

# News Letter



ORDO EQUESTRIS SANCTI SEPULCRI HIERSOLYMITANI

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## REFLECTIONS OF THE GRAND MASTER

### AN APPEAL TO PRAYER

From the very beginnings of Christianity there has never been a genocide of Christians as severe and cruel as that taking place in these years. The Center for the Study of Global Christianity in Massachusetts estimates that throughout the world today 11 Christians are being killed for their faith every hour. Scenes of beheading graphically filmed are, unfortunately, the tip of the iceberg, and on this account, the rampages of extreme Islam have captured our attention and concern. Modern-day martyrs there are countless and while their names will never be known for formal canonization their heavenly reward is surely guaranteed. For many years, however, in North Korea and China similar martyrdoms have been occurring. Likewise in many parts of Africa.

In addition to this "red martyrdom" Pope Francis has frequently focused attention on those victims of white martyrdom: those suffering daily persecution for their Christian Faith - exiles, those in labor camps, those forced to practice their faith

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#### IMPRESSUM

GRAND MAGISTERIUM  
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clandestinely under threat of torture and death.

We in the relative security of the West can no longer hide from the reality, especially when believers in the Holy Land and Rome itself are coming under the deadly aim of these radical fanatics. While leaders of the Western world seem paralyzed and reluctant even to speak of this genocide, as individuals we in the comfort of freedom must give individual

voice to elected officials and other silent collaborators of these evils to take action.

Who among our populations should be better informed about these calamities than members of our Order! In centuries past prayer has halted the radical zealots on our borders. One may wonder if we believe in the power of united prayer (Christians, Jews, Muslims) in our own communities to find the start of a solution before it is too late.

## The Order in Union with the Universal Church

# THE PLIGHT OF REFUGEES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE CHURCH'S MISSION



The picture of the Syrian child whose body was found washed up on the beach, which was widely circulated by the media, as well as the tragedy of 71 migrants from the Middle East who were suffocated to death in a refrigerated lorry in Austria, have caused a shock and awareness in European public opinion at the end of this summer. Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, the Archbishop of Vienna and Knight Grand

Cross of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, has spoken in favor of welcoming our "human brothers and sisters" at all levels, while barriers are being erected to stop their way. During the Angelus on September 6, the Sunday following these events, the Pope specifically asked that every parish, religious community, monastery and sanctuary in Europe, welcome one family of refugees. The



tragedies in the Middle East closely concern European citizens. In the name of the mission of the Church, members of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre – alongside many other volunteers who exhibit exemplary generosity – are committing themselves to tackling this humanitarian emergency, in response to a letter from the Grand Master, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien.

At the beginning of August, Pope Francis wrote an important message to the numerous refugees who, over the last year, have been fleeing from the terror orchestrated by the self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and pouring into the Holy Land, especially to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. On the occasion of the Secretary-General of the Italian Bishops Conference's visit to Jordan, he offered the Pope's letter, as a "word of hope", to Msgr. Maroun Lahham, the Patriarchal Vicar for Jordan. The letter constituted an appeal to the international community, asking that they do not remain silent and passive with regards to the fate of persecuted religious minorities. A few weeks before, on the occasion of the annual audience granted to members of the ROACO (Reunion of Aid Agencies for the Oriental Churches), which the Order of the Holy Sepulchre is a part of, Pope Francis vigorously denounced "those who appear as tacitly complicit, those for whom the life of thousands and thousands of families – women, men, children, elderly – seems to weigh less on the scales of interests than oil and arms", condemning the hypocrisy of those with power "who speak of peace and justice" while, at the same time, "permit the traffickers in death to operate in that land."

After the Vatican's announcement on May 13 of the recognition of the State of Palestine, the following spring the Pope clearly described the "persecution" in the Middle East as a "white-gloved terrorism", with particular reference to decisions and policies that have been adopted by some States. "Many Christians today continue to



## LETTER FROM THE GRAND MASTER ON WELCOMING REFUGEES IN EUROPE

To all European Lieutenants

Excellencies,

As the world knows, our Holy Father has launched an appeal to all Catholics in Europe to host refugees fleeing terrorism and war in their countries.

As members of this Pontifical Order of the Holy Sepulchre, we have a special duty to be at the forefront in our parishes and communities to meet this challenge of solidarity, especially towards our brothers from the biblical territories. May I ask for your assistance?

I would hope that, in each European Lieutenancy, concrete initiatives would be undertaken to this end. In this severe crisis, sacrifices are called for in fulfilling the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Please prayerfully consult and determine within your Lieutenancy how you will respond. I would hope to hear the results of your deliberations and will share them throughout the Order.

The Feast of Our Lady of Palestine will be a perfect opportunity to show our mobilization publicly.

I count on your urgent attention on this matter, and assure each one of you of my daily prayers.

In Christ,

**Edwin Cardinal O'Brien**







*"In those eyes that asked you for help and pleaded for peace, there was Jesus looking at you, asking of you that charity that makes us Christian." (Pope Francis to Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for Eastern Churches, after he returned from a visit to Christians in the Nineveh Plain, refugees in Kurdistan).*

be persecuted in the complicit silence of many with power," he said on September 7, during a Mass in the chapel of Casa Santa Marta, emphasizing that this is persecution and that "this story began with Jesus, that what they did to Jesus, they have done throughout history to his Body which is the Church."

