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Latin Patriarchate
of Jerusalem

www.lpj.org

P.O.B. 14152
Jerusalem 91141

Tel : +972 2 628 23 23

Fax : +972 2 627 16 52

Media office:
meo@latinpat.org

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NEWSLETTER OF JERUSALEM

LOVE THE HOLY LAND AND BE LOVED

Editorial

Dear Friends,

For you who love the Holy Land, the Latin Patriarchate now offers a monthly newsletter "JERUSALEM".

Our website provides information on the daily life of the Mother Church of Jerusalem. Our bulletin also connects you to our diocese.

This newsletter complements other publications for three reasons:

- simple, it tells you about the Latin Patriarchate news on a monthly basis;
- close, it wishes to maintain regular contacts with you;



The Co-Cathedral of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, Chair of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem.

- useful, it often refers you to the site www.lpj.org for more detailed information.

It is published in French, English and Italian.

"JERUSALEM" is a newsletter to be shared with all of you who are committed to the Holy Land and who always want to love more. The Mother Church of Jerusalem is a reason for love, prayer and attention for all. If you wish to subscribe, please send an email to:

meo@latinpat.org

Prayer for Christian unity in Jerusalem

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in Jerusalem was held on January 22 - 30. This year's theme in the West and East was prepared by the churches of Jerusalem with a quote from the the Holy See - "now offer a good view



The theme for 2011 refers to the experience of the first Christian community in Jerusalem

of what it means to fight for unity among Christians in the midst of many problems."

The Greek Melkite Catholics hosted the service on January 23rd, presided by Bishop Youssef Jules Zerey, who asked: «How can we believe in Christ, abide in him, and be divided among ourselves?" "My dear brothers and sisters, unity can only be achieved after a deep repentance and conversion for all, without exception, starting with us, leaders of the churches, and through me first," the Bishop said. Prayers were in the Byzantine tradition in Arabic, and attended by the faithful and representatives from various rites and denominations.

Ecumenical services continued through the week, hosted by: Armenian Orthodox, Lutheran, Latin Catholic, Syrian Orthodox, Ethiopian Orthodox and Anglican churches.

Happy coincidence

Prayer services for the Latins were organized by the Franciscans of the Custody in the parish church of St. Saviour, and by the Benedictines in the Upper Room. It was a special occasion on January 29th, that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church of Jerusalem hosted the service for all the other churches, for reconciliation, unity and peace.

Marie Malzac

Holy Land Coordination

In Memoriam

The Church of the Holy Land remembered three beloved Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, who died in a tragic car accident on Christmas eve. H. B. Patriarch Fouad Twal presided during the funeral Mass.

Persecutions

The Church of Jerusalem is deeply hurt by the terrible explosion which took place in Alexandria on New Year's eve 2011 in the vicinity of a Coptic church where Christians celebrated Mass.

24h of prayers

Christians from around the world were united in prayer on January 29 to 30, for the « Third International Day of Intercession for Peace in Holy Land. »

Community

On February 2nd, the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, the congregation of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of the Incarnate Word was welcomed to the Holy Land by Bishop William Shomali during Mass in the Milk Grotto Church in Bethlehem.

For the 11th consecutive year, Bishops representing Episcopal Conferences in North America, Europe and Scandinavia came to Jerusalem for the Holy Land Coordination meetings on January 8 to 13.

They came to assess the situation in and of the country, met with local authorities, leaders and faithful to measure the needs and modalities of action, for the universal Church to be closely connected and more responsive to the needs of the Church of the Holy Land, the Mother of Churches and always subject to uncertainties in history and difficulties encountered in the Middle East. In his address to the delegation, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem reiterated the importance of the Holy Land for Christians. After the meeting, the Bishops issued a final com-



Patriarch Fouad Twal reminded participants that Christians in the East need real action.

unique pledging «to pray for a just and necessary measures to protect the life, dignity, rights and religious freedom for all in the Middle East.» They also encouraged the revival of pilgrimages to holy places.

