



Preparing the way

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Institutions Conference:
January 2017
- Visit to Holy Land
Coordination of International Bishops with Friends of the Holy Land:
January 2017
- Clergy Retreat:
February 2017
- Archbishop Fred Hiltz with Canadian Companions visit:
April 2017
- Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby visits:
May 2017

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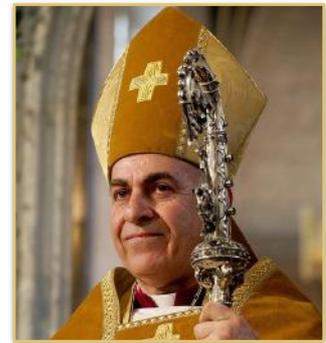
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Welcome from the Archbishop

Dear Friends,

At our Diocesan Synod ('Majma') in November I set as our theme for the Diocese this year: John the Baptist. His counter-cultural message of repentance and preparation was difficult for his community to hear. He was a man of austerity: worldly things did not matter to him. What mattered to him were not everyday concerns, but the will of God, as he call us to 'prepare the way'.



Christians must ponder on how to 'prepare the way' in our own lives and in our communities; for Christ is the Way. Yet, for what and for whom do we prepare the way? Advent gives us the answer: we are preparing for the Christ - he is the Way - and this is captured by that wonderful hymn "O Little Town of Bethlehem":

*No ear may hear his coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still
The dear Christ enters in.*

We prepare through primarily our prayer, as we open our minds and our hearts to receive his abundant love. We prepare through listening to those around us, our families, our neighbors and our communities. Through our prayer and through our listening, we learn what God wills and what our neighbors needs. As Christians we have a duty to act not for our interests but listen and respond to the needs around us as Christ has taught us. This is what John the Baptist did. It was not an easy task - the path is costly and narrow. For John his pursuit of truth cost him his life. With Jesus’s promise of eternal life.

So let us prepare ourselves to let the Christ child enter in this Christmas, I wish you all, wherever you are this Christmastide, his blessing, for your family, for your friends and for your neighbors.

Grace and Peace,

+ Suheil S. Dawani

The Most Revd Suheil S. Dawani, Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem



ARCHBISHOP VISITS LINK-DIOCESE IN IRELAND

Gets Taste of Dublin and Glendalough Diocesan Life

Archbishop of Jerusalem, The Most Revd Suheil Dawani and his Chaplain, The Revd Canon David Longe, traveled to Ireland for the first official visit to the link dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough under the Jerusalem Link partnership which was agreed in Jerusalem this past January, developing a link between the two dioceses which is mutually supportive and mutually enriching. Journeying with them throughout the trip were the Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, and members of the Dublin and Glendalough Council for Mission.

Their trip got underway visiting with pupils of Springdale National School in Raheny where Archbishop Suheil spoke to the children about his diocese and the holy city of Jerusalem. The Dublin school has over 200 pupils from 21 faith backgrounds and he talked of the importance of peace and living together as the family of God. The Archbishop presented the school with a Jerusalem Cross and they, in turn, presented him and Canon Longe with Irish rugby gear. Archbishop Michael explained the background of the Jerusalem Link partnership. Later, the Principal Stella Downes talked about the importance of integration.

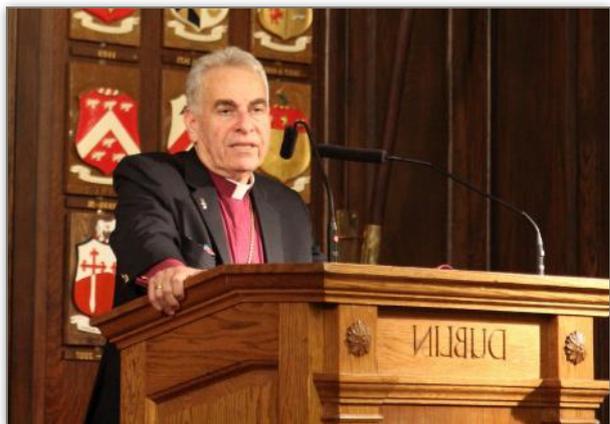


Archbishops Dawani (center) and Jackson (right), clergy, and administrators at the Springdale National School

Next, they visited the Mount Temple School in Clontarf, where they were greeted by administrators and given a presentation about the school and a musical performance. Archbishop Suheil told the students about schools and the other facilities run by the diocese. He said that while the majority of people attending their schools, hospitals and facilities were Muslim, they focused on shared respect for human beings rather than their religious identity.

