed

“Regularly,” Dr. von Siemens explains, “we come to the Holy Land to evaluate the needs of the projects proposed by the Latin Patriarchate.” Once the studied projects with their relevant dossiers have been presented to the Grand Magisterium, they are analyzed, and decision is taken to support a particular project, according to the priorities of the Patriarchate. Precise reports and regular visits follow to monitor the work progress, led by Father Khzouz. Twice a year, members of the Grand Magisterium visit the projects in the Holy Land that are funded by the Order: projects just initiated, in progress or completed.
In Jordan, the Commission was amazed “by the pure beauty” of the new Church of Stella Maris in Aqaba, which was inaugurated on December 14, 2012. Emotions were high at the parish Mass on Sunday, March 10, where families, young couples and children in Church came together. Dr. von Siemens was impressed by this visit which was an opportunity to perceive “Christianity alive in these places.” The group met with Bishop Laham, Patriarchal Vicar for Jordan, where another project, the new Vicariate in Amman, was completed a few months ago. The Commission also went to several convents and rectories, recently restored with the support of Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre, in Ruseifeh, Misdar, Hashimi, and the convent of the Rosary Sisters in Sweifieh.

One of the most important projects is the American University of Madaba. It is an undertaking that the committee has known for several years. The committee visited the University in operation with its students for the first time on Monday, March 11. The President of the Commission made no secret of being struck by the good relations that exist among the more than 850 students of different nationalities and religions. Further north, the group also visited the Wahadreh, site of the construction of a new parish house, which just started and is expected to be completed by the end of this summer.

A visit was also made to a site of a new project in 2013 in Fuheis. Work on the complete renovation of the parish house will begin in a few months.

Acknowledgements

In the course of a few days, the ten sites visited presented an image of the Church of the Holy Land, whose stones survive and are beautified, thanks to the continued support of the Grand Magisterium. Dr. von Siemens, very much taken by her encounters with the Christians of the Holy Land, concluded her trip with the words “we, not the East, we must be very grateful to the local Christians for their presence in this land.” Father Humam Khzouz, who guided the members of the Commission through the various sites, expressed gratitude to the Grand Magisterium on behalf of the Patriarchate: “Without the Grand Magisterium these restorations would not be possible.” He also wished a speedy recovery to Dr. Michael Whelan who was absent for health reasons.

Amélie de La Hougue

To read more, please visit www.lpj.org:

- 2013 Easter Message of the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem (March 26, 2013)
- Appeal from the Eastern Catholic Patriarchs from Rome, (March 22, 2013)
- Biography of Pope Francis (March 13, 2013)
- We are witnesses of the Risen Lord” Patriarch in Italy (March 15, 2013)
- Patriarch Sidrak enthroned as the new Coptic Catholic Patriarch (March 15, 2013)
- Welcoming Syrian refugees: an account by Latin Patriarchate Priest (March 5, 2013)
Vitality of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher in the Holy Land

There are associations whose vitality does not stop even after hundreds of years of existence. The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre is one of those, now in existence for 165 years, with over 28,000 members from 59 lieutenancies worldwide, committed to supporting the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. An overview of 2012 and the outlook for 2013 follows.

In 2012, Patriarch Fouad Twal and Bishop William Shomali welcomed about 3,500 Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulcher to the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and presented no less than 714 shells over the last twelve months. Although not surpassing the landmark year of 2010 (855 shells), this is a very significant number. In July 2012, pilgrim shells were presented for the first time, outside the Holy Land, in Andria Italy. We note that, more than a third were given to members from the United States, with the most numerous membership by far, followed by the Italians, Germans, English, and French. Also noteworthy was the visit of the Portugal lieutenancy, during which 24 pilgrims were invested as Knights or Ladies by Bishop Shomali at the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Co-Cathedral of the Latin Patriarchate.

Visits of friendship, prayer and support

One visit that marked the year 2012 was certainly that of Cardinal Edwin F. O’Brien, the new Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, who took over from Cardinal Foley last year. Patriarch Twal presented him with the Pilgrim Shell on November 26. A few months earlier, on January 30, 2012, the Patriarch presented the pilgrim shell to Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan, Archbishop of New York, while visiting the Holy Land and was elevated to the College of Cardinal two weeks later. We know that behind all these shells are loving pilgrims to the Holy Land. Men and women of all nationalities, bound by their prayers to the Land of Jesus, committed to visiting regularly their Mother Church and to financially assist Christians who live here. Thanks to donations from the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, we built and inaugurated the first church in Aqaba, Jordan – the Stella Maris Church.

Enthusiasm for 2013

The year 2013 promises to be as full of vitality. The Knights and Ladies by their loyal visits to the Christian communities of the Holy Land and by their prayers and financial support, are giving hope in the everyday life of our Christian faithful who are our “living stones” in the Holy Land. A few days ago, 80 homes in Beit Safafa were delivered to Christians of Jerusalem and surrounding areas, thanks to the generous support of the Equestrian Order. Many groups of Knights and Ladies are already booked in the Patriarchal agenda for the coming months. In September, the lieutenancy of Germany with no less than 600 Knights and Ladies will visit the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Amélie de La Hougue