

ECUMENICAL Theological Research FRATERNITY in Israel

POB 249 | 91002 Jerusalem | Tel: 625 4941 | Fax 672 4237 | Email: ecu_frat@netvision.net.il

President: Dr. Kirsten Stoffregen Pedersen | Executive Secretary: Rev. Petra Heldt

NEWSLETTER NO. 25 Aug-Sept 2001

Dear Friends,

The Fraternity in Jerusalem seems to be placed in the middle of the world, on the receiving end of the diverse reactions to the horrific terror attack in New York: There are those in America who prepare endless funerals for 6000 people, being exhausted both emotionally and physically yet caring for each other in the most tender way; there are those in Europe organizing peace conferences with their fellow Muslim citizens in order to show solidarity with Islam, and there are those in the East who hardly conceal their satisfaction about the events. It is in this time of turmoil that we find consolation in the words of John 14: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

The Fraternity Series 2001/2002

This academic year our topic is: "Communal Identity and Diversity in Judaism and Christianity. Faces of Religious Communities in Jerusalem". The opening lecture on October 25 will be given by Mr. Yossi Klein-HaLevi, a researcher on Christian and Jewish communities in Israel by giving an "objective" photograph of these groups. It is also the occasion of launching his new book published in September 2001, *At the Entrance to the Garden of Eden* (New York: Morrow, 2001).

CHARITABLE SERVICES

The Syrian Orthodox Community

The Mar Efreem School building gets its final touch with water, pipes and electricity systems in place. The determination to finish and wholehearted

efforts of the crew are glowing examples for all of us.

The Fraternity Sick Fund

In response to both requests for help and offers of support, the Fraternity has decided to officialize her service to the local Christians with serious health needs. Despina (Marphlan's Syndrome) & Shadi (Cystic Fibrosis) are just two of the young patients that have been helped so far. Several more are on the waiting list, including: A young father who has already lost sight in one eye and is about to lose the other as well; A schoolboy with advanced diabetes, desperately in need of regular injections of insulin that are not easily obtained in his town of residence. In her strategic position in Jerusalem, the Fraternity is blessed to offer this help whenever possible.

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Prayers for Peace

A joint initiative by the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches, Communities & Institutions in Jerusalem: A Call to Prayer during the week of August 15-28. Once again there was a sign of unity in the Body of Christ, united in prayer at a moment of need: Armenians, Syrian Orthodox, Anglicans, Lutherans, Copts, Ethiopians, Catholics, Greek Catholics together.

A New Greek Orthodox Patriarch

On Saturday September 15th we joined the solemn ceremony for the enthronement of the new Greek Orthodox Patriarch, His Beatitude Irineos at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The new Patriarch arrived in Jerusalem for the first time in 1953 where he has served as a Monk, Senior Deacon, Priest, Archimandrite and Deputy Sacristan. Since 1981 he has been Archbishop of Hierapolis and in 1994 he was named a Metropolitan.

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Coventry UK: New Dean & CCN Conference

September 8 marked the Collation, Induction and Installation of John Dudley Irvine as Vicar of the Cathedral Church of St. Michael and Dean of Coventry. Present at the occasion was the Fraternity Executive Secretary. The event was followed by an international conference of the Community of the Cross of Nails on Reconciliation and Forgiveness. Among those present were: The Very Reverend James Diamond, Head of the CCN USA; Pastor Knud Soppa (CCN Germany); The Venerable Abiodun Agunyemi, Archdeacon of Kaduna Nigeria; The Most Reverend Mar Severios Malki Murad, Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of Jerusalem and the Holy Lands.

The Armenian Church's 1700th Birthday

September 21-27 was a week of special highlights in the 1700th Anniversary Celebrations of the Armenian Church. On Tuesday the 25th, His Holiness Pope John Paul II honored the occasion by his first-ever visit to Armenia. For a beautiful yet sacred interactive presentation of the celebrations we invite you to visit the website: www.etchmiadzin.com.

Declaration by the Northelbian Church

The Synod of the Northelbian Church, in particular due to the life-long insights of Rev. Ingrid Homann, has formulated a new declaration on the relationship between "Christians and Jews". For copies: www.nordelbien.de/berichtsbyn.22/index.html.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Some Good-Byes

*Fr. Peter Ashton OFM went on a sabbatical to the UK.

*A farewell reception was held in honour of Propst Karl-Heinz Ronecker, of the Lutheran Church of the

Redeemer, on September 12. We cherish many wonderful memories of your time in Jerusalem!

*Heinz and Gabriela Pollack are moving to the Ebenezer Home for the Aged, located in Haifa. We have so much enjoyed your company here in Jerusalem and so we look forward to more of the same, also from a longer distance!

Visitors

Due to ongoing terror attacks, some large tour groups have postponed their visit to the Holy Land but individual visitors have been plentiful even during the hot summer months!

New Members

The option of "Corresponding Membership" has proven to be most popular for those who wish to remain connected to Jerusalem although they currently reside elsewhere. Welcome to: Eileen Schuller (Canada); Andrew Chiu (Hong Kong); Guido Baltes; Vera Kleine; Gudrun Lacquer (Germany); Edward Every (UK); Norman Beck; Ellen Chahey; Walter Harrelson; Peter A. Pettit; J. Robert Wright (USA). We would like to especially mention the activities on behalf of the Fraternity by two new Corresponding members: Vera Kleine of Germany, in her efforts to mobilize of a ring of supporters for the work of the Fraternity from her community; and Rev. Gudrun Lacquer, Director of Reineberg Academy who kindly offered to translate lectures and information from the Fraternity into German for wider circulation.

Student Christian Forum

The new season is about to begin! We look forward to another series of meetings and special events, including both new and old members of the SCF. Office hours are Mondays 14:00-15:00 in Room 103 of the Rothberg School.

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PUBLICATIONS

Books Received

*This past month we were pleasantly surprised to welcome a book personally delivered by Dr. Natan Ben Chorin to the Fraternity offices. *Per Amore di Gerusalemme* is the biography of Sr. Maria Baxiu, a woman who spent much of her life inspiring others to love Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Her efforts have been well-rewarded and this book will certainly bear much fruit also in years to come.

*The Pollacks have kindly donated to the Fraternity a collection of works, including Melkite Orthodox Syro-Byzantine Manuscripts in Syriac by Bishop Jacob Barclay.

Recent Releases

**The Holocaust, Never to be Forgotten. Reflections on the Holy See's Document 'We Remember'. Commentaries* by Avery Dulles, S.J. and Rabbi Leon Klenicki. (Paulist Press).

**A Story of Shalom. The Calling of Christians and Jews by a Covenanting God.* By Philip A. Cunningham. (Paulist Press).

*Malcolm F. Lowe has published an article in *Gregorianum* 81 (2000), entitled "The Critical and Skeptical Methods in New Testament Research". An interview with Mr. Lowe based on this article, conducted by Prof. Rudolf Pesch in German was published in the *Die Tagespost*/Nr. 20 (spare issues are available at the office).

We end with the words of His Grace Mar Severios, Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of Jerusalem and the Holy Lands: The peace brought by God is distinguished from the wordly peace. This later peace is achieved after long struggles and great efforts, and it is a temporary peace, which does not carry the meaning of justice and tranquility. While

the peace granted by God fills the hearts with everlasting composure, comfort and security. The peace of God grants strength, courage, quietude, confidence, wisdom, and bright and hopeful future for the generations to come.

Rev. Petra Heldt