



NEWSLETTER JERUSALEM

LOVE THE HOLY LAND AND BE LOVED

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Editorial

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of Jerusalem

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BEIT JALA – 2011

From Jerusalem,
we wish you all our
readers a 2012 full
of hope.

Remember us in
your prayers, for
peace in the Holy
Land

... He came and he saw

Following the road, or rather the star, he took the road to Bethlehem on the evening of December 24th. He was not a wanderer nor a tourist. He prayed as he walked. I will tell you his story. Anorak on his back, torch in hand and wearing hiking boots, he does not resemble any of our gospel shepherds who walked barefoot and draped in coarse woollen blankets. And yet, filled with the same hope, he travelled the road in the footsteps of the ancestors. He walked the road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem - away from the main road that leads to Hebron, bordered by rough, low, limestone walls, marked by olive trees, Bedouins resting in the meadows, with sheep and goats grazing at a distance. Nevertheless, the shadow of the cypress trees does not hide the settlements, nor does the purple night sky bring peace to this biblical landscape with its long history of suffering.

Little by little, a cool wind blows and the moon appears. Beneath his boots, a footprint marks the pilgrim's footsteps on a path in this Holy Land. In silence, he meditates in anticipation of the coming of the Saviour. He looks and listens. His prayer comes naturally. It seems the air is filled with songs, from heaven to earth and from earth to heaven "*Glory to God in the Highest and on earth, peace to men of goodwill.*" (Lk 2:4)

Suddenly, the wall! A concrete rampart blocking the road, one of the many separation facets of the West Bank. Poor Bethlehem, the town of the Prince of Peace is hidden behind the Wall!. The pilgrim stops, his heart in his mouth. Gone are the days when shepherds roamed freely over the hills. On his way back from

Mass, our pilgrim will have to navigate through the grey security corridors: personal effects checked and identity card scrutinized. No direct contact with the soldier concealed within the sentry station.

The paths of faith

But for now, the pilgrim reaches Bethlehem! The main square is full of laughter, joy and singing. The little town of Bethlehem of the gospel is surely of the past. Much has been built over it since the night the angels came. Our pilgrim is in a hurry to go down to the holy manger, where everything reminds him of our Saviour in the manger, with the gentleness of childhood memories. In the grotto, he stoops and kneels. Fifty-three lamps emit light. Beneath the altar, an enamel star marks the place of the Nativity. There, our pilgrim prays, weeps and gives thanks. Oh, how the holy scene repeats itself! The shepherds came here. Then, a little later, the Magi. All were welcomed by Him who asked of every man only what he can give.

Our pilgrim has left. Pilgrim on the paths of faith. He came and he saw.....

Christophe Lafontaine

As it was 2,000 years ago, on the road to Bethlehem....



2011 Christmas message to journalists on December 21

Dear friends present here, dear faithful of the Holy Land (in Israel, Palestine, Jordan and Cyprus); I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a New Year full of hope and peace in your hearts, in your families and your countries.



*His Beatitude Fouad Twal,
Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem*

I welcome our Bishops here present: Bishop Giacinto Marcuzzo, Patriarchal Vicar in Israel; and Bishop William Shomali, Patriarchal Vicar for Jerusalem. I also welcome Father David Neuhaus, Patriarchal Vicar in Israel for the Hebrew-speaking Christian community, and I thank them for all their work.

Dear journalist friends, welcome! Thank you for regularly covering the news of our Diocese and for your work of disseminating information to the world with dedication and professional competence, taking to heart the truth. We recognize the media's influence in the changes presently happening in the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

I would like to review with you the year that is about to end, to look at successes and shortcomings, and to share my concerns, hopes and expectations at the dawn of the New Year.

