

# News Letter

ORDO EQUESTRIS SANCTI SEPULCRI HIERSOLYMITANI

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## REFLECTIONS OF THE GRAND MASTER

All of us are quite familiar with the opening foundational statement in Article 2 of our Statutes declaring the principal purpose of membership in the Order of the Holy Sepulchre:

"...to strengthen in its members the practice of Christian life, in absolute fidelity to the Supreme Pontiff and according to the teachings of the Church...."

According to our records 7.3% of our membership are ecclesiastics – that is, overwhelming, priests. (Individual lieutenancies vary significantly in their percentage of priest members.)

It is my solid impression that our priests could be more effectively employed in fulfilling our members' goal to achieve personal holiness and I would ask our Lieutenants and Priors to help bring this about. Indeed, we might stress our clergy serving more as chaplains than as "knights".

I've no doubt that the great majority of our priests would take to the pastoral challenge of serving members at every level and in every area of our lieutenancies in spiritual support:

- liturgical planning and advise;
- individual spiritual direction;
- availability for Reconciliation in connection with liturgies;
- conferences for members and for prospective members/members in formation;
- assistance in identifying worthy new members;
- organized outreach to "inactive" members;

- newsletter meditations.

This would imply three steps for each Lieutenant and Staff:

1. Having familiarity with each priest member and specific knowledge both of his willingness to assist and in which of the above areas he might be of service;
2. Making it clear to each incoming ecclesiastical member that in joining the Order he is assuming important spiritual and pastoral responsibilities to the extent he is able;
3. Informing members of the resources our "Knight Chaplains" offer them.

As I mentioned during our Spring meeting of European and North American Lieutenants, there is vast potential here for the spiritual strengthening throughout our Order.

To ecclesiastics already so engaged: Thank you!

To those not yet so engaged: Help Wanted!



*Pastores Dabo Vobis, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien's motto, recalls God's promise as recounted by the prophet Jeremiah: "I will give you shepherds after my own heart" (Jer 3:15).*

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IMPRESSUM GRAND MAGISTERIUM OF THE EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM  
00120 VATICAN CITY - E-mail: [comunicazione@oessh.va](mailto:comunicazione@oessh.va)

## The Order in Union with the Universal Church

# THE JUBILEE OF MERCY CONTEMPLATING THE FIVE WOUNDS OF CHRIST

**T**he Jubilee of Mercy, which closes November 20, the feast of Christ the King, has already seen about 10 million pilgrims flock to Rome, despite the fact that this "decentralized" Holy Year can be fully experienced in every diocese in the world. During a recent Jubilee event the Pope spoke in particular of the five wounds of Christ and we would like to propose his words to readers in this newsletter as they perfectly illustrate the message transmitted by the Order of the Holy Sepulchre insignia.

"Lord, In memory of the five wounds that we carry on our insignia, we pray to You...", reads the famous prayer of Knights and Dames. **"We can find the definitive icon of the vessel of mercy in the wounds of the risen Lord.** Those wounds remind us that the traces of our sins, forgiven by God, never completely heal or disappear; they remain as scars. Scars, we know, are sensitive; they do not hurt, yet they remind us of our old wounds. God's mercy is in those scars, our scars," Pope Francis





*The Cross of Jerusalem, symbol of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, evokes the five wounds of Christ, source of inner purification and spiritual renewal for pilgrims who, like us, are on the path to the Kingdom of God.*

summed up perfectly speaking to the priests, who came to the eternal city for the Jubilee in June, 2016. "In the scars of the risen Christ, the marks of the wounds in his hands and feet but also in his pierced heart, we find the true meaning of sin and grace," he continued, stating that in contemplating the wounded heart of the Lord, we see ourselves reflected in him, as in a mirror, "His heart, and our own, are similar: both are wounded and risen. But we know that his heart was pure love and was wounded because it willed to be so; **our heart, on the other hand, was pure wound, which was healed because it allowed itself to be loved**". Another example of the spiritual logic with which the Holy Father encourages us to move forward is the prayer he recites before going to bed, which he mentioned to pilgrims during the general audience on

Wednesday, June 22, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean!" inspired by the Leper's plea to Jesus (Luke 5, 12). The Pope added that every night he says five Our Fathers, "**one for every one of Christ's wounds, because Jesus cleanses us with his wounds**". Could we too not pray invoking the mercy of the Heavenly Father through the five wounds of Christ, which in becoming scars, are a testament to his victorious love? In the words of Peter's successor, may every member of the Order, called to witness to the power of the Resurrection, renew their awareness during this Holy Year that: "The real vessel of mercy, then, is the mercy which each of us received and which created in us a new heart. This is the "new wineskin" to which Jesus referred (cf. *Luke 5:37*), the "healed sore".

## JUBILEE CALENDAR UP TO THE FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING

**T**here are still a few months left to receive the grace and spiritual renewal of the Jubilee Year. The great events scheduled to take place in the Eternal City include the Jubilee of Operators and volunteers of Mercy, September 2 to 4, the Jubilee of Catechists, September 23 to 25, the Marian Jubilee, October 23 to 25 and the Jubilee of Prisoners on November 6, prior to the closing of the Holy door at St. Peter's in Rome on November 20, the feast of Christ the King.





## Proceedings of the Grand Magisterium

### WELCOME TO AMBASSADOR ALFREDO BASTIANELLI, NEW CHANCELLOR OF THE ORDER

The Grand Master of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, has appointed Ambassador Alfredo Bastianelli as Chancellor for a term of four years. Bastianelli is a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St. Gregory the Great and a Grand Officer of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic. Born in Rome on January 26, 1951, he married Fiammetta Fiorentino in 1983, and is father to three sons: Giovanni Battista, Ascanio and Niccolò.

A graduate in Law, the new Chancellor served the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for many years, holding positions at the Italian Consulate in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and at Italian embassies in Canada, Mozambique and Indonesia, in addition to the Permanent Representation at the European Union. He then served as Ambassador of his country in Angola, Cyprus and Belgium.

Alfredo Bastianelli has also been a Gentleman of His Holiness since 2007. The members of the Order, present throughout the world, wish him welcome, and join together in prayer, entrusting his new mission to Our Lady of Palestine.



