

# ECUMENICAL THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH FRATERNITY

in Israel

POB 249 ~ 91002 Jerusalem ~ Tel: 625 4941 ~ Fax 672 4237 ~ Email: ecu\_frat@netvision.net.il

**President: Prof. Fr. Marcel Dubois OP ~ Executive Secretary: Rev. Petra Heldt**

## NEWSLETTER NO. 21 January 2001

### Dear Friends,

First and foremost we would like to convey our sincere thanks to ALL of you EVERYWHERE who have in so many ways expressed your support and concern at this time, in WORD and DEED. The words of **King David** continue to ring out encouragement to those who know His name and put their trust in Him: *The Lord is a stronghold in times of trouble. The Lord sits enthroned forever.*

### ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

#### The 2000/2001 Fraternity Lecture Series: To Cure the Wounds that Divide Us

Our line of study this year has turned out to be popular and has evoked the attention of several new attendees. November's lecture was presented by **Bodil F. Skjott** of the *Caspari Centre* & co-author of *Facts and Myths: About the Messianic Congregations in Israel* (UCCI, 1999), a first-hand description of the size and life of of Jewish-Messianic congregations in Israel. A wonderful presentation -only amazing that these congregations are in fact much smaller than always assumed.

In December, **Prof. Marcel Dubois & Dr. Roberta Ervine** of the *Hebrew University* joined forces to breach gaps in understanding the *Meaning of Sacramentality in the Eucharist*, in the Catholic and Armenian traditions respectively. Although commonly regarded as a major stumbling block, the explaining of this sacrament in the different traditions led to a discovery of striking similarities between them.

On January 11, in honour of this year's celebrations of the 1700th anniversary of Christianity in Armenia, **Bishop Aris Shirvanian** of the Jerusalem Armenian Orthodox Patriarchate gave a thoroughly enlightening survey of the history of the church from which all churches inherited treasure after treasure throughout the centuries. How many of us can say we were born in 301!?

#### Now Available!

Orders for the two new publications in our

'Occasional Series' are coming in from around the world! *Medical Ethics in Judeo-Christian Tradition: Ecumenical Fraternity Studies 1999/2000* and *The Fraternity 2000: A Compendium of the Ecumenical Fraternity 1966-2000* were prepared in our offices, in celebration of the opening of a New Millennium also at the *Fraternity!* We look forward to the year 2001 compilation of the lecture series "To Cure the Wounds that Divide Us"! The 134-page *Medical Ethics* is available for only 40 NIS or \$10 USD and the 101-page *Compendium* for 25 NIS or \$7 USD. Cheques may be addressed to *The Ecumenical Fraternity* and sent to our POB 249. HAPPY READING!

#### The Flusser Symposium

The international conference initiated by the *Fraternity*: "David Flusser: Innovator and Leader in New Testament Studies", scheduled for the end of May. We are grateful for the sponsorship of the **Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church of the USA** and **Sisters of Zion (Ecce Homo & Beit Ruth)**. The academic programme will jointly be carried out by Jerusalem's scholarly institutions with participation from overseas scholars such as **Prof. Brad Young, Dr. Martin Majer**.

### CHARITABLE SERVICES

#### Especially for Christmas

A moving gesture was made by the family of our Vice-President **Canon Bill Broughton**, in memory of his sister-in-law who recently passed away. In response to their specific request, we communicated the gift to the neediest among the 'Holy Family of Bethlehem'.

#### Food for the Needy

Thanks to:

~**Bridges for Peace** for the weighty packages of food supplies for 50 local Christian families!  
~**Rev. Staecker** for the gift at Christmas-time for the Syrian Christian community in Bethlehem!

**The International Centre for Reconciliation** (UK) continues to help carry the burdens of the Christian Orthodox in this Land. The current situation has caused a great increase in unemployment in all areas of the country; a lack of basic life necessities has become a reality. The

Centre has pledged to provide food for 150 Syrian Christian Orthodox families for a period of 3 months! The *Fraternity* has the joy of communicating this help to the local Christians.