The group toured the Cowper Care facility in Baldoyle where Archbishop Michael described the work of the center as being faith and community in action and praised the partnership between the Christian Brothers and the Church of Ireland. The group then joined parishioners of St Doulagh's Church, Balgriffin, for Evening Prayer. The site of the church has been a place of Christian worship for 1,400 years and parts of the current church building are 900 years old. Speaking during the service Archbishop Suheil said he hoped and prayed the partnership between the Dioceses of Jerusalem and Dublin and Gendalough would continue to be strengthened by prayer and visits. "Our ministry is of peace and reconciliation. There is a lot of





Speaking at a reception in the Mansion House in Dublin, hosted by the Amb. of the State of Palestine

violence and destruction so I hope we can work together for peace and reconciliation," he stated.

Later in the evening, representatives from many faith communities attended a reception in the Mansion House in Dublin, hosted by the Ambassador of the State of Palestine, Mr Ahmad Abdelrazek. Among the guests was the Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke.

Representing the Ambassador, who was unable to be present, the Chargé d'Affaires, Jilan Abdalmajid, praised the Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem's achievements in the medical, social and educational fields.

"We pray and hope because we believe that religion can be part of the solution... We pray for peace and stability for everyone in the region"

~Archbishop Suheil Dawani



Archbishop Suheil presents students with a Jerusalem Cross

Archbishop Suheil said it was a special occasion to meet people from Jerusalem and share friendship and fellowship. Talking about his diocese's work, he said they helped all people in need, people who were marginalized, and said it was important that all people have dignity and hope. "We pray and hope because we believe that religion can be part of the solution... We pray for peace and stability for everyone in the region," he said.

Archbishop Michael spoke of Dublin and Glendalough's fundraising efforts which have succeeded in raising €200,000.00 for the refurbishment of on-call facilities and solar panels at Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza. He added that the Jerusalem Link was not simply about money, but about friendship and solidarity.

~With thanks and appreciation to the Diocese of Dublin and Glendalough

STRESSING DIGNITY OF HUMAN LIFE IN THE HOLY LAND

Archbishop joins Irish faith leaders in signing Glencree Declaration for Peace



*Signatories to the Joint Declaration for Peace & Respect for the dignity of human life in the Middle East
Photo: Diocese of Dublin and Glendalough*

Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders in Ireland have pledged to work together to promote peace and deepen understanding in the Holy Land. Some 17 leaders of the three Abrahamic faiths across the island of Ireland also pleaded for an end to violence and loss of life in the Middle East. They did so after hearing a speech from Archbishop Suheil Dawani.

Archbishop Suheil met the faith leaders at the Glencree Centre for Peace and Justice this month as part of a week-long visit to Jerusalem's companion link united dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough. The Glencree Centre works to transform violent conflict and build peace with a vision of a shared world, where all can live free from violence and conflicts are resolved peacefully; using the experiences of reconciliation on the island of Ireland to help people around the world transform their own violent conflicts.



In the declaration, Irish faith leaders said they shared grief and pain at the death and suffering currently taking place in the Middle East, impacting dreadfully upon civilian populations and prayed for peace throughout the region:

“It is both the aspiration and the right of all people to live in freedom and security without fear. People of all faiths are equally entitled to enjoy such things and yet each sees the other as denying that right to the other with a consequent spiral of violence. Our prayer and plea is for this spiral to be broken and safety and security to be restored to all with a new beginning established through a commitment to parity of esteem in both politics and society.”

The declaration was signed at an event attended by 60 religious, political and community leaders: Milestones on a Journey of Hope. “It recognized the ongoing suffering which continues to affect

many parts of the Middle East, and offered an opportunity to explore and reflect with them on some of the experiences of Ireland's journey out of violence into the hope of a brighter future," a diocesan spokesperson said in a statement.

The declaration went on to say: "Today together we send our collective message of hope for peace to our brothers and sisters in across the Middle East who yearn to live in freedom and peace. We join with them and all people of faith in the region: Jewish, Christian and Muslim, seeking a just and durable peace, rooted in reconciling love for all the people of the land that is called 'holy' by each of the Abrahamic faiths." Signatories to the declaration included representatives from the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist, and Armenian churches as well as Islamic and Jewish leaders.

