

# ECUMENICAL Theological Research FRATERNITY in Israel

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

## NEWSLETTER NO. 18 July 2000

### Dear Friends,

We hope that you are having a good summer! We have had the privilege of being witnesses to several history-making events this year in Jerusalem, and the year 2000 is not yet over! Our prayers for the peace of Jerusalem are yet to be fulfilled, and we look forward to the day when the Holy Land will be a bright shining light of peace to all nations of the world.

### The Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held on June 15, 16:00-18:30. A warm thank-you to all attendees. Your input is truly appreciated! It was evident from the Executive Secretary's Report that the Fraternity has been busy this year, both locally and internationally. Much of the activity has been sponsored by *Coventry Cathedral* and the *Barnabas Fund* of the UK, in addition to gifts from a number of individuals.

**Sr. Carmen Farrugia NDS** has served the Fraternity as Treasurer, for several years. At her request, a new Treasurer was appointed to take her place. We welcome **Br. Elio Passeto** to his new role! New to the Steering Committee: **Fr. Michael McGarry CSP** Rector of *Tantur Ecumenical Institute*. An excerpt from the closing words nicely summarizes the Fraternity in 1999/2000:

*Both the Millennium and the peace process influence events, actions and thus the mind of the local Christian presence. While in this respect, the Fraternity makes no exception, its response comes from within its commitment to fulfill the process of reconciliation between Christians and Christians and Christians and Jews. This is a moral duty more than anything else, but a morality which develops its parameters on grounds of the biblical Judeo-Christian heritage. This year we took the exercise of this principle from the perplexing field of medicine which is of direct and personal interest to each one of us as well as to the society at large. To work along these lines of religious ethics is a novelty as set principles must be checked and attuned to modernity. Innovation can be a sticky matter, and while in process, might not challenge everybody. The results, however, are geared towards changes in life with qualities rooted*

*in divine revelation. The on-going turmoil in the land is thus just made of the stuff which challenges new thinking in the field of moral responsibility in a world which is in need of divine love and reconciliation. The Fraternity is right on focus.*

### How Can We Say Thanks

The Fraternity's activities have been made possible only because of your generosity! We remain indebted to the faithful team in the UK, *The Barnabas Fund* and the *Coventry Cathedral International Cross of Nails Centre for Reconciliation*; Rev. *Gruesnick* of Germany; Dr. *Myhill* of Australia; Sr. *Schuller* of Canada; *The Sisters of Zion* in Israel; Mr. *Wirtz* of Germany. Your kindness is a blessing to many people!

### New Publications

It is expected that two mini-publications will be published in the near future. As a reminder, the first in our mini-series was printed in 1995, entitled *The Holy Sepulchre. The Church of the Resurrection: An Ecumenical Guide*, by J. Robert Wright.

First, a Millennium celebration of the Fraternity 1966-2000, including: A compilation of the lectures given at the ETRFI since its foundation, an alphabetical index of all Fraternity lecturers as well as a comprehensive list of all Fraternity members throughout the years.

Second, a selection of this year's lectures, including a resource guide of 'practical answers to ethical questions'; a 'yellow pages' of both Jewish and Christian organizations to turn to for help and/or counseling.

### Special Lectures

On the evening of June 6 we had the honour of hosting **Mr. Catriel Sugarman** at the Fraternity. He gave a very interesting presentation on the "Setting of the Second Temple and its Influence in the Herodian Period". Accompanied by slides of his own hand-crafted model of the Temple, Mr. Sugarman lectured on this topic in a truly approachable and professional manner.

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The highlight of the annual ceremony marking the *Sir Sigmund Sternberg Prizes for Interfaith Understanding* at the Hebrew University was a lecture given by **Professor Michael A. Signer**, entitled: "From the Bridges of Paris to the Streets of Jerusalem: New Horizons in the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations". There seems to be a definite trend of renewal in this field, worldwide.

## Volunteers from the UK

A 'convoy' of four *Coventry Cathedral* 'emissaries' arrived at midnight on July 20, for a two-week appointment to the newly-established Syrian Orthodox Public School in Bethlehem. With their 'sleeves rolled up' (not only because of the summer heat!) the fearsome foursome came ready to join the local cohorts in turning soil, painting, cementing, etc. Our thanks go to: Rupert, Catherine, Barnaby and Mary-Jane!!!