Each one of us, today, should try to see Christ in the face of each migrant. He promised to remain with us until the end of

the world, and we can relieve his suffering by meditating and putting into practice the words spoken by Pope Francis to Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for Eastern Churches, after he returned from a visit to Christians in the Nineveh Plain, refugees in Kurdistan: "In those eyes that asked you for help and pleaded for peace, there was Jesus looking at you, asking of you that charity that makes us Christian."

## POPE FRANCIS MEETS WITH ISRAEL'S NEW PRESIDENT

"**T**he importance of interreligious dialogue and the responsibility religious leaders have to promote reconciliation and to build peace", was emphasized on September 3 at the Vatican, on the occasion of Pope Francis' first meeting with Israel's President Reuven Rivlin, for which the Pope's main collaborators were also present. The

occasion allowed them to discuss the socio-political situation of the region that has been characterized by several conflicts, and "particular attention was given to the situation concerning Christians and other minorities." They discussed problems with relations between Israel and the Holy See, the local relationship between State authorities and Catholic communities, in





*Before his meeting with the Pope, President Rivlin wanted to offer reassurance to Christians in the Holy Land, and met with the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem in Tabgha, Galilee, in the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves, which had been damaged in an arson attack by Jewish extremists on June 18.*

"the desirable prospect of the conclusion of the bilateral agreement that is currently in negotiation," particularly addressing the

situation of Christian schools in Israel facing the drastic reduction of state subsidies. The head of the State of Israel, who succeeded Shimon Peres in July 2014, wished to "remember the common origin of Judaism and Christianity," and offered a

*"Search for what unites. Overcome what divides"*

stone tablet as a gift to the Holy Father, on which can be read the verse of a psalm. In return the Pope gifted him with a bronze medallion displaying two separate rocks

joined together by an olive branch as a sign of peace, with the inscription: "Search for what unites. Overcome what divides." A few days before his meeting with the Pope, President Rivlin wanted to offer reassurance to Christians in the Holy Land, and met with the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem in Tabgha, Galilee, in the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves, which had been damaged in an arson attack by Jewish extremists on June 18.

## A NEW NUNCIO TO JORDAN AND IRAQ

**M**sr. Alberto Ortega Martin, who was born in Madrid in 1962 and ordained a priest in 1990, directed the Section for Relations with States of the Secretariat of State of the Holy See, after his diplomatic service to the Church in several countries including Lebanon. In August of this year, the Holy Father appointed him apostolic nuncio to Jordan and Iraq. We entrust the new ministry of this great friend of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary.





# RABBI ABRAHAM SKORKA: A YEAR AFTER THE HISTORIC PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND WITH POPE FRANCIS

## *A Vision of Peace for Jerusalem*

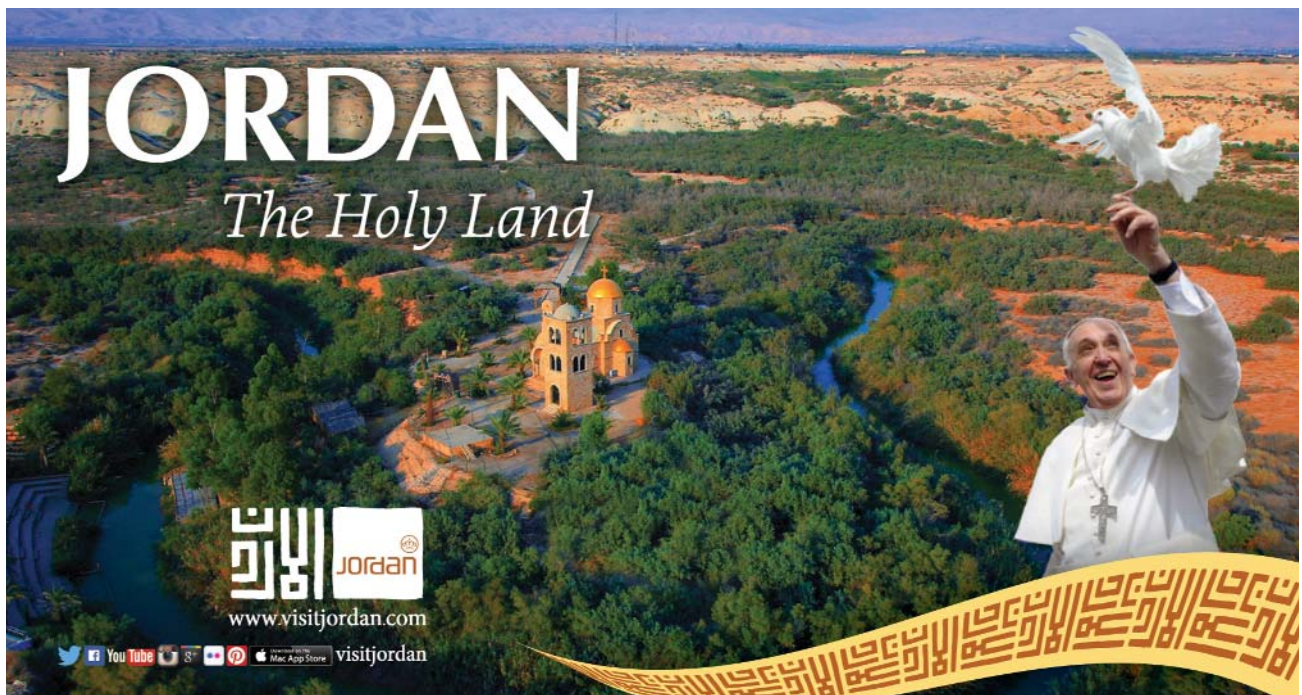
To celebrate the 50th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, the Conciliar Declaration on the Church's relationship with non-Christian Religions, the annual conference of the International Council of Christians and Jews was held in Rome this summer. Among those who participated in the conference was the Argentinean Rabbi Abraham Skorka, who, a little over a year ago, accompanied Pope Francis on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The following is a short excerpt from an interview that the Rabbi granted us, which can be read in full online at this address: <http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/en/inquiries-and-interviews/detail/articolo/oessh-42784/>