## THE ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE BIDS FINAL FAREWELL TO HONORARY ASSESSOR MSGR. GIUSEPPE DE ANDREA

Archbishop Giuseppe De Andrea was born in Rivarolo Canavese on 20 April, 1930. He was ordained a priest in 1953 in the Consolata Missions Institute, a congregation that devotes particular attention to the evangelization of peoples.

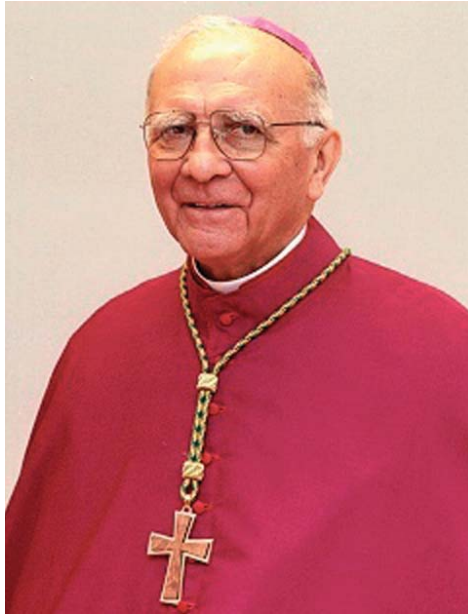
The young priest served in the Diocese of Greensburg, Pennsylvania (USA), for more than two decades, where he held various pastoral positions in education and administration. He was called by the Holy See to serve in the office of Permanent Observer to the United Nations in New York from 1983 to 1994. Subsequently for five years he worked for the Vatican as the Undersecretary of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People.

Monsignor De Andrea received the fullness of the priesthood in 2001 and was appointed titular Archbishop of Anzio. He also received the responsibility of serving as Apostolic Nuncio to Kuwait, Bahrain and Yemen, in addition to serving as Apostolic Delegate to the Arabian Peninsula. In the homily at De Andrea's episcopal consecration, Cardinal Angelo Sodano recalled the faithfulness to the call received that has always accompanied this pastor of God's Church: "Dear Father Giuseppe, an immense field of work opens before you. As the young Samuel, you listened to the Lord's voice, and promptly responded: 'Here I am,

O Lord... your servant is listening' (*Samuel* 3:1-10). Like Mary on the day of the Annunciation, you expressed your 'yes' to the Lord's call". In 2003 he was also appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Qatar. In 2005, upon having reached the age limit, he retired from diplomatic office.

The Equestrian Order of the Holy

Sepulchre of Jerusalem has been fortunate enough to benefit from the experience and pastoral care of Msgr. De Andrea in the years when he served as Assessor of the Order (2008-2013), a position which he carried out with special dedication from 2011-2012, the period of time between the resignation of the Grand Master Cardinal Foley and the moment his successor, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, took possession of his position. From that time until his last days, as



Honorary Assessor, he was always close to the mission of our Knights and Dames, and sustained it with his efforts and prayers.

Monsignor De Andrea passed away on 29 June, 2016, the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, and his funeral was held on the first Friday of July in St. Peter's Basilica. All members are united with the Grand Master, the Governor General and members of the Grand Magisterium, in accompanying this friend and supporter of the Order with prayers as he has returned to the house of the Father.



## A NEW WEBSITE WITH A UNIVERSAL DIMENSION

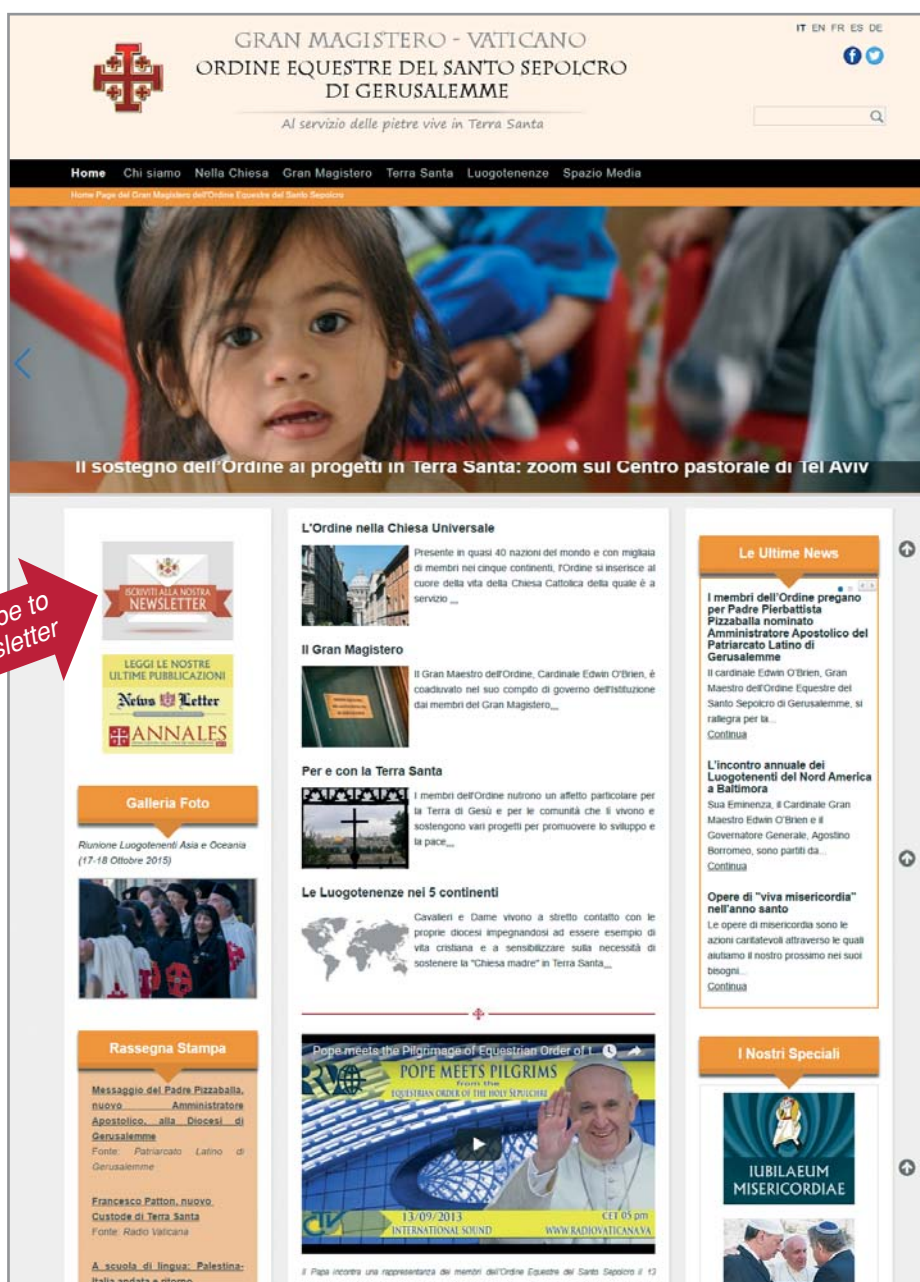
On Tuesday June 28 last, during the European Lieutenants meeting in Rome, the Grand Master Cardinal Edwin O' Brien officially launched the Grand Magisterium's new website, which is now available in five languages: [www.oessh.va](http://www.oessh.va).