1. Interreligious Dialogue

I gladly remember the following events that we need to encourage, to continue and to support:

1. I want to thank the Holy Father for welcoming and meeting the Council of Religious Leaders in Israel at the Vatican on November 10th with the purpose of promoting mutual understanding and respect. The different Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Druze communities still believe in the power of prayer to foster reconciliation and improve co-existence and relations with our neighbors. Interreligious dialogue is an indispensable condition in the creation of a climate of trust, friendship and collaboration.
2. The meeting directly complemented the significant gathering in Assisi, where Pope Benedict convened nearly 300 representatives of different faiths and non-believers for a time of prayer and dialogue, seeking peace and justice for all peoples.

For the second time in history, all religions of the world gathered in one place to pray to God, in each one's

own way for peace in the world. What I remember of Assisi is that religions have a special responsibility to help people build peace. Religions are a factor for peace. We condemn all violence against places of worship and contempt for religious symbols.

3. The London Conference held in July brought together Catholics, Protestants, Anglicans, Muslims and Jews around the same table. This is already a positive signal.
4. Just recently, the second Muslim-Catholic Forum in Amman brought together senior representatives of Catholics and Muslims. What we expect from these meetings is a dissipation of prejudices, foster mutual respect, learn about our common values, and build bridges of common sense and goodwill without forgetting the importance of dialogue in everyday life, in our schools and various institutions.

2. Ecumenism

Along the same lines, I would like to recall the commitment among Christians to dialogue. The 10th meeting of the Council of Churches of the Middle East recently held in Cyprus stressed the willingness of four Christian groups: Catholics, Protestants, Eastern Orthodox and Orthodox for more collaboration and commitment to unity. At the invitation of the Synod for the Middle East last year, we intend to unify the date of Passover. We do so, driven by the desire of our Lord and the unanimous will of the Christian people of the Holy Land.



*In Bkerke, Catholic Patriarchs
met Patriarch Kyrill of Moscow*

I also want to emphasize a happy moment following the meeting of the Catholic Patriarchs of the East held in Lebanon from November 14 to 17. We welcomed Patriarch Kyrill of Moscow who invited us to visit him in Russia to strengthen our relations. I am very delighted.

3. Arab Spring and situation of Christians

I would like to go back to current events, to situations that we continue to follow closely, to what happened and is happening in the Arab countries. I have always defended the changes taking place in favor of freedom and democracy. I have repeatedly emphasized that Christians are not excluded from these movements. That said, I fervently hope that human rights and the dignity of each individual are respected. I also hope and pray that the competent authorities make every effort to calm the spirits without violence, and to protect the minorities who are an integral part of the population in the region. We must grasp this moment of opportunity to build a new society based on equal citizenship for all. The Catholic Patriarchs of the East together have asked our faithful to set a day of prayer for reconciliation and peace in the Middle East.

4. Application to the UN for membership of a State of Palestine

We want a just and comprehensive peace to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We adhere to the position taken by the Holy See, clearly acknowledging the two-state solution with security and internationally recognized borders. I often say that to be with one of the parties does not mean to be against the other. We are for the welfare and interests of the whole world: peace, security, mutual respect and dignity. The journey has begun but the process is long and tedious. I firmly believe and even more today, that negotiation is the best way to resolve the conflict.

5. Visits to the Diaspora

Among the events of this year, I want to mention my two visits to the United States in June and September. They were opportunities to meet with our faithful of the Diaspora. The purpose was to encourage them to remember and to love their homeland, and help their brothers, "the little flock" that has remained in the Holy Land.

One of our major undertakings in the field of education is the American University of Madaba, which opened on October 17th, and aims to prepare our youth to be enlightened, open and to become responsible leaders of our future generations.

6. Pastoral Care of Migrants

Today, we face a new reality in the Church, the presence of migrant workers and refugees. In Israel alone, there are around 230,000 foreign workers and approximately 30,000 asylum seekers, the vast majority are Christian. They live mostly in Hebrew-speaking Jewish society. In fact, the Hebrew-speaking Vicariate is facing a great challenge to meet the pastoral needs of Catholic immigrants. We must redouble our pastoral efforts to



Philippino migrants in the Holy Land

provide religious services and to ensure their integration into the local church.