"The idea was to go to the place to which I direct my *tefilot* (prayers) and to the place where Jesus – who is so special to the

Christian faith – was born, lived, and spread his message. It is a special common place for us, and when I saw Pope Francis after he was elected, I told him: Let us go to Israel. This is the place in which our religiosity, our vision of God, and our connection with God was established. We are the children, the descendants of the great prophets who elevated their prophecies in Jerusalem.

We had our good friend Omar Abboud with us in order to show that all Abrahamic religions must embrace each other, forming a circle of spiritual power which, according to our Holy Scriptures, will bring peace to our world. This is our challenge and this was the reason for our journey, which was not a trip, but rather a pilgrimage."

**Interview by Elena Dini**



# THE EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE OF MERCY

*Exclusive interview with Msgr. Rino Fisichella,  
President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting  
the New Evangelization, who was entrusted with  
planning the Jubilee Year*

**P**ope Francis has surprised everyone: on the occasion of celebrating his first two years as Bishop of Rome, the Pope announced that on December 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, an extraordinary Jubilee Year will begin, and will be dedicated to the Divine Mercy. The Year will end on Sunday November 20, 2016, the feast of Christ the King. This special Jubilee will celebrate 50 years since the close of the Second Vatican Council, while the Year of Faith, in 2012-2013, had marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its opening. To better regulate access to the Holy Door in St. Peter's Basilica, and to avoid a long waiting period, we recommend that you register for the opportunity on the website: [www.im.va](http://www.im.va), in the "pilgrim registration" section, which will be available starting this October.



**Your Excellency, what can be expected in Rome during the Holy Year of Mercy in support of the persecuted Christians in the Middle East?**

Pope Francis desired and proclaimed the Jubilee of Mercy so that all might feel close to God's Mercy, especially those who suffer, who are experiencing trials and are in need of consolation. The Pope desires that all people, through gazing at the face of Jesus, will feel loved and comforted. Among those experiencing trials are, without a doubt, Christians in the Middle East, who currently live in persecution and face a daily battle in professing their faith. Particular attention to these Christians and their suffering will not be lacking over the course of the Holy Year.

**How might the Jubilee of Mercy be lived in a concrete way? For example,**

**while on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, is there a particular "way" that you would suggest?**

The Holy Father and the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization have provided, and will continue to provide, guidelines for celebrating the Jubilee all over the world. Various local groups will then take these common guidelines and apply them to their contexts. The same will be true in the Holy Land, where I am sure that the Custody of the Holy Land, together with bishops and other leadership, which I think will include the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, will find the best way to celebrate the Holy Year in Jesus' Land.





**In support of the “culture of encounter” that Pope Francis has promoted, will you organize any interreligious events, particularly with Muslim representatives?**

The Year of Mercy will also ensure special attention to ecumenism. In fact on January 25 there will be a celebration at St. Paul Outside the Walls. Furthermore, special attention will be given to interreligious dialogue in line with Pope Francis' message in *Misericordiae vultus*: “There is an aspect of mercy that goes beyond the confines of the Church. It relates us to Judaism and Islam, both of which consider mercy to be one of God's most important attributes. Israel was the first to receive this revelation which continues in history as the source of an inexhaustible richness meant to be shared with all mankind. As we have seen, the pages of the Old Testament are steeped in mercy, because they narrate the works that the Lord performed in favour of his people at the most trying moments of their history.

Among the privileged names that Islam attributes to the Creator are ‘Merciful and Kind’” (n. 23).

**In your opinion, in what way can the 30,000 members of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre around the world participate in and contribute to this Jubilee? What appeal is addressed to them?**

As an appeal to the members of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, I would like to use Pope Francis' words at the conclusion of *Misericordiae vultus*, which are addressed to the whole Church: “In this Jubilee Year, may the Church echo the word of God that resounds strong and clear as a message and a sign of pardon, strength, aid, and love. May she never tire of extending mercy, and be ever patient in offering compassion and comfort. May the Church become the voice of every man and woman, and repeat confidently without end: ‘Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old’ (Ps 25:6)”.

