

ECUMENICAL Theological Research FRATERNITY in Israel

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

NEWSLETTER NO. 30 May 2002

Dear Friends,

During a visit to the Church of the Nativity after the recent dilemma was resolved, **Fr. Razmig** of the Armenian Orthodox Church shared with us his source of strength as he waited patiently inside the church for 39 days for a solution to be found. He would read on a daily basis, Ps 31: 1-2 & Ps 127: 1 – “In thee, O Lord, do I seek refuge; let me never be put to shame; in thy righteousness deliver me! Incline thy ear to me, rescue me speedily! Be thou a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me!”- “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.” Fr. Razmig’s motto is: “Fear no one but the Lord alone.” **Canon Andrew White** and the members of the Permanent Committee of Alexandria were helpful behind the scenes for resolving the problem in a peaceful way.

ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Lecture Series 2001/2002

On April 11: “Reconciliation as a Principle of Jewish Identity.” **Rabbi David Brodman**, a signatory of the Alexandria Declaration stressed the conviction to continue in the hope that there will be reconciliation one day between the peoples of this country, in spite of the recent events. Revenge is not a concept, neither accepted nor taught, in Judaism.

On April 25: “Taking Root in Jewish Ground: The Catholic Integrated Community.” **Prof. Dr. Dr. Rudolf Pesch** and his wife **Ingeborg** moved to Israel two years ago and opened a branch of the Community in Moza Elite. Prof. Pesch spoke about the identity of this Catholic movement that has become an active partner in Christian and Jewish circles in Israel. Both lectures are available from the Fraternity.

Special Lectures

*On April 23 a symposium was held by the Hebrew University’s Armenian Studies Program: “Life after

Death: Vitality and Creativity after the Armenian Genocide” in the presence of **H.B. Torkom II**, Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem and **H.E. Mr. Tzolag** Momjian, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Armenia.

*On April 25 the ICCI hosted a lecture by **Prof. Peter A. Pettit** on the “Response of the Lutheran Church to the Current Situation.” Prof. Pettit, a Corresponding Member of the ETRFI, serves as Director of the Institute for Jewish-Christian Understanding of Muhlenberg College, Pennsylvania.

***Rabbi Michael Klein-Katz** lectured at the Rainbow on May 8: “Reconciliation: One Jew’s Perspective.”

*On June 2 & 3 at the Hebrew University and at Hebrew Union College: “An Israeli view of Christianity and the relationship between the religions.” As a follow-up to the “Dabru Emet” statement that was released in the year 2000, opened by **Prof. Michael Signer**.

CHARITABLE SERVICES

Donations

Many thanks to our friends in Germany, Israel and to our faithful **UK correspondents** for their generous support of the needs of the Christian communities in Bethlehem, including food and medicines during the last few particularly difficult months.

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

The Armenian Orthodox Church

On April 24th there was a commemorative service held at the St. James Cathedral in memory of the 87th year since the Armenian Genocide in the year 1915. The service was attended by hundreds – Armenian Orthodox but also representatives of the various local churches.

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FRATERNITY COMMUNITY NEWS

The AGM

On May 23rd the ETRFI Annual General Meeting was held at our offices. Elected for the office of Treasurer was **Br. Elio Passeto** and elected for the office of Director of the Student Christian Forum was **Sr. Abraham**. We were mutually encouraged by the review of this past year, realizing that the political crisis has not affected our activities nearly as much as could be expected.

Farewells

We regret the departure of **Miriam Girardi** of the Jerusalem branch of the Foculare movement. She will be replaced by **Margherita Karram**. We also have to say good-bye to **Rev. Ray Lockhart** and his wife **Jill** who have served in the Anglican community for many years in Jerusalem and most recently as the Director of ITAC.

Bargil Pixner

Fr. Bargil Pixner, osb passed away on the evening of April 6. Abbot Benedict Lindemann reminded us of Fr. Pixner's motto:

Short is your life on earth but long the one that follows. The time given to you may serve you as a credit for life with the Eternal One. He is love without end. His name and deeds will remain with us as a most blessed memory. Fr. Bargil was an active member of the Fraternity from the late 60s until this year. Currently the Fraternity prepares a symposium in his memory.

From the Fornbergs

Rev. Tord and **Mrs. Gunnel Fornberg** have returned to Sweden. Rev. Fornberg will teach Biblical Exegesis at Uppsala University. On May 10, he writes: "I am grateful for the friendship of all of you...and for what I have experienced and learnt while in Jerusalem, and I certainly hope to renew the friendship at some later occasion." They can now be reached at tord.fornberg@teol.uu.se.

Congratulations!

Corresponding Member **Patrick Gray** -formerly of Jerusalem - will be ordained to the priesthood on June 8 in Boston's Church of the Advent (Episcopal). The Fraternity's Vice President will be present at the ordination and represent the Jerusalem community.

Visitors

Friends from Germany: **Bishop Dr. Johannes Friedrich**; **Prof. Helmut Reihlen** of Domstift Brandenburg; **Rev. Ingrid Homann** and her successor at the Northelbian Church **Rev. Hanna Lehming**. Dohmke-Schulz Film Productions of Brandenburg paid us a visit and made a film on Christians in the Holy Land including a generous clip on the Fraternity. It was aired on German television.

PUBLICATIONS

Books

***Fr. Francesco Rossi De Gasperis** and **Antonella Carfagna** are the authors of the third volume in a series to be released this fall by EDB in Bologna: *Prendi il Libro e mangia!* (Take the Book and Eat it!). The volumes are published in two parts: 3.1 *From the Exile to the New Covenant: History and Prophecy* and 3.2 *From the Exile to the New Covenant: Wisdom, Piety and Poetry*.

***Friedrich Heyer**, Professor at the University of Heidelberg, has recently authored *2000 Jahre Kirchengeschichte des Heiligen Landes. Märtyrer, Mönche, Kirchenväter, Kreuzfahrer, Patriarchen, Ausgräber und Pilger* (2000 Years of Christianity in the Holy Land). It is published as volume 11 of the *Studien zur Orientalischen Kirchengeschichte*.

May I end with the words of our Vice-President, **Canon William Broughton**: "Pray not for Arab or Jew, for Palestinian or Israeli, but pray for yourselves that you may not divide them in your prayers but keep them both together in your hearts."

Fraternally yours, **Rev. Petra Heldt**