7. Religious communities and Year of the Bible

Before concluding, I thank all the religious communities in the Holy Land for their prayers and apostolic service. I also wish to thank all our good people who have dedicated themselves to the realization of the Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini*. The year 2011 has been dedicated as the Year of the Bible in the Holy Land, for our faithful to become more familiar with the Word of God, "our daily bread."

I look forward to some major upcoming events in the Church in which we will participate with joy:

1. The World Congress for Pastoral Care of Tourism (Mexico - April 2012).
2. The Congress for the Pastoral Care of the Media to be convened by the Pontifical Council for Social Communications. (Lebanon - April 17-19, 2012)
3. The World Meeting of Families (Milan - June 2012) with the participation of eight families from the Holy Land.
4. The 50th International Eucharistic Congress (Dublin - June 2012)
5. The Synod for the New Evangelization (Rome - October 2012)

I would like to conclude with an invitation to all Christians to come on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Do not be afraid. Our warm welcome awaits you. Come as pilgrims. It is one of the most beautiful ways to love the Holy Land, and to pray for it and its children. The earthly motherland of Jesus needs you and you need her.

Dear friends, I renew my sincere wishes for peace. Let us pray that Mary, Mother of Christ, the Prince of Peace intercede for our Holy Land. May Christmas fill you with joy.

Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem

Condemnation of mosque desecration in Burkin

The Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land condemned the acts of desecration of the mosque in the village of Burkin in the northern West Bank on Wednesday, November 7, 2011.

Anti-Defamation

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) called on the Chief Rabbinate of Israel to publicly denounce *"the repulsive decades-old practice by ultra-Orthodox Jews of spitting at Christian clergymen they encounter in the street."*

Appointment of new Armenian Catholic Exarch

The Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land (AOCTS) announced that Msgr. Joseph (Hovsep) Kelekian is the new Exarch for Armenian Catholics in the Holy Land (Jerusalem, and Jordan).

10th Middle East Council of Churches in Cyprus

The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) held its 10th general meeting in Paphos, Cyprus on November 29-30 with the theme *"The community of believers was of one heart and mind"* (Acts 4, 32). The 10th General Assembly ended with the election of the Secretary General for a period of four years, Fr. Dr. Paul Rouhana of the Maronite Church.

Diocese

Society of St. Yves Open House

Doors wide open, colorful balloons, welcoming booths in the street, thematic conferences, friendly staff presenting their mission. Here is a nice way for the society of St. Yves to celebrate its 20 year anniversary without losing its vocation to make everyone aware of human rights and defend the weakest. In collaboration with various partner organizations of the St. Yves society, including the Silwan Information Center, EAPPI, Caritas Baby Hospital, Addameer and PCATI, the Open House took place from 12 noon to 18 pm on Friday, December 2nd. The day began with a greeting from President Raffoul Rofa, who thanked everyone for attending, followed by a speech by Bishop William Shomali, Auxiliary Bishop for Jerusalem. The Bishop recalled the three main missions of the Church: teaching faith, living sacraments and improving charity for the benefit of individual rights. He congratulated the Society of St. Yves for its work on human rights that responds to this third mission "through its commitment to protect the weakest." He thanked them for the initiative of this day that allows communicating and educating the public about the immutable rights for each person." Father Emile Salaytah, President of the Ecclesiastical Court of the Latin Patriarchate and Raffoul Rofa expressed their gratitude to the staff for their dedication and commitment. Five conferences were held during the day, on the right of residents, insurance, health, house demolitions, permits, the issue of family reunification, and the child rights.



The Society of St. Yves works under the patronage of the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem.