## TAILORING SUPPLIES



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## THE POPE'S WORLDWIDE PRAYER NETWORK

Jesuit Father Frédéric Fornos, the director general delegate of the Pope's worldwide prayer network, presents a spiritual work which will be available to members of the Order wherever they may be:

We are now present in one hundred countries, under the name Apostleship of Prayer ([www.apmej.net](http://www.apmej.net)). For 170 years we have made people know the challenges facing humanity and the Church's mission that are dear to the Pope. Every month he entrusts his intentions to the whole Church, and in particular to this network of prayer, as guidelines for our prayer and our mission. These cover many issues, including environmental and social challenges, human trafficking, the defense of life, peace and justice in the world, the Middle East and peace in the Holy Land, but also the vitality of our faith and the Church's mission in the world.

Few Catholics know about our network, which consists of thirty million people. In

order to pray with Pope Francis and mobilize ourselves for the great challenges of our humanity and the mission of the Church, we are about to launch an app for iPhone, Android, and Windows Phone (which will be joint with our blog, Facebook account and Twitter) in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese. Our first version, "Click to Pray", is already available. On Friday, August 7, in a private audience for the centennial of the EYM (Eucharistic Youth Movement, our branch for the youth), we presented a project to Pope Francis, a new version that in the coming months will become the digital platform for the world network "Pope Prayer". We hope that this will create a boost in prayer with the Pope for the great challenges of our world. In order to achieve this we need you and your financial support. We would like to have you as one of our partners. Please do not hesitate to contact us at: [apora@sjcuria.org](mailto:apora@sjcuria.org)

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## Proceedings of the Grand Magisterium

### THE GRAND MASTER'S VISITS IN THE FALL

At the beginning of the fall season, the Grand Master will be busy with various events taking place in different continents. During the first days of September, Cardinal O'Brien visited the Lieutenancies of Scotland (September 5), Sweden (September 7), Slovenia (September 12) and Northwestern USA (September 20) for the ceremonies of investiture. Moreover, with great joy, His Eminence traveled alongside Pope Francis during his U.S. visit. In October, the Grand Master celebrates the ceremonies of investiture in Toulouse (October 3) and Valletta (October 10). Cardinal O'Brien then is set to participate in the first meeting of the Lieutenancies of Asia and Oceania, which will be held in Adelaide on October 17 and 18, and which will be addressed in the next Newsletter. At the end of October, the first investiture in the Czech Republic will take place and will be presided over by the Grand Master.

In conclusion, confirmed commitments for the final months of the year mainly concern Italy, with visits to the Lieutenancies in Bari, Cagliari and Rome. Furthermore, he will be present at the ceremony during which the King and Queen of Belgium will be awarded with collars.

### AMERICAN LIEUTENANTS CONFERENCE IN QUEBEC

From June 4 to 6, 2015, the North American Lieutenants met in Quebec to have an opportunity for discussion and fraternal dialogue. Regular meetings are also planned for the European Lieutenants (which took place in May 2015) and, starting this year, for the Lieutenants of Asia and Oceania (to take place in the coming weeks of October). These meetings are important occasions that allow the Order, which has the joy of being present in so many countries around the world, to ensure that the leadership is in agreement on fundamental issues and that everyone is informed about recent events concerning both the Holy Land and the Order's structure itself.

In addition to the Cardinal Grand Master, Edwin O'Brien, the Governor General,

Agostino Borromeo, the Vice Governor General of North America, Patrick Powers, and other members of the Grand Magisterium, the meeting brought together ten Lieutenants from North America. Also present were the consultant Msgr. Robert Stern and Msgr. John Kozar of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA).

The busy schedule included various work sessions following the Grand Master's opening address and an introduction given by the Governor General. Vice Governor General Powers briefly summarized the Order's financial situation, while Thomas McKiernan, the President of the Commission for the Holy Land, described the projects that were implemented by the Order in 2014 and introduced the selected projects for 2015. After a short break, the



floor was given to Msgr. Kozar who shared CNEWA's perspective on the current situation in the Middle East, after which the annual reports of the Lieutenancies were presented.

Ample time was dedicated to an "open forum", which took place the entire afternoon of June 5, and which allowed the Lieutenants the opportunity of discussing themes such as membership in the Order, spirituality, ongoing programs, and administration. The morning of June 6 was devoted to topics on the agenda such as communication, the situation of the American University of Madaba, fundraising, and Hotel Columbus. The meeting officially concluded that same day with a closing reception, which was organized by the Lieutenancy for Canada-Quebec under the direction of Lieutenant Jean-Claude Michaud, the Grand Prior, Cardinal Gerard Cyprien Lacroix, and the



*The North American Lieutenants met in Quebec to have an opportunity for discussion and fraternal dialogue. Regular meetings are also planned for the European Lieutenants and, starting this year, for the Lieutenants of Asia and Oceania.*

council.

During the month of August, the Vice Governor General Patrick Powers held a conference call with the five lieutenants who were not able to attend the meeting in Quebec City, to update them on the information that was shared at the meeting.