All members, Knights and Dames, but also friends of the Order and press can now subscribe to the Newsletter via email.

Each Lieutenancy can send texts and images to be included, as well as links to articles

published in the press. This site will be able to reflect the universality of the Order, and the dynamism of its members and create links, where possible, to the Lieutenancies various publications in the corresponding language areas.

The Grand Magisterium is also present in social media: a Facebook page (Gran Magistero OESSH) and a Twitter account (Gran Mag OESSH), with the cross representing the five wounds of Christ and the icon of Our Lady of Palestine. All this helps to renew the Order's image to raise awareness of its spiritual mission. Visit us and follow us!




# NORTH AMERICAN LIEUTENANTS ANNUAL MEETING IN BALTIMORE

*In early June the North American Lieutenants gathered for their annual meeting in Baltimore, Maryland. It was the first ever meeting of Lieutenants in the Premier See of the United States.*



*The Lieutenants of North America and their consorts during the meeting which was held in Baltimore, in the United States, last June.*

**H**is Eminence, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, Grand Master, and Governor General Agostino Borromeo, travelled from Rome to attend the meeting. Vice Governor General Powers, and four members of the Grand Magisterium, attended two days of meetings along with Monsignor John E. Kozar, President of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA), and Monsignor Robert Stern, President Emeritus of the CNEWA and consultant to the Order.

On Thursday evening, June 2, the Grand Master presided at Vespers in the historic Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Most Reverend William E. Lori, Archbishop of Baltimore, welcomed the group to Baltimore. Following Vespers, a reception was held in the Archbishop's residence

where Archbishop Lori greeted guests and provided details on the history of the first Roman Catholic diocese in the United States.

The Archdiocese of Baltimore was established as a diocese on 6 November 1789, with Father John Carroll as the first Bishop of Baltimore. Baltimore was later established as an Archdiocese in 1808. It is here where the Catholic University of America was founded, the site of the First Synod and Councils of Baltimore, and where Baltimore Catechism was promulgated.

The meetings commenced with the Grand Master giving an opening address in which he emphasized the importance of the annual meeting, and asked that the Lieutenants continue their efforts in renewing the spiritual lives of the Knights





and Dames. Governor General Borromeo also addressed the group and provided an update on the hotel, which thus far is entrusted to the Columbus society, and the recent appointment of the Order's new Chancellor, His Excellency Ambassador Alfredo Bastianelli. Vice Governor General Powers gave a detailed presentation on the finances of the Order.

The two days of meetings included a wide variety of topics ranging from the daily operations of a Lieutenancy, to finances, liturgy, pilgrimages, and candidate formation. Several newly appointed Lieutenants attended and the meeting provided them the opportunity to observe and participate in various discussions.

Professor Thomas McKiernan, President of the Holy Land Commission, gave an update on the construction projects currently underway in the Patriarchate and

insight into the planned 2016 programs. Monsignor John E. Kozar, President of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA), having recently returned from the Middle East, provided first-hand insight into the refugee crisis facing Christians in Kurdistan.

On Saturday morning, the Lieutenants and their spouses attended Mass at the historic National Shrine of Saint Alphonsus Liguori, located in downtown Baltimore, where Monsignor Robert L. Stern was the principal celebrant and homilist. The final day of meetings included discussions about the legacy program, recruitment efforts, microcredit opportunities, the Squires program, and activities planned during the Year of Mercy. The meetings officially concluded on Saturday with an evening dinner honoring the Grand Master.

**John Carmen Piunno**

## ANNUAL MEETING OF EUROPEAN LIEUTENANTS IN ROME

**T**he European Lieutenants of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre held their annual meeting at the headquarters of the Grand Magisterium in Rome, June 27 and 28, 2016.

Welcoming them, the Grand Master Cardinal Edwin O'Brien spoke of the importance of the imminent Jubilee pilgrimage to the Marian shrine of Pompeii, October 15, in the footsteps of Blessed Bartolo Longo, the first lay member of the Order to be beatified, a model of holiness for all the Knights and Dames. European Lieutenancies are particularly invited to send their delegates on this pilgrimage, organized by the Italian Lieutenancies.

Following on from this, the Governor General, Agostino Borromeo, spoke of giving priority to prayer and Christian formation,

thanking the cardinal for his "fruitful stimulus of the Order's spiritual development," seen in his actively taking part in Investitures on all five continents.

The Governor then spoke of how the members of the Order, encouraged to become increasingly involved in the commitments they have taken on, were more generous than ever considering that donations have reached, for the first time, more than 13.5 million euro (here we must take into consideration the past year's fluctuating currency exchange rates).

The continued growth and expansion of the Order, especially in Eastern Europe and Latin America, was outlined by the newly appointed Chancellor, Ambassador Alfredo Bastianelli. He also unveiled the new website of the Grand Magisterium, in five





*European Lieutenants gather around Cardinal O'Brien during their Spring Meeting at the Order's headquarters in Rome.*

languages, which will foster the Order's international communications ([www.oessh.va](http://www.oessh.va)).