## The Boy Scouts Summer Camp 2000

A 'second edition' of last year's incredible success! From July 24-July 1, 60 of the Bethlehem Syrian Orthodox youth camped at *Tabgha* on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. The trips of the week, from Baniyas to Wadi Yehudia to Mt. Tabor to Nazareth, were possible only due to our excellent driver **Kareem Jubran-Cadoux**, husband of **Laure**, a member of the Fraternity and former student of the *Hebrew University*. Thanks Kareem!

On two occasions over the course of the week we celebrated Holy Mass, led by **Rev. Fr. Yaakov Itzhak**, cherished 'Abuna' of the community. First on Sunday at the seaside and then on Friday in the beautiful church. It is always special to participate in a church service of the Syrian Orthodox, particularly as it is carried out in the Aramaic, or Syriac language, the language of Jesus.

In fact, a lesson in Aramaic was a part of each day. For those of us who are fluent in Arabic and/or Hebrew its actually not a difficult language to pick up!

It was a reward of sorts to see the youth of this community enjoying their heritage and each other's

company in such a beautiful setting. We look forward to next year, *Insha allah*.

## News of the Armenian Orthodox Church

Next year will mark the 1700th centenary of the official proclamation of Christianity in Armenia: The Armenian nation is the oldest Christian nation of our globe! In honor of the occasion, the *Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg* is organizing the WORLD CONFERENCE ARMENIA 2000, to take place from Sept. 2-10. Among the Patrons high of this event: **The Catholicos of All Armenians** and **the President of the Federal Republic of Germany**.

## The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia

We would like to draw your attention to those among us in particularly trying situations. Following the January 15th arrest of the Russian Orthodox monastics in Jericho, two nuns chose to remain on the property for 90 days. Awaiting fulfillment of a promise made by the PA for a fair division of the property between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Free Church of Russia, the nuns moved to a container on the edge of the property. Monks who came to replace them encountered an unpleasant surprise: On July 1, running water was cut and electricity for an air-conditioner denied. Frs Sampson and Tichon would appreciate your prayers for the promised "equal chances and fair solutions".

## Good-Byes

Unfortunately we all need to say 'good bye' from time to time, sometimes 'forever' and sometimes temporarily. Faithful member of the Fraternity, Vicar of the *Redeemer Church*, **Rev. Olliver Zobel** and his family will be returning to Germany on August 15, after four years in the country. Olliver has been a great help to us in many ways. At the AGM he expressed his experience of cooperation with the Fraternity, with an excellent understanding of our goals: *Who can build bridges between the different people and organizations of this country and who can help the Christians of the Holy Land to stay together? I found in the Fraternity such an*

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*organization and I was very excited to work with you. Here was the place where the new regulation of the volunteer-visa could be discussed with Christians from different backgrounds. So it was possible to bring the different views together and to speak with one voice to the government...This experience encourages me that also in other issues it will be possible to reach common aims.....I hope to find such a place in Germany where the building of bridges between the different groups has such a big importance.*

On this note, wishing you a pleasant summer season,

*Fraternally yours, Rev. Petra Heldt*

## PUBLICATIONS

### IMMANUEL

Malcolm Lowe (Ed.)  
*People, Land and the State of Israel, Jewish and Christian Perspectives*  
IMMANUEL 22/23 (1989) 50:-NIS

Malcolm Lowe (Ed.)  
*The New Testament and Christian-Jewish Dialogue.*  
*Studies in Honor of David Flusser*  
IMMANUEL 24/255 (1990) 55:-NIS

Malcolm Lowe (Ed.)  
*Orthodox Christians and Jews on Continuity and Renewal*  
IMMANUEL 26/27 (1994) 60:-NIS

### SERIES OF OCCASIONAL STUDIES

J. Robert Wright  
*The Holy Sepulchre. The Church of the Resurrection* (1995) 10:-NIS

### OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Kirsten Stoffregen-Pedersen  
*The Ethiopian Church and its Community in Jerusalem* (1994) 5:-NIS