## THE DEATH OF HONORARY CHANCELLOR MSGR. JUAN JOSÉ DORRONSORO ALLO

Msgr. Juan José Dorronsoro's funeral took place on August 11 in the Papal Basilica of St. Mary Major. Among those present was a delegation of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, for whom Msgr. Dorronsoro had been Master of Ceremonies since 2003, and then served as Chancellor from 2005 to 2012, with the rank of Knight Commander with Star. Cardinal Carlo Furno, Grand Master Emeritus of the Order, was present, along with many prelate friends of the deceased. The Mass was presided over by Archbishop Francesco Canalini, the Vicar of the Basilica and former apostolic nuncio. Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, Grand Master of the Order, who could not be present due to being abroad, sent a letter which was read at the beginning of the ceremony, in which he assured the assembly of his spiritual solidarity, and paid homage to Msgr. Dorronsoro, a great servant of the Church. Born on November 16, 1931, in Zumarraga, Spain, Dorronsoro was ordained a priest in the year 1957 and held several important positions in the Holy See before becoming Canon of the Basilica of St. Mary Major and Chancellor of the Order. He died on the night of August 10, after having had the joy of assisting in the celebrations of the Dedication of the Basilica on August 5. "The service that he gave to our Order will be remembered with gratitude for a long time," Cardinal O'Brien said in his special message.





## ON THE FEAST OF OUR LADY OF PALESTINE

On November 11, the Grand Master of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre will receive his guests at the Palazzo Della Rovere, in Rome, for the feast of Our Lady Queen of Palestine, Patroness of the Order. All around the world, from the Philippines to South Africa, from Norway to Australia, the Order's 30,000 knights and dames celebrate their Patroness' feast day, which generally falls on the last Sunday of October, by making the cause of the Holy Land known in their dioceses with various prayer initiatives and campaigns for awareness.



*The icon pictured here of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Palestine and Patroness of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, can be venerated in a room in the Palazzo Della Rovere, seat of the Grand Magisterium in Rome. It was hand painted by nuns from the Beit Jamal monastery, in Israel. For those who would like a photograph of this icon, with the corresponding prayer printed on the back, it is available upon request from the Communications Service of the Grand Magisterium ([comunicazione@oessh.va](mailto:comunicazione@oessh.va)).*

### PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, QUEEN OF PALESTINE

*Our heavenly Mother, Daughter and Queen of the Holy Land,  
we turn to you to obtain your powerful intercession.  
May graces fall like abundant rain on your people,  
heal all the hardened hearts and bring justice and peace to the Holy Land.  
May Jerusalem shine like a beacon of unity between Christians who are privileged  
to live close to the Holy sites, sanctified by the life, the passion,  
the death and resurrection of Jesus.  
May this Holy City be a haven of friendship and understanding  
between Jews, Christians and Muslims.  
May intolerance and suspicion vanish, may love eradicate fear.  
Our Heavenly Mother, look with pity on all those who live on the land  
which is yours, afflicted by the differences and the conflicts for many generations.  
May all those who do not believe in the one God  
be touched by your grace and reach the fullness of faith, hope and love.  
Through Christ, Our Lord.  
Amen.  
Our Lady, Daughter and Queen of the Holy Land, pray for us*

**Msgr. Fouad Twal**  
Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem



## The Order and the Holy Land

# INTERVIEW WITH MSGR. GIUSEPPE LAZZAROTTO, APOSTOLIC DELEGATE TO JERUSALEM AND PALESTINE, AND APOSTOLIC NUNCIO TO ISRAEL

*"The culture of encounter and dialogue is at the very heart of the mission of the Church"*

**M**sgr. Giuseppe Lazzarotto, in what way could the agreement signed on 26 June, between the Holy See and the State of Palestine, be described as historic, and in your opinion what fundamental elements does it contain?

We can certainly call this an historic agreement because it is the first Treaty between the Holy See and the State of Palestine. But its real importance lies in the fact that it offers a clear recognition and precise legal guarantees to the Catholic Church and its institutions in Palestine.

Regarding the content - which will be released after the ratification of the Agreement - the very title indicates it. This is a "global agreement" and thus covers all aspects of the life of the Church, its members, clergy and faithful, its structures and institutions. An important chapter concerning religious freedom and conscience is elaborate and detailed. Other aspects of the life of the Church in Palestine are also addressed: its jurisdiction, personal

status, places of worship, social and charitable activity, means of social communication. Another chapter is dedicated to taxation issues and other aspects of church property.

**Can we consider that this agreement is a model for organizing the presence and life of the Church in all other Muslim-majority countries?**

The Agreement can surely be an important point of reference for other Muslim-majority countries where the church can boast a long tradition of presence and activity on behalf of the Christian community and society in general. But I believe it is important to understand why the Holy See

negotiates and concludes such agreements. At the same time as it seeks to achieve legal security, the Church also intends to offer concrete ways for its members to promote the welfare of the society in which they live.