Engineer Pier Carlo Visconti, gave a presentation of the Grand Magisterium's financial budget, noting a favorable trend and a positive year, thanks to reduced costs and increased revenue. Pierre Blanchard, a member of the Grand Magisterium, went on to explain that this positive result is also the fruit of the Grand Magisterium's prudent management of revenues in favor of the Holy Land.

Archbishop Antonio Franco, Assessor of the Order, then gave an outline of the financial situation regarding the San Giovanni Battista Foundation, the institution established by the Holy See to support Catholic universities and in particular that of Madaba, Jordan, to promote a culture of encounter. Last year Lieutenancies responded to the Grand Master's call to support this Church institution, whose

development is promising and, through the Foundation, the Secretariat of State has provided a loan that the

Latin Patriarchate will have to repay over five years.

Other topics that were covered include the frustration expressed by Lieutenants in the delay in the reconstruction of Gaza, despite considerable funds having been allocated. However, for the moment the Israeli authorities generally continue to prohibit the export of products that are not food, clothing and medicines to this territory. The Lieutenants are also interested in the evolution of the social reality in Israel, a country that sees the Hebrew-speaking Catholic community in expansion due to the number of migrant workers, in particular from Asia, whose children are educated in Israeli schools.

The president of the Holy Land Commission, Thomas McKiernan, gave a presentation on the Order's involvement



with the Vicariate for migrants in Israel, in helping the younger children of immigrants through the establishment of a professionally organized daycare center. He also spoke in detail of the other projects of the Grand Magisterium in the Holy Land for 2016: a kindergarten in Jordan that will allow the development of a school, the expansion of a playground at another school, building work for a nursing home in Taybeh, Palestine, and an increase in teachers' salaries in the Patriarchate schools, which is vital in order to preserve the quality of education.

In this context the Commission has proposed a five-year plan to simplify the management of schools and to improve provisions for social security contributions and staff pensions, to the Patriarchate. "We want to be part of the solution, not the problem," said the Vice Governor General in America, Patrick Powers. He was referring to the issue which faces the new apostolic administrator, Father Pizzaballa, one he will have to attempt to resolve. In fact, Fr. Pizzaballa joined the group over dinner

Monday night, honoring the Lieutenants and the whole Order with his presence. Through his cooperation, the Order can count on a healthy coordination of aid, with each Lieutenancy being able to devote 10% of its resources to projects other than those of the Latin Patriarchate, for example to aid the Catholic communities of the Greek-Melkite and Maronite churches.

The meeting was followed by a lengthy exchange on how to reach out to the non-active members of the Order. Some of these are very old but still in communion of prayer with the Holy Land, while others have distanced themselves, even morally. In this regard, a committee chaired by the Chancellor will present proposals to the Grand Master.

Concluding, Cardinal O'Brien spoke of his desire that ordained members of the Order be increasingly integrated into the spiritual accompaniment of Knights and Dames' missions, especially during this Year of Mercy, the door of which is still open until the feast of Christ the King, November 20 next.

## ECHOES OF THE GRAND MASTER'S VISITS

**T**he Grand Master of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, travels throughout the world to meet Knights and Dames and to continuously encourage them to live their spiritual vocation witnessing to the grace of the Resurrection of Christ and his merciful love in the heart of the society to which they belong.

Cardinal O'Brien was in Poland, on June 10 and 11, for the Investiture that took place in the Pelplin Cathedral; he then went to Pompeii, to the Marian shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary, founded by Blessed Bartolo Longo, for the Investiture of a Member of the Order organized by the Lieutenancy for Italy South Tyrrhenian, on June 24 and 25. From July 22 to 24 he presides at an Investiture in Maynooth, Ireland. In September, the Grand Master will be in Asia, where he was invited to preside over an Investiture in Guam on September 8; on September 11 he will be in Taiwan and the Philippines on September 15. He will be in Paris, on September 23 and 24, to celebrate an Investiture of the French Lieutenancy in Saint-Louis des Invalides. Finally, at the end of September he will be among the members of the USA Western Lieutenancy in Tucson, Arizona.



## The Order and the Holy Land

### STARTING ANEW WITH THE RISEN CHRIST

*The following is an interview with the new Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, who was appointed by Pope Francis to assume this position on the feast of St. John the Baptist and raised to the dignity of Archbishop. Father Pizzaballa will receive his episcopal consecration on September 10 in the Cathedral of Bergamo, his diocese of origin.*



**F**ather Pierbattista Pizzaballa, in your opinion, what are the various current challenges of the Christian presence in the biblical lands, from a pastoral point of view, especially in those territories entrusted to the Latin Patriarchate?

As you know, the Patriarchate extends from Jordan to Cyprus, passing through the Holy Land (Israel and Palestine), with the heart of Jerusalem. It is a vast territory and quite diverse, where politically, socially and pastorally speaking the issues are completely different.

In Jordan, the political environment is stable. Compared to the tragedies in the countries that surround it, especially in Syria and Iraq, it is a calm and serene oasis. But even here, as is the case everywhere, there are plenty of problems: the economy remains fragile and there is a serious problem of unemployment among the youth. The vast number of refugees, who are mainly Syrian, is creating a serious unease from a social point of view. It must be noted that the efforts of the whole country to help

those who are desperate are admirable, but it remains objectively difficult to offer opportunities to hundreds of thousands of people who arrived so suddenly, above all, as we said, in an economical context that is already fragile.

In the Holy Land the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a political reality that is known to all and honestly I would not know what to add in this regard. We hope that the political earthquake that has shocked the Middle Eastern ports will also cause the rulers of Palestine and Israel to meet again in order to give a perspective to their respective peoples that is not only to accuse one another. It seems that they are redefining a new equilibrium between the various Middle Eastern countries. In the Holy Land it is also time for a new language that offers prospects and a future. The alternative to this is only war.

In Cyprus too it seems that discussions between the two sides have become easier. We hope that this is the case not just in appearances.

In this context of great change, our



pastoral activity also changes. The changes, in fact, not only concern the macro-political, but also (and I would say especially) the societies of the respective countries. The role of the family, the youth field and the world of work are rapidly changing in the Middle East. Interreligious dialogue, in a context of a growing fundamentalism, poses new and difficult questions. The relationship between the Christian churches is faced with common needs of coordination not only on a pastoral level.