[Read the full Declaration](#)

~With thanks and appreciation to the Anglican Communion News Service

2016 MAJMA: "THE HUMBLE AND SACRIFICIAL MINISTRY"

Archbishop reports on year's achievements and future prospects

This year's two-day Majma (Diocesan Synod) featured the blessed company and communion of friends, colleagues, esteemed guests, dignitaries, and clergy. Before the conference started, Canon David Longe on behalf of Archbishop Suheil, journeyed with Archbishop Michael Jackson of the Diocese of Dublin and Glendalough, The Revd Andy Bowerman of the Anglican Alliance, and Catherine Chapman of the Diocese of Ottawa to the baptism site of Christ along the east side of the Jordan River. This visit was especially appropriate as this year's Majma theme centered on John the Baptist and his life and ministry. The final event on their journey to the Majma was the ordination service for Revd Fares Naoum and Revd Jamil Khader at the Theodore Schneller Chapel in Amman. (*see article on pg. 9-11*)



The 2016 Majma Group convening in Amman, Jordan

In Archbishop Suheil's report, he spoke at length about the work and ministry of several churches and institutions. Notably, there was palpable excitement and enthusiasm around the various women's ministries and the planned reopening of St. Saviour's Church in Acre and St. Peter's Church in Jaffa. Participants also listened to speeches from the Mayor of Greater Jordan on behalf of King Abdullah and Haifa Najjar, Jordanian Senator and Superintendent of the Al-Ahlyia Girl's School.



Archbishop Suheil addresses Majma attendees

“Through the humble and sacrificial ministry of John the Baptist, we need to learn and place before us in this Church Council, whether we be lay or ordained, a life given in faith which diminished so that Christ could increase, when John said, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” (John 3.30)

~Archbishop Suheil Dawani

The event also included prayer and meditation around the ministry of John the Baptist, allowing participants to reflect on their own service to God. With the reopening of two churches and the yearly gathering of all the clergy together, the 2016 Majma concluded in a spirit of hope and affirmation, with everyone departing feeling encouraged by our common fellowship in Christ.

ANGLICAN WOMEN COME TOGETHER IN THE HOLY LAND

Diocese of Ottawa Women's Conference strengthens ties and highlights diocesan ministries

The Ottawa Women's Conference and Pilgrimage to Jerusalem took place between November 5-18. It was a wonderful two weeks in the Holy Land. The delegation from Ottawa were kept very busy, visiting many Christian Churches of different denominations, diocesan ministries and parishes, and observing several archeological sites. However, the warmest and greatest memories were of the “Living Stones”; the people with whom they met, and being able to see firsthand some of the great work that is being carried out by the Diocese of Jerusalem. This article was written from the perspective of two Canadian pilgrims participating in the conference:



In the Beginning

It all began at the Diocesan Synod for the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa in 2013 when Catherine Chapman and Shafeeqa Dawani had a dream to further the partnership between our two dioceses. Shafeeqa and her husband Archbishop Suheil Dawani, Archbishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, were in Ottawa as honored guests of the Synod.

A Warm Welcome

The evening we arrived in Jerusalem, we were met at St. George's Cathedral by Dean Hosam Naoum, who led us in evening prayer. After the service we gathered for a reception with Archbishop Suheil, Shafeeqa, and some of the women from the cathedral. “As people get to



know each other across boundaries of distance, religion, faith, and culture, they will be inspired to work together and go further than either one could go alone... To Catherine Chapman, I say, your dream and mine has come true! Thank you."

Princess Basma Centre for Rehabilitation

The Centre is one of many ministries provided by the Diocese of Jerusalem. Directed by Ibrahim Faltas, the Centre is for children with a wide range of disabilities, emphasizing on those with autism. They work on helping the children and integrating them into regular classrooms. Additionally, the centre is equipped with special rooms for therapy on a one on one basis for visual, audio, and tactile learning. Adjacent to the rehabilitation areas for children is a "Sheltered Workshop" which provides vocational training for adults with disabilities to help them gradually become more independent and integrated into the community. The people in the workshop carry out different activities such as carpentry and rattan products; the revenue of which goes to help cover the costs of the Centre. Recently, The Princess Basma Centre signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Diocese of Ottawa and the Children's Hospital

Bethlehem

While in Bethlehem the group had the opportunity to tour the city and learn about some of the hardships that are faced by those in the refugee Camps. While they feel a lot of anger, they are using art as a way to both process and manage their emotions. The art program encourages the use of theatre, dance, art, and video, to channel participants' energy and raise awareness.