Amélie de La Hougue

Schmidt's College celebrates 125th anniversary

125 years! In 1886, Father Wilhelm Schmidt thought of creating a school for Arab girls. Sponsored by the Congregation of Jesus and the German Association of the Holy Land (Deutscher Verein vom Heiligen Lande, DVHL), Schmidt's College now has 550 Palestinian students. Latin Patriarch Fouad Twal presided Holy Mass on Sunday, December 4th, in thanksgiving for this 125th anniversary, with Mass, concert, bazaar, singing German and Palestinian students dressed in traditional costumes... His Beatitude Michel Sabbah, Patriarch Emeritus and former student of the school spoke at a panel discussion* on Saturday afternoon on the theme *"Schmidt's College yesterday, today and tomorrow."* Minister of Education of the Palestinian Authority, Mrs. Lamis Alami was present. Mr. Klaus Schmitz, school director, welcomed the participants, teachers, students, parents and many German guests and friends. The Sisters of the Congregation of Jesus who sponsored the jubilee helped to coordinate the celebration in the presence of Sr. Frances Orchard from Rome, and Mr. Bernd Mussinghoff, representative of the German Association for the Holy Land. This Association supports Schmidt's College in its mission to serve as a bridge between German Catholics, the Holy Places and the people of the Holy Land. In a multi-faith context, Schmidt's College, as a catholic institution, educates its students, Christians and Muslims in a spirit of listening and of openness to others. Teachers take to heart and ensure that the students are educated in issues of human dignity, of individual inalienable rights, of social responsibility, of inter-religious dialogue and of mutual tolerance.

Amélie de La Hougue

Migrant pastoral coordination fourth meeting

On December 6, 2011, at the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the commission for the coordination of priests and pastoral workers involved with migrant workers and asylum seekers convened to continue their discussions directed by the coordinator of the commission, Father David Neuhaus, Patriarchal Vicar for Hebrew speaking Catholics in Israel. Some news of the work were shared from the various communities. In the prisons, permission is awaited to celebrate a Catholic wedding of a prisoner with his fiancée. In the Bedouin communities, the struggle continues for their rights. An NGO has been established to help Filipinos hospitalized in Israel deal with medical expenses. The Indian community has begun to meet in a chapel formerly used exclusively by Filipinos in Tel Aviv. The Indian chaplaincy has organized a number of mass events leading up to Christmas. The Eritreans continue to call out for attention with regard to the massive human rights abuses taking place in Sinai. These are a few of the news items shared at the meeting. Father David then introduced the agenda of topics. A main topic was the preparation for marriage within the various migrant communities. Those present took some time to examine the directives issued by the Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries in the Holy Land with regard to preparation before receiving the sacrament of marriage. During the meeting, Bishop William Shomali, Auxiliary to His Beatitude Patriarch Fouad Twal, shared with those present the concern of the Patriarch for this pastoral effort among migrants and assured those present that the Patriarch and his Vicars are examining how to better organize the outreach of the Church.

Saint James Vicariate for Hebrew Speaking Catholics

Thanksgiving mass in Nazareth for St. Guanella

Thanksgiving mass was held, on Sunday, November 27th, at the Annunciation Latin Church in Nazareth on the occasion of the Canonization of Fr. Luigi Guanella, which took place in Rome with Pope Benedict XVI on October 23, 2011.

Emotion for Blessed Mariam Baouardy's letters

"*Letters of the Blessed Mary of Jesus Crucified*", published recently, have been "received and read" with emotion in Sister Mariam's native village of Ibillin on Friday, December 2nd. Bishop Giacinto-Boulos Marcuzzo, Latin Patriarchal Vicar for Israel, conducted conference at the Melkite parish church.

New Director of Maison d'Abraham

Secours Catholique - Caritas France announced the appointment of Mr. Maher Turjman as the new Director of Maison d'Abraham and as its Representative in the Holy Land, replacing Fr. Michael P O'Sullivan.