The questions are many, therefore, and we will try to understand and to work together as a Church to find the possible answers.

**You know the Holy Land perfectly well, as you have already served the Gospel there for a quarter of a century. The situation of extreme tension that prevails in Palestine seems particularly, to our human eyes, to have no way out. What is the secret of your hope and what do you intend to do in order to participate in the search for solutions that promote peace?**

Our hope, the hope of every Christian, is the risen Christ. We have to start from there. The Church does not believe that it can change or affect big politics. The great things of this world do not succeed, let alone what we can do. We can certainly try to bring our voices and make them known, but remaining well aware of our limitations.

What we need and want to do is to never lose hope and trust, and remain stubbornly passionate and in love with this Land and these peoples. In this context we want to bear witness with our lifestyle of a way of living inside this conflict. Above all, we want to be in peace and to not allow the language of hate and violence to prevail among us. We do not want to stop believing in the goodness of people. In short, we want to be a place of encounter that goes beyond all walls and all barriers. And this force is



*Father Pizzaballa, just three days after his appointment as Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, was received at headquarters of the Grand Magisterium of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre by the Grand Master and the Governor General and shared a convivial meal with European Lieutenants.*

only born and understood through an encounter with Christ. Otherwise it is and remains only one of many spiritual abstractions.

**In what way do you, a son of Saint Francis who chose to marry Sister Poverty, think that the Order of the Holy Sepulchre can raise better awareness of its profound vocation, which is sometimes hidden behind ceremonial appearances, and is there a spiritual message you would like to share with the 30,000 Knights and Dames who are committed in their dioceses to serving the “living stones” of the Holy Land?**

The Holy Land is a testimony of the history of salvation. For this reason it is holy. A Knight must therefore be the bearer, the herald of that experience of salvation that he has experienced. Before his conversion, Saint Francis wanted to become a knight and in this way to win a heraldic title. After his conversion he would become the herald of the great King, Jesus.

A Knight of the Holy Sepulchre who serves the living stones, that is the Christian communities of the Holy Land, wants to joyfully and concretely show the beauty of having encountered Jesus and of still being able to “touch” him, to experience him through the Mother Church of Jerusalem.

**Interview by François Vayne**



## A NEW CUSTOS OF THE HOLY LAND

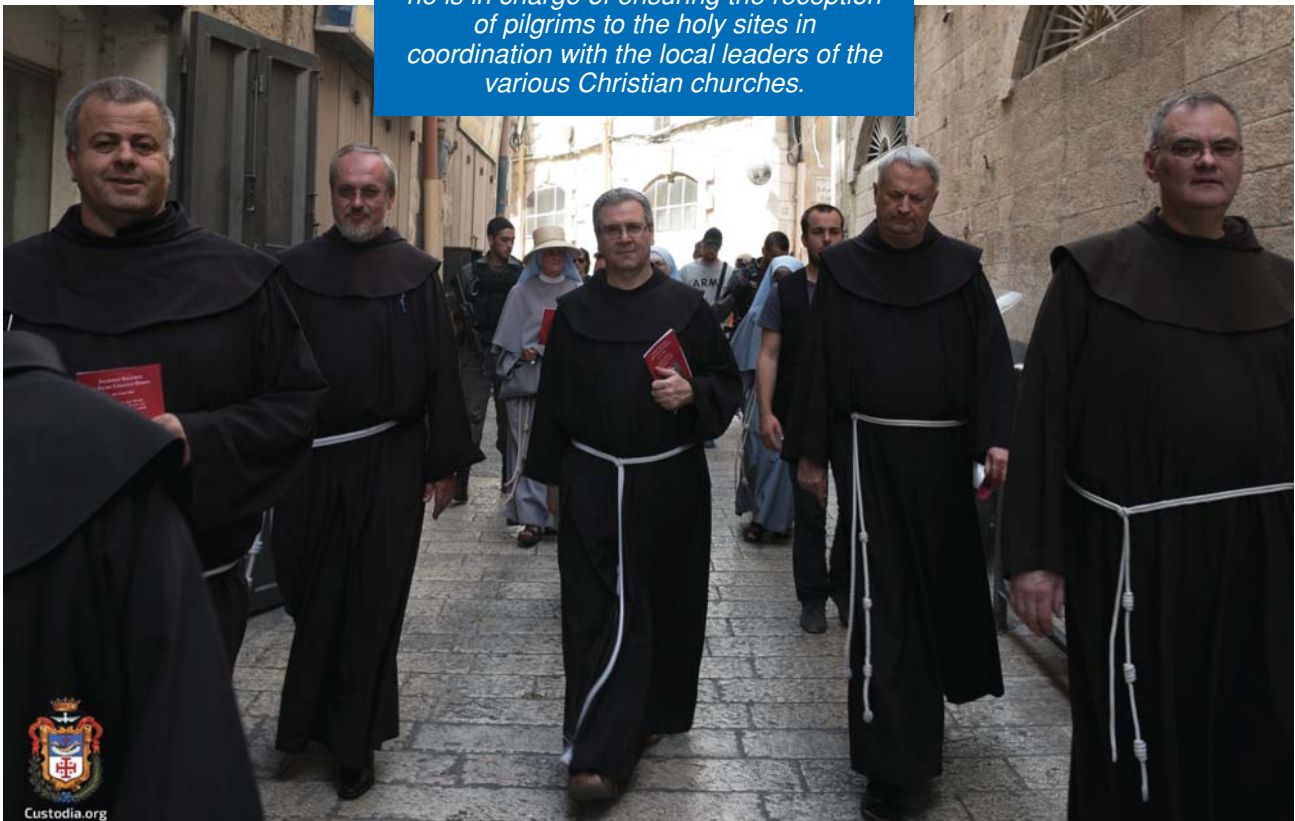
In May, Father Francesco Patton was appointed to take over as Custos of the Holy Land from Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, who had held the position since 2004. The Custos of the Holy Land is the provincial minister, that is, the major superior of the Franciscans in a large portion of the Middle East. He has jurisdiction over the territories of Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, part of Egypt, Cyprus and Rhodes. By virtue of his office, he is a member of the Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land. The Custos' main mission, in addition to his responsibility for his brothers, is to ensure, together with the local Church, the "living stones" of the region: the Christians who reside there. This responsibility has been entrusted to him by the Holy See for over 600 years.