**Regarding the agreement with Israel, which is still under negotiation, do**





*"It is essential that, in our schools, we engage further in seeking new educational pathways to meet the challenges imposed by encounter and dialogue in the specific context of the Holy Land and, in general, the Middle East", emphasized Msgr. Lazzarotto.*

**you think we are heading for a signature in the short term?**

The agreement with Israel is virtually defined in its essential aspects. There are only a few technical points on which the Government of Israel has yet to decide. Various circumstances, including the formation of a new Government, have so far delayed the conclusion of the Agreement. For its part, the Holy See hopes we can soon resume negotiations and find a common agreement on the points that are still outstanding.

**How does the Church promote this culture of encounter and interreligious dialogue in the Holy Land, and what is especially the role of Catholic schools in this area?**

I would say the promotion of the culture of encounter and dialogue is at the heart of the mission of the Church. It is the Gospel message, which she is called to proclaim, that requires it. In the Holy Land the Church accomplishes this by all its institutions and especially by its network of schools that can boast a long tradition of

teaching and high level of education recognized by all. I think it is essential that, in our schools, we engage further in seeking new educational pathways to meet the challenges imposed by encounter and dialogue in the specific context of the Holy Land and, in general, the Middle East.

**Can you briefly describe the legal status of Catholic schools in Palestine on the one hand, and Israel on the other, and tell us in this regard what challenges face the Church in the two countries?**

Both Israel and Palestine recognize the right of the Catholic Church to exercise its educational mission and to

establish schools. The State of Israel also provides some financial support, as it does also for other schools in the same category. Currently the level of economic commitment of the State is the subject of a dispute between Christian schools in Israel and the Ministry of Education. The recent visit to the Vatican of President Reuven Rivlin offered the opportunity to express the

**“ What the Church asks in truth is to fulfill its mission in the most efficient manner ”**





common wish that this issue could quickly find a satisfactory solution. What the Church asks in truth is to fulfill its mission in the most efficient manner.

**In your opinion what are the fruits of the visit of Pope Francis to the Holy Land in May 2014?**

The visit of Pope Francis in May 2014 remains a point of reference and encouragement, strong and clear, to all who sincerely work for peace in the Holy Land. The words and gestures of the Holy Father are also an appeal to all the leaders to open up to a higher dimension of politics. I think especially of the moment of prayer to which he invited the President of Israel and the President of Palestine in the presence of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople.

**How are the people of Gaza living today, a year after the “protective edge” operation, in particular the members of the small Catholic community, and what can we do for these people in a concrete manner?**

In Gaza the situation is very difficult after the war last year. Even the reconstruction has not yet been initiated. Our small Catholic community continues to offer a generous and courageous testimony among many difficulties. It does so mainly through the three schools and the homes for assistance to disabled children and the elderly.

**Are refugees from Iraq and Syria welcomed in Israel and also in Palestine, as they are in Jordan? Are these refugees victims of anti-**

**Christian persecution, as claimed by some Western media, or do you think that their plight is the subject of a global operation to promote the “clash of civilizations” in the strategic interest of one particular camp?**

Regarding the situation of Christians in Iraq and in Syria, and more generally in the Middle East, we all know the frequent calls by Pope Francis, who continues to invite us to prayer and action on behalf of all the Christians who suffer persecution because of their faith. The situation is certainly very

complex and very difficult to decipher. Nevertheless the words of the Holy Father are clear and push the international community to think seriously about the injustices of which Christians are the victims.

**How do you see the future of the region, from the**

**outpost of Jerusalem, what is your hope, and how can the Order of the Holy Sepulchre participate even further in the service of peace in the Middle East?**

The general framework of the situation and the future in the Holy Land and the Middle East remain bleak. But we have learned from the Lord that we must never cease to sow hope even when discord seems to stifle everything. This is the great challenge for the Church in these times, well beyond this region. The Order of the Holy Sepulchre will find its place and continue its commitment to dialogue and collaboration with the local Church and its institutions.

**Interview by François Vayne**

**“ The words of the Holy Father are clear and push the international community to think seriously about the injustices of which Christians are the victims ”**



## RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY: 2015 PROJECTS APPROVED BY THE GRAND MAGISTERIUM

As is done every year, in addition to the monthly support for the expenses of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Order of the Holy Sepulchre selects certain projects to be carried out. These projects, among those presented by the Patriarchate, have been positively evaluated by the Commission for the Holy Land.

In 2015, three projects were selected, and are briefly described below.

### RENOVATION OF THE MONASTERY OF JAFFA OF NAZARETH (ISRAEL)

Jaffa of Nazareth is situated only a few kilometres north of Nazareth, in the state of Israel. The local parish includes some 580 families and the complex includes, apart from the church itself, a school, a kindergarten, the residence of the Parish priest including his office, and a house for the religious sisters. The work that will be implemented over the next three years includes the expansion of the number of classes to enable the school to accommodate students to the level of higher secondary education with the consequent displacement of the kindergarten, and of the accommodation of the priest and sisters to a new building. Currently, the school and kindergarten have 555 students.



### FINAL PHASE OF THE NEW CHURCH AND THE MARJ ALHAMAM COMPLEX (JORDAN)

Located on the outskirts of Amman, the city of Marj Alhamam directly serves an area where there are about 1,500 faithful. The Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Apparition live in the Convent of Marj Alhamam. They currently have 15 novices and postulants. The pastoral work of this community is of great help to the people. Whereas the church could accommodate up to 120 people, the new

Parish, under construction, will have a capacity of 600 people and a new hall for 500 people. The work is currently in its final phase.