M. Malzac and C. Lafontaine

Priests' Session in Lebanon

On Monday, January 24, 2011, 24 young priests from across the Diocese of Jerusalem flew from Amman to Lebanon for a continuing education session. The purpose of this session was to have a greater familiarity with the Eastern Catholic churches of Lebanon and especially

the Maronite Church, which has greatly contributed to the formation of the first priests of the Patriarchate and the development of musicology in the Latin liturgy in the East. Among the topics covered were: How to live the recommendations of the Synod for the Middle East? How

to translate into practice the apostolic exhortation on the Word of God? The session was rich in spiritual and pastoral knowledge and allowed priests to live unforgettable days of fraternal communion and priestly fellowship and friendship. priesthood.

+ William Shomali



In Beirut, the priests before the statue of the Blessed Jacques Haddad, founder of the Sisters of the Cross

Patriarchate Projects

Interview with Bishop William Shomali, Auxiliary Bishop of Jerusalem, on the Beit Safafa building project supported by the Latin Patriarchate. It is a real challenge to try to stop the exodus of Christians from the Holy Land.

1) What is the scope of the project ?

The Christian population in Jerusalem has significantly declined. In 1948, there were 25,000 Christians (about one quarter of the population during that time), now they are a little more than 10,000 (2% of the current population). This decrease in population is a major concern, and the reason is clear: the continuing exodus of Christians, low birth rate and difficulty of acquiring land and obtaining permits to build one's own house. Jerusalem has become very expensive for Christians.

To possibly reduce the departure of Christians, the Latin Patriarchate initiated a project of building 80 homes in Beit Safafa, located south of Jerusalem. The housing project will provide homes for Christian families, especially young couples. Having their own homes will be a motivation for them to remain in the country, to start and grow their families in the Holy Land.

The Latin Patriarchate had the opportunity to acquire a substantial piece of land at a decent price. The Beit Safafa project was primarily intended for employees of institutions and associations of Christian Jerusalem, but not to become a ghetto. The families chosen belong to all churches with even two Muslim families selected. Half of the first 40 units will be available for occupancy in eleven months.

2) What is the role of the Latin Patriarchate?

The Latin Patriarchate's role in this project is that of a developer. It is much easier for groups of individuals, in the concept of 'strength in unity' to purchase land and obtain construction permits publicly under strict regulations.

Note that it still took 15 years to register the property and project in the city cadastre. Today, the Patriarchate coordinates buyers with the various teams working on the site (lawyers, engineers, financial), for example, the Patriarchate, is the representative of beneficiaries before administrative groups and agencies, and administered the distribution of the first 40 dwellings.

A draw was held among the families whose applications had been selected for the project, followed by a detailed investigation of their family situation and financial needs. All families were pleased and satisfied with the drawing

process. Providence has always accompanied the project from its tentative beginnings and difficulties through the drawing.

3) What are the financial issues ?

We initially note that the buyers themselves provide the funding. They paid the price of the land. The cost of construction is covered by a loan from Arab Bank, through mediation, and support of the Patriarchate.

This project represents a total cost of \$15 million: with assistance of \$2 million in grants and subsidies, \$600,000 from the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher liutenancies and other personal initiatives, \$1.1 million from the Italian Cooperation.



One of the first forty units of the housing project in Beit Safafa (south of Jerusalem) which will be ready for occupancy at the beginning of next winter

4) Has the Beit Safa Project met your expectations?

Such project does not solve all the problems of the Christian community in Jerusalem or even the growing need for housing. But it can help solve some of the difficulties and challenges. Most of all, it will be a pilot project that can be the model and be duplicated by other religious institutions.

This project complements others initiated and completed by the Patriarchate and by the Custody of the Holy Land, which recently completed a project of 71 units, located in Bethpage, in the northern sector of Jerusalem.

Interview by Christophe Lafontaine

Beit Safafa Housing Project in pictures



The Beit Safafa neighborhood lies south of Jerusalem,
on the outskirts of Bethlehem



Each apartment has a lounge, kitchen
and three bedrooms



The first forty units will be available
at the end of the year

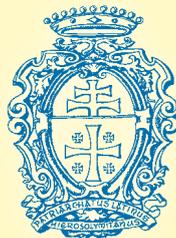


Finally, the housing project will welcome 80 families

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