Francesco Patton was born in Vigo Meano, in the Diocese of Trento, Italy, on December 23, 1963 and belongs to the Province

of St. Anthony of the Friars Minor, which is located in Northern Italy. Besides Italian, he speaks English and Spanish. He made his first profession September 7, 1983, his solemn profession October 4, 1986 and was ordained a priest on May 26, 1989. In 1993, he graduated in Communications at the Pontifical Salesian University in Rome. He has held various positions in his province of origin and in the Order. He has twice been secretary general of the General Chapter of the Order of Friars Minor (2003 and 2009), but also General Visitor (2003), Provincial Minister of Trentino (2008-2016) and President of the Conference of Ministers of Italy and of Albania. The members of the Order of the Holy Sepulcher present in the world, Knights and Dames, pray for his intentions, as well as those of his predecessor, who was appointed Apostolic

Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem on June 24.

*Father Patton (center) is the new Custos of the Holy Land, succeeding Father Pizzaballa. As Superior of the Franciscans of much of the Middle East, he is in charge of ensuring the reception of pilgrims to the holy sites in coordination with the local leaders of the various Christian churches.*



## THE ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE COLLABORATING IN ROACO PROJECTS

Each year, as part of the Reunion of Aid Agencies for the Oriental Churches (ROACO), the Order of the Holy Sepulchre commits to support some projects, expanding its mission of solidarity in the Holy Land, meaning all the biblical territories, and all the Catholic communities in addition to the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. At the recent ROACO Spring meeting, the Order has agreed to collaborate in projects for the Catholic communities of the Greek-Melkite Church and of the Rosary Sisters who welcome a thousand pupils, in Gaza, in very difficult conditions.

■ The Greek-Melkite community of Nazareth has about 10,000 faithful. The Church of St. Joseph, built 50 years ago, works to meet the spiritual needs of parishioners, as well as hosting prayer meetings for students of the annexed Greek-Catholic school twice weekly and many other parish activities. Work began on badly needed renovation two years ago, with a local contribution covering 60% of costs. The Order of the Holy Sepulchre will contribute specifically to about 75% of the costs for the fence

project to protect the church from vandalism which unfortunately has recently damaged the structure.

■ There is a small Christian community of Catholic Greek-Melkite faithful and Greek-orthodox faithful in the village of Bi'ina, next to Akko, in northern Israel. The Melkite Church of Saint Peter, built in 1907, has 250 parishioners. The project supported by the Order will provide for the construction of an annex to the church to accommodate religious and social activities for the local community and the surrounding villages.

■ The last project that the Order has committed to in 2016 through ROACO, is the renovation of The Sisters of the Rosary School in Gaza. This school, run by a Latin rite Catholic congregation of women religious, welcomes about 900 students –

of which only 9% are Christians, considering the small number of Christians left in the Gaza Strip – and provides schooling from pre-school to the age of 15-16. The Order will fund the renovation of the toilets and kitchens, as well as realize side access stairs to the facility and install a new drainage system.

### THE WEST NEEDS THE EAST

“I am grateful to everyone for the zeal you put into carrying out the mission entrusted to you and for the attention to the needs of our brothers of the East,” said Pope Francis last June when he received the members of the Reunion of Aid Agencies for Oriental churches of which the Order of the Holy Sepulchre is part. The Holy Father also greeted the papal representatives in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Ukraine participating in this work under the direction of Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, prefect of the Congregation for Oriental Churches, and concluded by quoting St. John Paul II in his apostolic letter *Oriente Lumen*, “the words of the West need the words of the East, so that God’s word may ever more clearly reveal its unfathomable riches”.



## SPRING 2016 IN THE HOLY LAND

*A brief overview of the most important events that have touched the life of the Catholic communities in the Holy Land in recent months.*

The last few months have brought with them important innovations to the Catholic community of Latin rite present in the Holy Land with the appointment of the new Custos of the Holy Land, Father Francesco Patton; the end of the mandate of the Patriarch Fouad Twal and the appointment of Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa as Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Within the context of the Jubilee Year proclaimed by Pope Francis, on May 12, the "Garden of Mercy" was inaugurated in Jordan in the presence of the Undersecretary of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, Monsignor Segundo Tejado Muñoz. This is a sustainable farm that will provide jobs and will allow the trade of local products. This concrete initiative of mercy has been promoted and supported by Pope Francis, to help the many Iraqi refugees present in Jordan.

### Our Lady who Brings Down Walls

On a sadder note, construction continues of the separation wall in the Cremisan Valley. On May 26, an EU delegation visited the site to see the situation firsthand and listen to the testimony of Issa Al-Shatleh, a land owner whose olive trees have been uprooted to build the wall. Prayer is certainly of support to the local people and in this

the beautiful icon painted onto the part of the wall that separates Bethlehem from Jerusalem in 2010 by iconographer Ian Knowles, comes to mind: Our Lady who Brings Down Walls. We share the prayer to her which reads: "We beg you, through your ardent intercession, to bring down this wall, the walls of our hearts, and all the walls that generate hatred, violence, fear, and indifference between people and between nations".

Regarding the situation of Christian schools in Israel, unfortunately we cannot report any significant progress over the past few months. The 50 million shekels (local currency) promised by the Israeli Government to offset the cuts in school support in the past few years have not been transferred to schools within the agreed deadline (March 31, 2016) and the schools are facing difficult economic conditions.