St. Philip's Church, Nablus

St. Philip's Church, Nablus, used to be the parish of Archbishop Suheil. This is where the first confirmation took place as described in Acts 8. The Rev. Ibrahim Nairouz, rector of one of the Nazareth parishes mentioned that a church by the same name, St. Philip's in Gaza, was bombed and some people in Ottawa paid for repairs to the roof. Additionally, he shared that it was his parish who, a few years ago, had partnered with youth from the Diocese of Ottawa to raise money for a new altar.

St. Luke's Hospital

St. Luke's Hospital is another ministry of the Diocese of Jerusalem and has been open since 1900; and now has 60 beds and specializes in Neurology. The majority of the patients treated at St. Luke's are very poor and do not have the means to pay; these patients are placed in shared rooms, while those who can afford to pay are given single rooms. They serve a large population of predominantly Muslim citizens in the city of Nablus.



At St. Luke's Hospital, with Salwa Khoury, Director of public relations; Dr. Walid Kerry, Director of the Hospital, Photo: Diocese of Ottawa

St. Matthew's, Zababdeh

A new church building, St. Matthew's tower was built in 1993 and the church in 1996, and already they are looking to expand.

Archbishop Suheil said, "the church is full Sunday morning , it gives us hope that Christianity will stay in the country". Additionally, the Diocese of Jerusalem has awarded around 100 scholarships for students in this area to cover their expenses for school. St. Matthew's, Zababdeh is currently working in partnership with St. James', Carleton Place.



St. George's Anglican School

Despite the many struggles and challenges that come with having to cross checkpoints to get to and from school, the high school students the group met with were all ambitious and positive about their futures, hoping to go to universities in other parts of the world. One student mentioned that his goal is to study international law, he wants to go away to learn and then come back to help his country.

Majma Gathering in Jordan

Catherine Chapman travelled separately for two days to attend the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem's annual Majma (Diocesan Synod) in Jordan (See above article). Catherine spoke at the Majma, bringing greetings from Primate, Fred Hiltz; Bishop John; and also spoke on behalf of the Women's Conference; presenting a quilted wall hanging that was filled with prayers from Ottawa. While at Majma, Catherine also has the opportunity to have lunch with a gathering of women from Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, and the West Bank.

Nazareth

The group was delighted to once again be joined by women from the Diocese of Jerusalem, as some of the women from Christ Church, Nazareth, came to their Guesthouse for dinner. Inspired by their visit, the women led everyone in singing together "We Shall Overcome".

Sunday at St. George's Cathedral

Dedicated in 1898, St. George's Cathedral is a beautiful space with sweeping stone arches and striking pipe organ. Sunday morning's the Cathedral is host to three services; one in Arabic-English, and two in English. It was a delight to be able to participate in the Arabic-English service officiated by Dean Hosam, where the hymns were sung in English and Arabic at the same time. There was a small congregation of Arabic speaking Palestinians who sat in the front pews. We watched and listened as the Dean, from a high pulpit, gave his sermon in Arabic, smiling and looking down at those people. Then, looking toward us, he proceeded to deliver his sermon in English; with the same smile and easy way of speaking. He talked about how the Archbishop of Canterbury had said there were three priorities in being a Christian: prayer, reconciliation, and evangelism and witness. He gave a little laugh and said how everyone gets uncomfortable when we talk about evangelism. But, he said, it was really just showing our love for Jesus to others in our actions.



*Dean Hosam and Canon Fuad offer
Palestinian music to the group
Photo: Diocese of Ottawa*

Witnesses

"When your trip comes to an end, I hope that you will go back to Canada with a taste and an aroma of our faith, culture, hospitality, dreams, stories, situations, and witness to our Lord Jesus in the Land of the Holy One" – Shafeeqa Dawani

A Changed Perspective

"This gathering and your visit to our land reminds us of the breadth, width, and height of God and of our humanness"

"This past Sunday I walked through rain, hail, and snow, to get to church. It was miserable. But after visiting a refugee camp and listening to teenagers share their stories and struggles of



crossing checkpoints, I found myself feeling thankful that Mother Nature is all that stands between me and attending church, crossing the city for work, and/or visiting with loved ones.”