## COMPLETING THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE CENTRE OF OUR LADY OF PEACE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CULTURAL CENTRE (JORDAN)

The Centre of Our Lady of Peace was opened near Amman in 2004 by the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and currently offers a range of services for people with disabilities, as well as supporting Church youth movements in Jordan in various ways. In finishing the ground floor of the Centre, more office space will be available, as well as meeting rooms and an apartment for the sisters who live there.

## THE CREMISAN WALL: “THE LAST NAIL IN BETHLEHEM’S COFFIN”?

Despite objections from the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, who is concerned about the 60 Palestinian families in the Cremisan Valley whose lands are under threat, Israeli bulldozers resumed the construction of the Separation Wall last month on August 17, uprooting around fifty olive trees that were centuries old. The American Bishops’ Conference asked American Secretary of State John Kerry to intervene with Israeli authorities so that this ongoing construction might end. “The construction of the Separation Wall and the confiscation of lands of the local families are threats and insults to peace,” wrote the American bishops. A recent 90 page long report, which aims to shed light on this issue that first began in 2006, has just been published by the Society of St. Yves -



Catholic Center for Human Rights, with the eloquent title: “The last nail in Bethlehem’s coffin.” Using pictures and statistics, this report presents a brief history of the problem, the main issues at stake and the legal implications, regarding Israeli civilian law, military law and international law.

*Source: Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem*

## AN APPEAL FROM THE CUSTOS: LET’S NOT ABANDON THE HOLY LAND!

The Holy Land is not merely a geographic location. It is much more than that. It is a place that is very much alive, where you can immerse yourself in the colors and biblical scents of the scriptures, and it is inhabited by various communities, including Christians. In a

message issued at the end of July, Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Custos of the Holy Land, reported that in recent months, “especially due to the fear generated by the wars in the Middle East, and the attacks committed by fundamentalist groups that have caused bloodshed in Western countries





as well, pilgrimages to the Holy Land have undergone a dramatic decline." In response to this situation Fr. Pizzaballa says wholeheartedly: "Let's not abandon the Holy Land!" and he gives two valid reasons: the guaranteed security in sanctuaries and in the areas frequented by pilgrims, and the great need that Christians in the Holy Land have for "the presence and support of pilgrims who come here in prayer from all over the world." A few days after the Custos spoke these words, Sister Donatella Lessio, an Elizabethan religious

sister who has worked for years at the service of the Caritas Baby Hospital in Bethlehem, launched a video appeal entitled "Let us go to that land ... and let's get involved." Sister Donatella has also noticed the decline of pilgrims in the Holy Land. To those who do not come because they are afraid she says: "There is nothing to fear! Here, everything is quiet. Here, more than anywhere else, security is not failing. As Christians, we cannot experience fear, for as St. John says: The one that carries fear cannot love."

## THE BISHOPS' CONFERENCES OF THE EUROPEAN NATIONS IN THE HOLY LAND: "THE ANGUISH KNOWS NO BOUNDS"

At the invitation of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Msgr. Fouad Twal, the Plenary Assembly of the Presidents of the Bishop's Conferences of the 45 European nations was held in the Holy Land for the first time in September, and mainly addressed the issue of refugees fleeing from the Middle East. At the conclusion of the Assembly, the CCEE prepared a message addressed to the UN. The following is an important excerpt from this message:

"Looking at the joys, sufferings and challenges of the Church in the different countries, there emerged a picture of the great movement of peoples: asylum-seekers, refugees, migrants. The anguish knows no bounds. The complexity of this exodus, with its inevitable differentiations, demands great attention from the individual States, whose situations are radically different, with the aim of responding promptly to the needs of immediate assistance and welcome of people desperate due to war, persecution, and misery. Through the necessary institutions, the States must maintain public order,

guarantee justice for all and offer generous willingness to those truly in need, with a view to respectful and collaborative integration. The commitment of the Churches of Europe is great, and, following the indications of the Holy Father Pope Francis, they are collaborating with the States, who are primarily responsible for the social and economic life of their peoples. The many experiences already underway encourage the pursuit and intensification of every effort. Given the complexity of the situations and the breadth of the humanitarian tragedies, we hope that the UN will take the situation into decisive consideration and reach effective solutions not just with respect to the first welcome but also to the migrants' countries of origin, taking appropriate measures to stop the violence and build the peace and development of all peoples. Furthermore, peace in the Middle East and in North Africa is vital for Europe, just as it is crucial that a true peace throughout the continent itself be reached as soon as possible, starting from Ukraine."



