

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.23 May 2001

Dear Friends!

Reconciliation has been very much the theme this year, also at the Fraternity. Our focus has been *To Cure the Wounds that Divide Us* - between Churches, communities, individuals. The faithfulness of God to His children striving for unity here in the Holy Land has moved our hearts once again this past year. From the midst of the present turmoil we would like to encourage you all to continue strong in our common Faith which has been passed down to us.

ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

2000/2001 Lecture Series

On May 10, Visiting Lecturer at the *Hebrew University*, **Prof. John Gager** of *Princeton University* (USA), author of "Reinventing Paul" (2000), reminded us in this year's final lecture of our common heritage sometimes quite uncommon to us, in his lecture "Was the Apostle Paul the Father of Christian Anti-Judaism"? Prof. Gager: "The traditional view does not arise necessarily and inevitably from the texts themselves. Instead it depends on our confidence that the starting-point of our interpretation is correct, that our framework places us close to Paul's time and circumstances and that our questions are at least to some degree his questions rather than those of later generations." A fascinating & refreshing re-reading of Paul.

The Flusser Symposion

We are glad to report that the May 23 & 24 joint-conference organized by the Fraternity, Tantur & Ratisbonne was a truly memorable and inspiring occasion in memory of *Hebrew University* Prof. David Flusser. Entitled, "Innovator and Leader in New Testament Studies", this International Symposion was attended by 71 participants and included contributions from **Dr. Brad Young** (USA); **Dr. Martin Majer** (Germany); **Dr. Malcolm F. Lowe** (Jerusalem); **Fr. Frederic**

Manns, SBF; **Prof. Yohanan Ronen**, *Jerusalem School*; **Prof. Serge Ruzer**, *Hebrew University*. The Opening Lecture, "Early Jewish Evidences in the New Testament" by **Prof. Shmuel Safrai**, was followed by a Dinner Reception, graciously hosted by **Fr. Michael McGarry** at *Tantur*. The following day continued at *Ratisbonne* under the chairmanships of **Prof. Guy Stroumsa** (*Hebrew University*); **Fr. Marcel Dubois & Rev. Petra Heldt**. The special concluding evening was spent reminiscing about "The Personality of the Man David Flusser", together with his son **Yohanan** and many close friends, including **Neri Arieli & Mr. Spitzer**. Thanks to the contributions which were received towards this event the Fraternity offices will publish the proceedings.

Special Lectures

*The Fraternity invited **Fr. Prof. Lawrence Frizzell** of *Seton Hall University* (New Jersey) to speak about "The Jews in John's Gospel & in Liturgy", a topic very much in line with our theme for this year. (April 16).

***Prof. Michael Signer** from the Department of Theology at *Notre Dame University* (Indiana), member of the International Liaison Committee to the Vatican, presented to the Fraternity a summary of the Committee's latest events (May 20) with an emphasis on the renewal of Jewish-Catholic relations headed by a new leadership on both sides. Details and "Sampler of Noteworthy Statements made During the Meeting May 1-4, 2001" available in our offices.

*"Religious Pluralism and Chosenness: Are They Compatible?" -a panel discussion co-organized by the Fraternity and *Yakar's Center for Social Concern*. The talk given by **Dr. Raphael Jospe** of *The Open University of Israel* was followed by Responses from **Bishop Krister Stendahl**, **Prof. Zeev Harvey**, **Dr. Katherine Wolff**. Chaired by **Fr. Prof. Marcel Dubois**. (May 22).

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CHARITABLE SERVICES

We continue to communicate the aid received from overseas to our neediest constituents. In addition to this year's main source for local Christians support from the UK, we have received again funds from **Grunenthal Company** in Germany towards the year 2001 payment of the Syrian Orthodox children's school fees.

Thanks to the generous donations, food supplies have been provided for 200 Christian families; outstanding electricity bills have been paid as well as the health bills of a young Christian Cystic Fibrosis patient in Bethlehem.

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Jerusalem 2001 Repentance Conference

The Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary (Darmstadt & Jerusalem) organized an International Conference on April 17-20, as an official expression of the desire of the Sisterhood and several other Christian bodies to repent of their sins committed against the Jewish people. In attendance were over 800 people from over a dozen countries. This event is regarded to be one of the fruits of the life's work of **Mother Basilea Schlink**, foundress of the Sisterhood.

FRATERNITY COMMUNITY NEWS

Student Christian Forum

On April 30, **Rev. Jan Mortensen** gave a well-received report on the developments in Biblical Archeology, including his personal involvement in various projects around the country. We look forward to Sr. Abraham's excursions again this summer!

The STI Symposium

May 15-18 The *Swedish Theological Institute* held a Symposium in celebration of her 50th birthday.

Visiting scholars included **Rev. Ake Skoog; Krister Stendahl & Goran Larsson**. Congratulations and much success in the next 50 years!

Sr. Abraham in the "Post"!

In the May 25 edition of the *International Jerusalem Post* there is an excellent article about the life and work of our long-standing Fraternity Member and SCF Director **Dr. Kirsten Stoffregen Pedersen**, more commonly known as **Sr. Abraham**. Written by **Patricia Golan**.

Visitors

We were happy to welcome as visitors, **Rev. Ingrid Homann** from Luebeck; **Canon White** together with a Bishops delegation from the UK. Our special thanks to **H.E. Metropolitan Cornelius** for kindly receiving the UK-delegation and for inspiring us with your words of godly wisdom!

Birthdays

Teddy Kollek, former Mayor of Jerusalem, celebrated his 90th last week. The highlight of the festivities was a joyous evening at the Biblical Gardens Zoo, attended also by members of the Fraternity.

Sir Sigmund Sternberg has turned 80! In a belated birthday celebration in Montevideo this summer he will be presented with a publication of greetings from friends around the world; including one from us!

Weddings

Our Fraternity Office Assistant **Natalie Posti** is now Mrs. King, since May 2. At the Lutheran *Redeemer Church* of Jerusalem she was married to **Michael King**. All present enjoyed a joyful Reception at their new home in the centre of Jerusalem.

YEAR-END GREETINGS

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We finish this academic year with the Annual General Meeting on June 7. The Retreat which normally follows has been postponed to the beginning of October since many of our members have taken this low season in regard to visitors as an opportunity to go abroad.

The complexity of the situation in the Holy Land can hardly be described with words. We all endure the hardships caused by extremist actions. Maybe the irony can be envisioned when I share with you the following situation: At the Dinner Reception for the Flusser Conference at *Tantur*, while we were all enjoying the most lavish buffet and sitting at the Terrace on this warm summer evening, enjoying the sunset, in front of us the shooting between Beit Jalla and Gilo started. No words can express the clash of the beauty of the country with the murderous sounds of war actions.

***Yours in the hope for peace and reconciliation,
Rev. Petra Heldt***