Technology for Peace

On Saturday, December 3, 2011, while time indicated 9.30 am in New York and 5.30 pm in Palestine, the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the John Paul II Center in Washington were joined together with a simultaneous broadcast via Internet to send a message of peace and hope to the world.

Jewish Council for Public Affairs visits Patriarchate

About twenty members and officers of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) visited the Latin Patriarchate on Thursday, December 8 to discuss the current political situation, and identify positive and negative perspectives. The JCPA includes a dozen of American Jewish organizations. The delegation that visited the Patriarchate was led by Conrad Giles (JCPA chairman), Steve Gutow, JCPA executive president and Martin J. Raffel, senior vice president. Rabbi David Rosen, director of interfaith relations for the American Jewish Association was moderator. Leaders



Leaders of Christian Churches gathered
to welcome JCPA members

of Christian Churches gathered. Discussion focused on the current situation in the country. His Beatitude Patriarch Fouad Twal referred to two major problems: lack of housing for Palestinians and the issue of family reunification: if one's wife is Jordanian and the husband Palestinian, the wife cannot come and live in the Palestinian territories without authorization to enter Palestine. The same applies to a Palestinian woman whose husband is in Jerusalem or Israel. Thousands of similar cases exist. In addition all Palestinians who were outside of Palestine, during the 1967 war and who have not been identified by the Israelis, lost their right of residence in the country, for them and their children. Thousands of them are Christians. Bishop Shomali thought that during the meeting JCPA members expressed their readiness to provide assistance.

Christophe Lafontaine

Project

RAMALLAH – AL-AHLLIYAH HIGH SCHOOL HOTEL MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

His Beatitude, Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, accompanied by Dr Mohammed Shateyah, representing President Mahmoud Abbas, inaugurated the new hotel management department of Aliyyah School in Ramallah on Saturday December 3, 2011. This project as with many others, is part of the effort to minimize the high level of Christian emigration.

Ramallah means “Mount Allah” or “the Heights of God,” a city 900m above sea level, and some 15 kms north of Jerusalem. According to Christian tradition, it is here, that Joseph and Mary realized the 12 year-old Jesus was missing, having stayed at the Temple of Jerusalem. Ramallah, a name seemingly predestined to comprise one of the largest parishes of the Diocese of Jerusalem, the parish of the Holy Family.

Christians are leaving

Before 1948, Christians were the majority of the population, now they are less than 10%, spread across five confessions. Every family is affected by emigration. Then Fr. Aktham, the parish priest, estimated that there were 42,000 Christian natives of Ramallah residing in the USA in 2008. Today, as is happening throughout the Latin diocese, Fr. Faysal Hijazen parish priest of the Latin Parish of the Holy Family, is doing everything to keep the 450 Catholic families in the parish and to stop Christian emigration. While reminding us “that a priest’s mission is pastoral, sacramental and social,” he uses different ways of gathering his flock together.

- **A dynamic parish where everyone is invited to participate actively:**

Services are enlivened by the choir of boys and girls, prayer and meditation groups have been launched such as the JEC (Christian student youth movement), JOC (Christian workers’ youth movement), as well as the Legion of Mary and Caritas. Five years ago, a family community centre was set up in the parish as a place for parishioners’



Mosaic in the Holy Family Parish Church



An opportunity for Ramallah parishioners to socialize



School and High School in Ramallah

evening gatherings, to socialize, play, listen to music or watch videos.

• **Accomodations**

The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem has built two residential complexes in order to help Christian families. The buildings have 25 apartments close to the church and 27 apartments in Tireh, a suburb of Ramallah.

• **Schools**

One of the most fundamental means of slowing emigration is to provide education, and professional training up to adulthood. The creation of a hotel management department within the Al-Aliyyah school, one of the Latin Patriarchate’s most recent projects, responds to that need.