~With thanks and appreciation to the Diocese of Ottawa

PRIESTS ORDAINED IN JORDAN AND LEBANON

New faith leaders offer hope for the Diocese

In November, the Diocese of Jerusalem ordained three deacons to the Holy Order of Priesthood. First came the ordinations of Revd Fares Naoum and Revd Jamil Khader in Amman, Jordan, at the Theodore Schneller Chapel. Led by Archbishop Suheil and members of the Jerusalem clergy, the service was enriched by the preaching of Archbishop Michael Jackson of Dublin and Bishop of Glendalough. Then the Archbishop and several clergy headed to Lebanon where Revd David Roche was ordained at All Saints Church in Beirut.

To honor and celebrate these momentous events, we wanted to share some of Archbishop Michael’s sermon as we continue to discern and listen to God’s call in our lives:

“I was listening to the radio one evening and heard someone say the words: *The world is a small place. But I wouldn’t like to have to paint it.* It was one of those disconcerting phrases at which everyone on the panel on the radio program laughed; but it has stuck with me and it will not quite let me set it aside. I suppose what it means to me now is something like this: the world draws us together; and through communication, travel, the telling of stories and the sharing of images the same world becomes smaller because it becomes more accessible; the world holds us in its embrace through our seeing the faces of people in celebration, in degradation, in terror, in flight and in defeat and so it weaves its way into our own human experience whether we want it to or not; but it is still an intricate place as there are lots of corners, lots of nuances, lots of distinctions, lots of differences as well as lots of similarities, lots of variety and lots of needs; and the challenge of getting both the broad picture and the tiny detail is a life’s work. But perhaps most obvious of all: the world is a place on which we depend for nurture, for companionship and for responsible generosity of living for others as well as for ourselves; and there is no stepping off it, so we can only look at it from within our belonging and contributing to it; and if we do not maintain it, that is *paint* it – give it life and color, give it protection and care - then it declines around us and we decline within it too. Maintenance and mission go together as do the intricate detail and the broad picture. This is the ministry to which these candidates are called and in which they are affirmed by all of us gathered here by God for the church and the world.



Perhaps in some ways ordination is similar. The world comes to meet us once we are ordained and it does so as a place of pastoral opportunity, of liturgical response and of social action. There is so much of it, however, and it is so complex and reveals itself in its own time and in its own terms, that it is well-nigh impossible to have a grasp of even our own segment or section of it at any given time. Launching out into the waters of ministry is a delightful experience and we are the better today for sharing this with the candidates. God has called them to serve in complex



times when the history of the world and its next unfolding is hard to read; and it is for reasons such as these that it is good to have The Partnership and Formal Agreement around things that matter to us and to others such as this Diocese of Jerusalem and the Diocese of Dublin and Glendalough decided to begin on Epiphany 2016. It is for this reason that I am delighted to be here for this double ordination and I also wish the third candidate for ordination next weekend in Beirut everything that is best in the Lord.

The language of 1 Peter 2 is language that resonates very instinctively with us in Ireland. Not only do we have a wide range of stone-built churches; and a fascinating range of traces of medieval monasteries and houses of learning; but we have dry stone walls that are built with the greatest of skill by hand without the addition of mortar or cement because they date from a time when there were no such things as mortar or cement. There are still people who can exercise this skill, art and craft. The architecture of grace is something of which I spoke at my own Diocesan Synods a little over a month ago and I spoke of the living stones appointed by God to provide security and solidity, belonging and beginning, companionship and courage to those who need to gather and be gathered to know one another and more specifically to know one another through



Ordination of The Revd David Roche in Lebanon



Ordination of The Revd Fares Naoum and Revd Jamil Khader Jamal in Jordan

the suffering, the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The living stones form the church; the living stones are the church in action; the living stones form the walls of hospitality that, particularly in your context, in the stresses and strains of being a Christian in the Land of the Holy One, are essential to the architecture of grace and are an inspiration to everyone. It is into this inheritance of Christianity that it is at once global in its Anglicanism and local in its lived and living witness that these disciples enter now as they are ordained here and now by God to the office and work of priest. We are ever conscious that you, in this place, with humble pride, see yourselves as: *Living Stones by God appointed ...*