## FROM THE WORK OF SAINT JAMES TO THE VICARIATE FOR HEBREW SPEAKING CATHOLICS IN ISRAEL: 60 YEARS OF HISTORY

Sixty years have passed since temporary permission was granted to the Work of Saint James by the then Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Alberto Gori, and since the first mass was celebrated in Latin in Jaffa. The Association has been called to work for the development of the Catholic community, to help Jewish converts to Catholicism to integrate both into the Universal Church and into the Israeli community, to raise awareness within the Church of her Jewish origins, and to combat anti-Semitism. In 2013 the Vicariate of Saint James was established: it pursues the Work's mission and promotes pastoral care as well as evangelization and training for migrant workers, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Father David Neuhaus, responsible for the Saint James Vicariate for Hebrew speaking Catholics in Israel, recalls how there is good reason to be thankful for all that has happened over these 60 years: the conciliar document *Nostra Aetate*, which marks the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the State of Israel, and the growth of the *kehillot* (parishes), which today number at seven and belong to this Vicariate.



Father David Neuhaus, responsible for the Saint James Vicariate for Hebrew speaking Catholics in Israel, in a meeting with members of the Commission for the Holy Land of the Grand Magisterium of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

But there are also many challenges that these communities are facing. Perhaps the most significant is finding ways to transmit the Faith to the new generations that are increasingly tempted to assimilate into Jewish and secular society, and sometimes, to convert. Another particular challenge is creating bridges between the Palestinian world and the Israeli world. Father Neuhaus writes in his pastoral letter: "We are all

invited to reflect on the fact that God Almighty has planted the seed of faith in Christ deep in the soil of both Palestinian (and Arab) and Israeli societies. Does this have significance for the vocation of Christ's disciples who, though separated by walls of enmity because of the ongoing conflict, are united by their faith in

Christ? [...] Brought together, despite the walls of enmity, because "He is our peace", Hebrew speaking and Arabic speaking disciples of Christ are called to show that justice, peace and equality are possible in our land."

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of the Holy See, informed the Vicariate of Pope Francis' apostolic blessing on this celebratory anniversary.



## The Life of the Lieutenancies

The Lieutenancies are invited to contact us to share their experiences:  
[comunicazione@oessh.va](mailto:comunicazione@oessh.va)

### GRAND PRIOR OF HUNGARY PASSES AWAY

Cardinal László Paskai, Archbishop Emeritus of Esztergom, Budapest, died on August 17, at age 88. Pope Francis honored his memory with a telegram. Cardinal Paskai was ordained a priest on March 3, 1951, became a bishop in 1978, and a cardinal in 1988. He presided over the Hungarian Bishops' Conference during a period of historic transition for his country and the whole of the old "communist bloc" in Eastern Europe. Our prayers go out to the members of the Hungarian Lieutenancy of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, in mourning their Grand Prior.

### WAITING FOR THE SEEDS TO SPRING FORTH: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MAGISTRAL DELEGATION FOR NEW ZEALAND

In 1994 the Franciscan Father Anthony Malone was appointed the New Zealand Commissioner of the Holy Land. The same year, during his visit to the Holy Land, he came into contact with other Franciscans and lay people who belonged to the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. Through these encounters an idea came to Father Malone, the idea of founding a group in New Zealand connected to the Order. The then Archbishop of Wellington, Cardinal Williams, positively welcomed the intuition of the priest, and encouraged him to continue. However, when Father Malone was elected in 1998 to be the Superior of the Franciscans in New Zealand, the initiative of laying the foundations for the Order in New Zealand suffered a temporary setback, but Providence continued to act.

In early 2010, the British Knight James

Bickford moved to New Zealand for work and soon contacted Bishop Patrick Dunn of Auckland, sharing with him his desire to form a peripheral structure of the Order in his diocese. Immediately Bishop Dunn put the knight in touch with Fr. Malone and, soon after, together with an aspiring knight and Msgr. Hackett, they organized a trip to visit the Lieutenancy of Australia-New South Wales. From that point on, the steps that led to the founding of the Magistral Delegation for New Zealand quickly fell into place.

During the year 2011, Bickford, Fr. Malone and Msgr. Hackett organized a full training program for six aspiring knights and dames who received the Investiture in the Auckland Cathedral in 2012. New Zealand was now a Section of the Order belonging to the Lieutenancy for Australia-New South Wales. The following years saw the





*In the next picture, the first Investitures in New Zealand in 2012. On the right, James Bickford, the then president of the Section for the New Zealand. Below, the Investiture of Jack Gibbs, Magistral Delegate, by Bishop Patrick Dunn in 2012.*



consolidation of the structure. In 2014, when Bickford was transferred by his company to Singapore, Knight John (Jack)



Gibbs was appointed as the new President of the Section. The year 2014 was also the year in which members of the Order who belonged to the Section voted unanimously in requesting that New Zealand receive the status of Magistral Delegation.

Cardinal O'Brien, the Grand Master of the Order, was pleased to sign three decrees this year in July: one for the founding of the new Magistral Delegation for New Zealand, one for the appointment of John Barry Gibbs to Magistral Delegate, and thirdly for the appointment of Most Rev. Patrick James Dunn, the Bishop of Auckland, to Grand Prior of the Magistral Delegation.

## UPDATES ON OUR WEBSITE: [INFO.OESSH.VA](http://INFO.OESSH.VA)

**A**t the time of this newsletter's publication, Pope Francis was concluding his important trip to Cuba and the United States of America. We invite you to visit our website for news that we will publish about the event, especially regarding the participation of members of the Order in the 8<sup>th</sup> World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia.