## CHURCH ACTIVITIES

### A Christmas Visit

This year the Orthodox tradition celebrated Christmas on January 6 & 7. The **Fraternity's Executive Secretary** and the visiting **Rev. Canon Andrew White** and **Canon Dr. Patrick Sookhdeo** from Coventry 'delivered' holiday greetings to all of the Jerusalem Church leaders, visiting the Patriarchs and Bishops on the first high holiday of 2001.

### Historic Covenant Signed

On January 8, an agreement was signed in Jerusalem, by the representatives of three dioceses: **Bishop Josiah Fearon** of the Anglican Church of Kaduna, Nigeria, **Bishop Colin Bennetts** of the UK Anglican Church and **Archbishop Mar Severios** of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Jerusalem. Coordinated by the *Fraternity* and **Canon Andrew White**, this is the first official link between the Syrian Orthodox and the Anglican Churches. The event was nicely covered in a *Jerusalem Post* article on Jan 14, available in our offices.

### The Week of Prayer

*The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2001*: January 21-28. The highlight of the week, the ecumenical afternoon of prayer in the Cenacle, or Upper Room on Mount Zion, was 'sold-out' as usual! May we express a special appreciation for the care & warmth provided by our Ethiopian Orthodox friends for the Saturday service in their beautiful Church in the New City!

## DIPLOMATIC FUNCTIONS

### Visas for Christians

As a reminder: In a letter dated November 12 from the office of the **Minister Haim Ramon**, a new policy of the Israeli Ministry of the Interior guarantees visa renewals up to 48 months to Christian volunteers and citizenship or permanent residence status to Christian clergymen who have resided in Israel for over 15 years. As a result of this news, several of those in these categories have submitted their applications.

## FRATERNITY COMMUNITY NEWS

A Funeral at the Greek Orthodox Church  
**His Beatitude Diodorus I**, Greek Orthodox

Patriarch of Jerusalem since 1981, lived in Jerusalem for over 6 decades. He passed away on December 20, following prolonged complications due to diabetes. Earlier this year *His Beatitude* met with Pope John Paul II during the Pontiff's visit to the Holy Land. We extend our heartfelt condolences to **H.E. Metropolitan Cornelius**, the *locum tenens*.

### The Student Christian Forum

Whoever attended this year's SCF Christmas Party had no choice but to don the red "headgear" & join in the fun! Welcome to all on January 29 for an evening centered on *The Russian Orthodox Church in the Holy Land*.

### Reasons to Rejoice

On December 14 we had the joy of welcoming **Rev. Ross & Mrs. Gwyn Jones** to Jerusalem, with a reception held in their honour. Blessings to Rev. Jones in your new post as Dean of *St. George's College*!

In conjunction with the signing of the historic covenant between the Syrians and Anglicans, *St. Mark's Monastery* was awarded a 'Cross of Nails' by the **International Centre for Reconciliation**. *St. Mark's* is the newest addition to the family which includes the *Fraternity*; *The Mar Efreem Syrian Orthodox School*; *Musalaha*; *House of Hope*; *Beit Asaph*. The inauguration celebrations continued the following evening at the *Har Zion Hotel*, with a festive dinner.

### Avec remerciements

Your gifts have enabled us to continue producing this newsletter and sending it to our constituents world-wide. Our thanks to: **Feigenbaum e.V.** (Germany); **The Presbyterian Church** (USA); **Jim & Polly Monson** (USA); **Sr. Eileen Schuller**, NDS (Canada); **John & Mary Townsend** (USA); **Rt. Rev. Arthur Walmsley** (USA).

### Mazal Tov!

Not only did the end of last year mark the beginning of a new decade, it was the beginning of the 9th decade for two of our long-time friends **Sr. Marie-Louise Sacco SJA** and **Fr. Josef Stiassny NDS**!

**Rev. Ingrid Homann** of the *NMZ* (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany) in Luebeck celebrates her 60th, *very very soon*! *Ad mea vesrim* from the *Fraternity* and sincere thanks to you for your support this past year!

*Yours from the Fraternity, Rev. Petra Heldt*