Founded in 1858, the Al-Ahliyyah school, presently under the direction of the Latin Patriarchate and run by the Sisters of the Rosary, has some 600 pupils between 3½ and 18 years old, boys and girls, Muslims and Christians. On December 3rd, Patriarch Twal inaugurated the new hotel management department. He expressed satisfaction for this project, and declared that it, “offers a great opportunity for students to pursue their academic or professional training.” It will help young Palestinians to stay in their country.”* Dr Mahmoud Shtayeh, representing President Abbas, was also present at the inauguration and applauded the project. “I congratulate you for launching the hotel management department of Al-Ahliyyah school which will be of great service to our young men and will provide them with additional skills.” He also thanked the donors, “for participating in the construction and development of the institutions of the future state of Palestine.”*

“We can take twenty-five students each year” declares Fr. Faysal. This department “will give Ramallah’s young people hope and enable them to build a future.” The hotel management department will be ready to welcome its first students in September 2012.

Amélie de La Hougue



School and High School in Ramallah



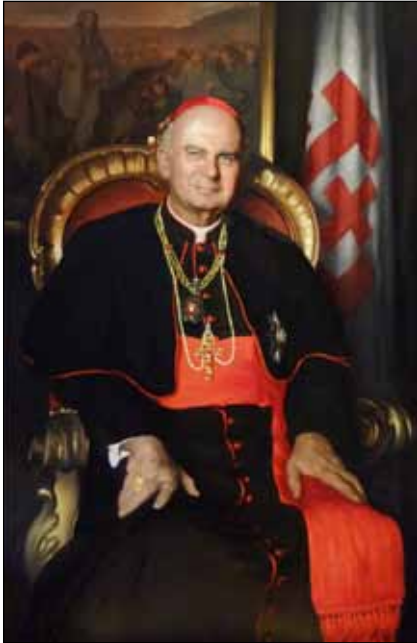
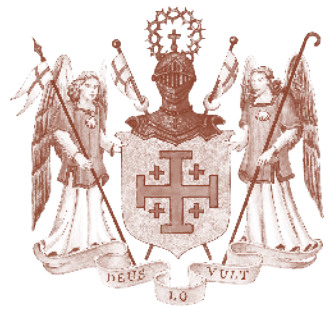
Inauguration of Ahliyyah High School Hotel management department



The Parish of the Holy Family

(*) quotes from Abouna.org

The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem



His Eminence John Patrick Cardinal Foley resigned from his position as Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem in February 2011.

Patriarchate mourns Cardinal Foley's death

Cardinal John Patrick Foley died in Philadelphia, U.S., on Sunday, December 11. He was 76 years old. He was ordained a priest in 1962, and was named in 1984 by Pope John Paul II as president of the Pontifical Commission (now Pontifical Council) for Social Communications at the Vatican. Before that, Cardinal Foley was editor of the Catholic Standard and Times in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia/Pennsylvania. On June 27, 2007, Archbishop Foley was named by Pope Benedict XVI Pro-Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem and became cardinal. For health reasons, Cardinal Foley resigned as Grand Master of the EOHSJ. The Holy Father appointed Archbishop of Baltimore, Most Rev. Edwin F. O'Brien, Pro-Grand Master of the Order. His Beatitude Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Auxiliary Bishops, clergy, religious, and faithful of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem (Israel, Palestinian Territories, Jordan and Cyprus) are deeply saddened by his death. Under the guidance of Cardinal Foley, the EOHSJ spread to new countries and achieved the highest number of members in its history.

The Patriarchate remembers with gratitude his many years of dedicated service for the Christians of the Holy Land, especially in being a strong

supporter of the Bethlehem University. We express our condolences to Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien, Pro Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher and the Knights and Ladies of the Order worldwide. The Patriarchate also presents its condolences to all who know and respect him, and all those he loved and served. In spiritual union with all who mourn his death, we pray and commend him to the infinite mercy of God. "Eternal rest grant unto Cardinal Foley, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him."

Christophe Lafontaine



Cardinal Foley was a strong supporter of Bethlehem University.

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