*The beautiful icon created in 2010 on the wall that separates Bethlehem from Jerusalem inspires in all ardent prayer for justice and peace.*





### Restoring the face of the Church

On June 16, Pope Francis received participants at the Reunion of Aid Agencies for the Oriental Churches (ROACO) in audience, who were gathered in Rome for their usual spring meeting. The Holy Father began by noting how the ongoing restoration of the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem (for more information [www.nativityrestoration.ps](http://www.nativityrestoration.ps)) sends a strong message to the whole Church: "I have been told that in the course of restoration work in Bethlehem, on one of the walls of the nave a seventh angel in mosaic has come to light, forming with the other six a sort of procession towards the place commemorating the mystery of the birth of the Word made flesh. This can lead us to reflect on how the face of our ecclesial communities can also be covered by "incrustations" as a result of various problems and sins. Yet your work must unfailingly be guided by the certainty that, beneath material and moral

incrustations, and the tears and bloodshed caused by war, violence and persecution, beneath this apparently impenetrable cover there is a radiant face like that of the angel in the mosaic. All of you, with your projects and your activities, are part of a "restoration" that will enable the face of the Church to reflect visibly the light of Christ the Word Incarnate".

A few days after the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, it is nice to remember the moments of sharing between the Christian and Muslim communities of the Holy Land, such as the breaking of the fast meal (*iftar*) organized by the Latin Patriarchate and by Abraham's House on June 17. In the spirit of the call to fraternal and spiritual communion, the thirteenth edition of Extraordinary Prayer of all the Churches in Jerusalem for reconciliation, unity and peace, took place on June 19. This year it was organized by the Maronite Church.

Elena Dini

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## The Life of the Lieutenancies

### Caring for migrants' children in Israel

# TESTIMONY OF THE CHANCELLOR FROM THE SWISS LIEUTENANCY

*The testimony of Donata Krethlow-Benziger, Chancellor of the Swiss Lieutenancy of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, about their commitment to the Holy Land and the "Babywarehouse" project in Tel Aviv.*

"What it is unique in our Order – says the Chancellor of the Swiss Lieutenancy Donata Krethlow-Benziger – is the total equality of Knights and Dames". Equal rights for men and women as experienced within the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem are an example for the laity of the Catholic Church organizations. Donata Krethlow-Benziger was the first woman in Switzerland to assume the post of Chancellor in 2010.



"My membership in the Equestrian Order is a family tradition," continues the 45 year old historian. After her first pilgrimage to the Holy Land with the Order, about ten years ago, her outlook completely changed: the theory of the Order's social commitment was tangible in the Holy Land. The proximity of the Christians and visits to the many projects supported by the Equestrian Order fostered a desire in her to take a more active part. She was impressed and encouraged by the way people live their faith in the Holy Land, and how different this seemed when compared to Europe.

With around half a million Swiss francs a year, the members of the Order of this country are important supporters of the humanitarian projects of the Christians in the Holy Land, said the Chancellor. Her next visit will be devoted to the "Babywarehouses," revealed Donata Krethlow-Benziger, who now wants to mobilize the Swiss to make more donations to improve these facilities.

According to the report of the authorities in the Holy Land, there are more than a hundred unlicensed nurseries structures in Tel Aviv, many taking in children of illegal immigrants, especially Africans, Filipinos and Indians (it is estimated that there are about 2,600 infants and young children). These "Baby camps" or "Children's garage" are called "Babywarehouses", and are located at the train station in Tel Aviv and surrounding areas which are inhabited by a majority of Christian refugees from Eritrea.

Given the great demand for childcare facilities, it is the refugee families themselves who organize these structures.





*The Chancellor Donata Krethlow-Benziger in front of the Caritas Baby Hospital in the Holy Land and below accompanied by Msgr. Pier Giacomo Grampa, Grand Prior of the Swiss Lieutenancy for the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.*

They built these camps as an emergency solution for Eritrean mothers who have to work and have little money to help their children. Some of these "Babywarehouses" welcome between sixty and one hundred children in one room. The support staff is unskilled and often inadequate. Up to 100 children can be taken under the care of a single person. In these conditions, infants suffer, get sick and some die.

The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, under the direction of Jesuit Father David Neuhaus, Patriarchal Vicar for Hebrew-speaking Catholics, has taken up the challenge of creating a structure for these nurseries: properties have been leased and trained nurses contracted to educate the rest of the staff. The current project involves the construction of over 400 care centers and should allow for refugees and migrants to have a legal and healthy structure for the custody of their children. This project, which is particularly dear to Donata Krethlow-Benziger, has already received funds from Austria and Germany. This year, Switzerland has given its contribution in the hope that the "professionalization" of Babywarehouses can improve the situation



on the ground.

In August 2016, Chancellor Krethlow-Benziger, will visit the Babywarehouses in Tel Aviv with Father David Neuhaus.

**Interview by Nina Oezelt**



Acts of solidarity in the spirit of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre

## THE MEDAL OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE IN MACARENA COTELO, SPAIN

Members of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre are called to inspire acts of solidarity towards the Holy Land in the heart of society. So for example Pilar Lara, Dame of the Order, has initiated a partnership between the Foundation for the Promotion of Social Culture (FPSC), of which she is president, and the Holy Land represented by the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The FPSC supports a network of the Patriarchate schools in Palestine and Jordan through the restoration and expansion of facilities, as well as the construction of new buildings, as is the case in Gaza, and a training program for teachers. Other areas of focus are housing and job creation projects. In recognition of twenty years of this fruitful partnership (which has resulted in thirty cooperation projects costing over 10 million euro), Macarena Cotelo, director of projects of the Foundation for the Social Promotion of Culture, received the Gold Medal of the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Granting us an interview, Macarena Cotelo describes the beginnings of the Foundation that she heads in the Holy Land. "We started our business in the Middle East, in Lebanon, in 1993 after a journey that our former president, Pilar Lara, Dame of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, made to the Holy Land." "Pilar was deeply struck by the reality of the problems which Christians in this part of the world face that we started to work in Lebanon". The following year, "through an acquaintance in Jerusalem, we were proposed for a project of the Latin Patriarchate. We made our presentation and it was approved by the Spanish government", she says. In December 1995, Macarena Cotelo and Pilar Lara arrived in the Holy Land, fell in love with these places and "we discovered that there was much to do," she says. For several years the Latin Patriarchate was their only on-site partner. Macarena Cotelo speaks of the delicate

situation of Christians during all these years, "when we went to Palestine, we learned that there were fewer and fewer Christians and that they were living in very precarious conditions. This reality drove them to remain "to become involved in those places, to fight and to continue to help where we could". Talking about the current situation of Christian communities in the Holy Land, she tells us that today it is "more dramatic than ever".