The duty and the gift of the people is to let their discernment meet God's discernment. They need to release this energy; and the leader and the led will be enriched in the exchange. Discernment we learn in the Book of Numbers has to do with the succession between Moses and Joshua and with the transference of authority. We have conventionally thought of ministry in terms of service but we need also to think of it in terms of power – even though we often shy away from this notion out of an over-stated sense of church hierarchy or a scruple of personal reticence. Skills and instincts learned as a deacon remain pivotal and paramount in priesthood and must not be swept aside by the undue cares of administration and of managerialism: one's antennae are out, one's eagerness is strong and one's energy is forceful. This is precious and it is because all experiences are still new and worthy of reflection and rejoicing. But it is also because one is also at an early stage of a lifelong journey in faith, hope and love; one is at the point of *closest consciousness* of a fresh commissioning and *closest connection* with an existing condition



within the discipleship one has sought to exercise up until now as people of God; we who are ordained continue to be people of God like all God's people. God is asked in a late prayer in the Service of Ordination in my own Church of Ireland tradition to give to priests the will to undertake the task before them, the strength to perform it and the capacity to complete the work begun by God in them. Priests give voice to discipleship in Gospel, in sacraments and in collegiality but also in justice, peace and authority. Leadership follows through from laity into a discipleship of the ordained – deacon, priest and bishop – by collaboration in wisdom and in discipline. What is *that* about? Knowing what you are doing and sticking to it and listening to God.

It would be remiss of me, in preaching at this glorious Service of Ordination, at the heart of a school, an educational establishment that is intrinsic to the architecture of grace of this diocese, not to speak of St Mark 10.45: *The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many*. Whatever the intricacies of Biblical Criticism that continue to rage about this one verse in the Scripture – and nobody here will be more aware of this than our candidate-priests, the thrust of this one verse is to show the underlying and the overarching connection of love and of sacrifice that is contained in the service of the Son of Man freely given to the children of the world through the children of the light. As we all know from The Living Scriptures, service is often rejected; service is frequently mocked; and yet service is the kernel and the seed of glory as the Son of Man holds together earth and heaven and equips and empowers all his people and ordains his deacons, priests and bishops to continue this work and this witness as fools for the Gospel who are also the jewel in the crown of the King of Kings. There is no expectation that either of you or any of us will do this all at once or all on your own. There is the expectation that you will return day by day to the Son of Man to seek guidance on the way to deal with my opening illustration: *The world is a small place. But I wouldn't like to have to paint it*. You and I have no option but to try and try again and, like Peter in St John 21, try a third time.

I offer you and *Faris*, [*David*] and *Jamil* and all those who love them and travel with them, finally the words of Jesus to the Peter who on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, where he first began his discipleship, hears after the resurrection the words of restoration to full dignity and the invitation to go and offer discipleship to and for others in this Land of the Holy One and right across the world: *Then feed my sheep*. (St John 21.17)

~The Most Revd Michael Jackson

VIEW ON LEBANON

Lebanese and English priests discuss call and mission service in Beirut

As part of our monthly Ministry Profile, we turn to Lebanon and focus on two priests partnering together both inside and outside the Anglican church in Beirut. All Saints Church, Beirut, was founded in the 19th century by English missionaries and merchants and has since served a strong English-speaking congregation. After 1948, an Arabic-speaking congregation of mainly Palestinian origin joined the church. Newly ordained, The Revd David Roche leads the English congregation while The Revd Imad Zorrob leads the Arabic congregation. The two work side-by-side in their ministry, and Revd Imad also faithfully directs the diocesan institution, St. Luke's Centre for children with special needs. The Centre is a recognized provider of compassionate services for children with mental illness.



1). David: You and your wife Amy are Mission Partners with the Church Mission Society (CMS). What advice would you give to someone who wants to come and serve the church in this region?

Come and visit and tour around before you commit yourself so you can see for yourself the profound work God is doing especially in our Diocese and the work of the institutions to serve the poor and those in need. I would advise to spend some time at St Georges Cathedral in Jerusalem, maybe attend a short course at the College to get an in depth view of the region. One should be aware of negative stereotypes from western media, as you may have a blind-spot and limited understanding of how beautiful the Middle East is, how hospitable the people are and how amazing the food is! We have found it very enriching to work and worship with God's people in a culture that has been different from our own. I would advise anyone to make sure they do their homework on understanding culture and other religions in the region as well as local and national politics. It goes without saying one must take serious steps to begin learning Arabic to ensure you fulfill your role to the best you are able to.

2). Imad: Where did you grow up and what was it like? What led you to become ordained as a priest?

