

ECUMENICAL Theological Research FRATERNITY in Israel

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

NEWSLETTER NO. 19 Sept 2000

Dear Friends,

We welcome you to the 1st autumn of the Millenium! In some places of the world, the maple leaves are about to decorate the sidewalks, in others summer is only beginning. But here in Israel from the Hermon to Eilat, we identify with the changes brought by the new season, accentuated by Rosh haShana celebrations on Sept. 29 & 30. May this new season bring each one of us renewed inspiration to strive for the best -to His Glory!

The New Lecture Season

"To Cure the Wounds that Divide Us" will be our line of study this coming academic year, in the spirit of reconciliation. The opening lecture in October will be entitled "A New Way to Present the Hebrew Bible Through Research in Jerusalem. What then is the Canon of Scripture?" **Fr. Boffet OP** of *Ecole Biblique* has kindly agreed to share with us the very current research on this topic, in which he has been involved together with a team of experts. We expect to be duly challenged on this topic of 'Ethics in the Church', as a continuation of last year's 'Medical Ethics'!

The Student Christian Forum

This summer's extensive excursion-study program to Christian places in and around Jerusalem was faithfully organized and conducted by **Dr. Kirsten Stoffregen Pedersen**.

Conferences this Summer

Organized by the *Coventry Cathedral International Centre for Reconciliation* and sponsored by the *Barnabas Fund* of the UK, there were two back-to-back conferences in

Coventry on the week of Aug. 12-19, attended by delegations from around the world, including one from the Fraternity! The first was entitled "Religion and Conflict: The Use and Abuse of Power" and the second, "The Cross of Nails Conference 2000". On Sunday the 13th, your Executive Secretary **Rev. Petra Heldt** had the honour of preaching at the Cathedral and following the service she was installed as a Companion of the *Community of the Cross of Nails*, in recognition of her role as an exemplary leader in the service of reconciliation.

An important instrument in reconciliation is the Centre for Dialogue and Prayer in Auschwitz. This year's seminar, entitled "...at the edge of Auschwitz", was held on September 3-9. Speakers included **Dr. Lewis Barth, Dr. Manfred Deselaers, Rev. Petra Heldt, Rev. Prof. Lukasz Kamykowski, Rabbi Dr. Michael Signer** among many others from around the world. More than 40 students from Poland (Catholics), the USA (Jews & Christians), Germany and Israel discovered to each other the history through the eyes of the second generation after the Shoah. A life-giving experience.

The first meeting of the new academic year 2000-01 will be held at the Fraternity offices, on October 30th at 7:30 pm, on the topic *Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue in Jerusalem*. Please note the new details for SCF office hours at the *Rothberg School*. The room has been changed to #104 and it will be open on Mondays, from 2-3pm.

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Recently-Issued Statements

At the June 16 Audience, the **Sovereign Pontiff John Paul II** ratified and confirmed the Declaration entitled "DOMINUS IESUS on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church". This 20-page document released on August 6 has created much debate particularly in Part VI: The Church and the Other Religions in Relation to Salvation; "...it is necessary to keep these two truths together, namely, the real possibility of salvation in Christ for all mankind and the necessity of the Church for this salvation" (p.12).

Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity, was released this month, by the *Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies* in Baltimore, MD. Prepared by a group of four interdenominational North-American Jewish scholars (**Frymer-Kensky; Novak; Ochs; Signer**), the Statement is a response to the 'reformation' in Christianity since the Holocaust, a recognition of the official 'efforts of Christians to honor Judaism'. The Statement can be retrieved via: www.icjs.org/what/njsp/dabruemet.html.

Christian Community News

* In memory of the enthronization of **His Holiness Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, Alexios II** a 'Patronal Feast' was held at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, on June 8.

* **His Beatitude Christodoulos, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece** was cordially received at a reception held at the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, on August 24.

* Jesuit deacon **David Mark Neuhaus SJ** of the *Pontifical Biblical Institute* was ordained on September 8, 2000. Please

accept our blessings & warm congratulations, Fr. David, and may your service to our Lord be anointed with a new anointing of His Spirit!

* The Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of the Western United States, **Eklimis Eugene Kaplan**, was welcomed in a reception at the Jerusalem Archbishopric, on Sunday the 17th of September.

* Steering Committee Member **Bishop Aris Shirvanian**, of the *Armenian Orthodox Church* has had a serious battle with heart illness this past summer. We join you in thanks to the Lord for your excellent recovery!

* We bid farewell to: **Sr. Irmtraud** of the *Paulushaus/Schmidtschule*, as a new chapter opens in her life; **Dr. Michael Bongardt**, Study Director at the *Dormition Abbey* as he returns to Germany following a fruitful term here in the Holy Land.

How Can We Say Thanks

A special thank you goes to **Rev. Ingrid Homann**, of the *ELKNE* in Luebeck (*The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Northelbia*) for kindly supplying the office with equipment, further facilitating our activities and enabling us to keep in step with the rest of the world! Kind gestures have been received also from friends in England including **Elizabeth Smith** and in the USA, from **Abraham Tekin** -towards the Syrian Orthodox *Mar Efrem* School in Bethlehem.

Special Celebrations

* We rejoice together with **Sr. Gemma Del Duca S.C.** for her experience of the faithfulness of God in the 50 years of her service to Him in the Sisterhood.

* For the 60th birthday of **Msgr. Dr. Richard Mathes**, Rector of the Pontifical German Institute in Rome *Santa Maria dell'*

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Anima, the *Fraternity* together with **Ronith Halpern** organized a 'surprise lecture' on Aug 5. His audience welcomed him in song and with candles, to a rather tasty and lively 'lecture'!

* **Fr. Thomas Stransky** of *Tantur Ecumenical Institute* celebrated his 70th on September 3.

Of Blessed Memory

Our friend and colleague **Prof. David Flusser** passed away on September 14, at the age of 83. His wide-reaching academic influence on the re-reading of the New Testament and his great ability to gather friends around the world was made public in the *Festschrift* we have presented in his honour: **Dr. Malcolm F. Lowe**. *The New Testament and Christian-Jewish Dialogue. Immanuel 24//25* (1990). The chapter 'Personal Encounter' portrays David Flusser brilliantly. It includes the only comprehensive bibliography of his enormous work. Available for \$20 USD in our offices.

New Publications in Preparation

The Millennium celebration publication of the Fraternity 1966-2000 should be 'hot-off-the-press' by our first lecture at the end of October. Look for this as well as the *Compilation of the Series on Medical Ethics*, including a 'yellow pages' resource section.

With blessings!

Fraternally yours, Rev. Petra Heldt

LITANY OF RECONCILIATION

ALL HAVE SINNED AND FALLEN
SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD

The hatred which divides
nation from nation, race from
race, class from class
FATHER FORGIVE

The covetous desires of people
and nations to possess what is
not their own
FATHER FORGIVE

The greed which exploits the
work of human hands and lays
waste the earth
FATHER FORGIVE

Our envy of the welfare and
happiness of others
FATHER FORGIVE

Our indifference to the plight of
the imprisoned, the homeless,
the refugee
FATHER FORGIVE

The lust which dishonours the
bodies of men, women and
children
FATHER FORGIVE

The pride that leads us to trust
in ourselves and not in God
FATHER FORGIVE

BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER,
TENDERHEARTED,
FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER,
AS GOD IN CHRIST FORGAVE
YOU