

The Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel invites you to the Fifth Lecture in its 2015-16 series "Contemporary Perspectives on Martyrs in Judaism and Christianity" in cooperation with the *Jerusalem Institut der Goerres-Gesellschaft* (JIGG)

"Franz Stock – Not a Name, but a Program" (John XXIII) *A German Priest in Paris during World War II*

Prior Ralph Greis OSB

The Dormition Abbey, Jerusalem

Thursday, 7 April 2016 at 8:15 P.M.

At the Dormition Abbey, Jerusalem

In February 1948, a German Catholic priest died in Paris, 43 years old. His heart had failed due to complete exhaustion resulting from his wartime experiences. Officiating at his funeral was then Apostolic Nuncio in Paris Angelo Roncalli, later Pope John XXIII. At the coffin of this priest whose work he had accompanied for the last three years, he said: „Abbé Franz Stock – that is not only a name, but a program“.

This lecture intends to take a look at this program of a life: At the young man who engaged in the international youth movement to overcome the hatred left with so many from World War I, who fell in love with France and was the first German to study theology in Paris since decades. We take a look at the rector of the German parish in the Paris of the thirties and at the horror he went through as a chaplain in the military prisons of the Wehrmacht in Paris during World War II. We will see how in these years he was there for everyone, regardless of nationality or faith, kept contact between the prisoners and their families, and more than a thousand of those condemned to death he accompanied to their last moment, keeping everything in a distressing diary. He completely ruined his health, but especially the French honoured his memory, and he is widely recognized as having paved a big part of the way leading to the reconciliation of France and Germany. After the war we will see him appointed rector of the biggest theological seminary ever, with more than 900 young prisoners of war studying with him behind barbed wire in Chartres.

The life of Franz Stock was to bear witness for his faith, for the sake of others, and in the end he paid for his dedication with his life. So he could be called a martyr in the original sense of the word. When in June 1963 his remains were taken from his original poor grave and reburied in a church in Chartres, Pope John XXIII honoured this with a telegram from his own deathbed, repeating his words from 15 years earlier: „Abbé Franz Stock – that is not only a name, but a program.“

Reception to follow the lecture, courtesy of JIGG.

Yours Fraternally,
Rev. Dr. Petra Heldt
ETRFI General Secretary

NB. The next lecture will be on April 21, 2016.