### From Lebanon to Palestine to the communities of Iraq and Syria

"Since the outbreak of conflict in Syria, the existing Christian communities across the region are struggling to stay on their land," she adds. "I am always surprised when I meet Christians from the Middle East. I realize the effort they make to stay, knowing that they must ensure a Christian presence. Many of them have the



opportunity to leave, some have family in other countries and could have far better lives than in the biblical lands where they were born, yet they remain because they know that that is their mission.

Unfortunately, we in the West don't really understand this".

"The war is forcing people to leave" she reminds us, and communities who leave Iraq

"unfortunately will not be able to return home. The same thing will happen to those communities that

have been forced to leave Syria and who in all likelihood will never return".

Since the beginning of the Syrian conflict in 2011, the Foundation for the Promotion of Social Culture has set up an important humanitarian operation. The main objectives are to save lives, alleviate suffering and safeguard people's dignity. "Because of the crisis in Syria, we have developed a series of humanitarian projects that we are trying to carry out in both Lebanon and Jordan." In particular, "we run a clinic for disabled refugees in Jordan". As for Lebanon, Macarena Cotelo says the Foundation is working in partnership with the Ministry of Health, in a clinic for refugees suffering from mental illness.

**"There is a population of Arab culture, but of Christian profession"**

"People are discovering that there is a population of Arab culture, but of Christian profession," says Macarena. The Latin



*Macarena Cotelo while receiving the Gold Medal of the Holy Sepulchre in recognition of the help offered to the Latin Patriarchate by the Foundation which she directs.*

Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which hosts thousands of pilgrims every year, tries to put these communities in contact with local Christian Arabs. "It is critical to realize that they are living communities, where people feel at home." These communities "participate very actively in the life of the parishes, which they view as a second home," emphasizes the FPSC director of projects.

She adds: "I think those Christians in the Middle East probably felt very alone, ignored

by all, even before the war had broken out. Then news about the suffering of Christians started to spread..." Today, the awareness is global.

Macarena says that over the past year she has resumed concrete collaboration with the Latin Patriarchate to plan together, and that the Foundation is very "happy to help the Patriarchate in these new projects", especially for the renovation of the Gaza parish and school.

Macarena Cotelo ends with words of thanks for the Latin Patriarchate for the award of the Medal of the Holy Sepulchre: "I am touched, honored ... it really is an award for the whole institution, the Foundation, and a team that has always worked and served with dedication". She also stresses the importance of the mission of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre as an institution of very interesting origins and evolution, and one that "is still fully inserted into the reality of our time".

**Interview by Mireia Bonilla**



## WHERE ARE THE RELICS OF ST. HELENA?

*On August 18, the Order celebrates one of its patrons, St. Helena, but do the Knights and Dames know where the relics of the mother of Emperor Constantine are, to whom we owe the conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity and the construction of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre?*

**B**orn into a family of modest means, in Asia Minor, towards 248, Helena was working at an inn. A tribune, a native of Illyria, named Constantius, was attracted by the quality of the girl and married her. Helen accompanied her husband at all stages of his military career, to Germany, to England ... The young Constantine was born from their union. In 293, Constantius became Caesar in Gaul, Britain and Spain. He was then forced, by Roman law and the custom in use at the time to repudiate Helena and marry Princess Theodora. Constantine was brought by his mother up in the court of Nicomedia, partly guest, partly hostage, but later joined his father in Britain and helped him in his military campaigns. When his father died, in 306, his troops brought him to power. In 312 his rival, Maxentius, was proclaimed emperor of Rome. Constantine took to the road of the eternal city, and was victorious in Ponte Milvio, attributing it to a vision that he had

long ago: a cross in the sky with the words: "By this sign you will conquer". Constantine favored the spread of the Christian faith with the promulgation of the Edict of Milan which put an end to the persecution of Christians. In 317, Constantine appointed Helena "Augusta", mother Empress.

Helena decided to go on pilgrimages to holy places. On arriving in Jerusalem, she destroyed the Temple of Venus that Hadrian had built on Calvary. During the excavation, many crosses were discovered one of which was identified miraculously as the Cross of the Saviour. The emperor's mother laid the first stones of the basilicas wanted by Constantine: the Church of Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre, the Church of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives, the Church of the Grotto of Bethlehem.

Helena died in Constantinople, next to her son. Her body was brought to Rome. Constantine decided to transform her residence into a church, the Basilica of Santa



### PRAYING WITH ST. HELENA

**S**aint Helena, you who were able to pass on the Christian faith to your son Constantine, grant us the simplicity, courage and judgment to speak of the love of God to those who are close to us.

When your son Constantine was the leader of the empire, for the love of Jesus, you desired to find the place of his crucifixion and the wood of the Cross. Help us understand that if we too desire, nothing can separate us from the love that God has testified to us in gifting us His Son Jesus. Show us the Cross as a reminder of that love. Make us true disciples of Jesus. And if life places trials on our path, help us to know how, as He asked us, to take up our cross every day and follow Him with love. Amen.



Croce in Jerusalem. In 840 or so, a monk named Theutgise, stole a part of the saint's remains and brought them to the Benedictine Abbey of Hautvillers, where they were placed in a reliquary behind the altar. Granted the prayers of the Archbishop of Reims, the Pope approved their transfer. Rich in numerous relics, the Abbey has honored St. Helena down through the centuries. On the anniversary of her death, August 18, and on the feast of the Holy Cross, a solemn office of the saint is celebrated, followed by a procession where, with great fervor, many pilgrims implore the intercession of St. Helena to receive healing. During the French Revolution, Dom Jean-Baptiste Grossard saved the relics of St. Helena, which in 1820 were placed at the Saint-Leu-Saint-Gilles church in Paris, the Chapter Church of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre in France. They are today an object of ecumenical worship for Catholic and Orthodox faithful who come on pilgrimage to invoke she who so loved the Holy Land.



*St. Helena's relics are in the crypt of the Church of Saint-Leu-Saint-Gilles in Paris, the Order Chapter Church of the Holy Sepulchre for the French Lieutenancy, and are an object of developing ecumenical worship and pilgrimage, after the rapprochement of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Holy See following the meeting between Kirill and Pope Francis in Cuba on February 12, 2016.*

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