I was raised during wartime in Beirut in a place called Ain Il-Rummaneh, where I lived in daily fear from regular bombing and shelling, filling sacks of sand to make safety barriers. When the war ended in the early 1990s, I realized that my life had been torn apart by its events, my childhood stolen away from me, like a dream I never had. I became an adult at an early age, acting mature, being responsible, and making decisions as if my whole life depended on it. I grew up without a dream or any idea of what I wanted to become later in life. One thing that kept me going was my faith and love. I constantly repeated the prayer, "thank you God for keeping me, my parents, my relatives, my family, and my friends safe."

In the mid 1980s, my parents and I lived in the eastern side of Beirut, but we couldn't reach our church which was in the western part of the city. As Christians, we were forbidden to enter this area. Thus, I used to go with my parents to a small chapel at an institution called St. Luke's Center for Children with Special Needs. 17 years old, I started to get to know and work with the children at the Center. I loved serving there and the children helped me discover God's call for me in this life, to help and support children with special needs. This call led me to become a priest.

3). David: Tell us what it is like to work with Imad?

Revd Imad is such a dear colleague, he is always smiling and positive with a real sense of humor, even when times are pressured and tough he has taught me how to remain faithful in our work and give the rest to God! Over the last 3 years Father Imad has been a huge support to me personally on my journey to the priesthood in modelling Anglican church ministry in the Middle East. Revd Imad has a lovely family and they have warmly welcomed us as over time we have got to know them better. All Saints is the only Anglican Church in Lebanon, and so we have a large parish extending from Beirut and beyond, and it has been lovely to encourage both congregations to worship together regularly! I enjoy meeting with Imad several times a week to chat and pray and at every event we attend outside the church it is clear Revd Imad is well known for his generosity and deeply respected by



Revd Imad Zoorob and Revd David Roche at the recent Diocesan Synod in Amman



priests and church leaders from other denominations across Lebanon. I regularly visit St Luke's school for children with special needs, it has been a joy to see it thriving under Revd Imad's leadership, the staff and children love him!

4). David: As a British national, how is family life in Lebanon? How do the children find it?

Lebanon is a unique place, once you have been here you will fall in love with it forever. As family we love the culture, the people, the food (especially za'atar, tabouille, Fatouch) and we have got used to the crazy driving too which seems normal now! Our children attend a local school, they have made lots of friends and have learned to read and write Arabic which has been so encouraging. As we know, Lebanon passed through dark times in the last decades and is still not without its troubles today, however, it has such a positive and vibrant culture that can only serve to build good for the future. Lebanon has many hidden natural beautiful countryside and is superb for walks in the mountains and also the beach in summer, all the things a family needs.



Revd David and Amy Roche

5). Imad: Tell us about your family? How do they support your ministry?

My parents are very devout believers in God. Whenever we had the opportunity to worship at St. Luke's on Sunday morning we would participate in the youth and Bible Study groups. My parents are so supportive and enthusiastic about my will to serve God. They have really helped me reach my utmost potential in life.

6). Imad: What's your work/ministry consist of at St. Luke's Church? Typical day?

My ministry focuses on All Saints Church and St. Luke's Center in Beirut. I am blessed with having to accomplish lots of different duties each and every day. Normally, I start my day at the office in the early morning at 7:30 AM after taking my children to school. Afterward, I pay St. Luke's a visit, usually twice per week, where I perform a service for the children and do some visitations. Later in the week, I begin my preparations for Sunday services. Those are a few of my main responsibilities. In addition, I am responsible for representing the Diocese of Jerusalem and Archbishop Suheil at many events and on ecumenical matters in Lebanon.

8). David/Imad: What are the current challenges for the church, including the Anglican Church in Lebanon?

David: Many Christians from across the denominations are leaving or planning to leave Lebanon and the Middle East because of the fear of conflict and lack of opportunities for jobs and children. There will be an ongoing challenge in the years to come to maintain a Christian and Anglican presence in Lebanon.

Imad: The main challenge for our church in Beirut, mainly among the Arabic speaking congregation, is the increasing age of parishioners. Our church is mainly composed of approximately 95% of Palestinian families who migrated to Lebanon in 1948. Many of the younger family members tend to move to other parts of the world after marriage, thus creating a generational gap in the pews and few children for Sunday school and youth programs. This is a huge challenge that worries us.



Advent service at All Saints Church, Beirut



9). David/Imad: What is the most beautiful thing you've witnessed or experienced in Lebanon? Why?

David: My first Christmas I attended a service at St Luke's where the children sang carols and songs and danced. It was so moving to see those children having fun and celebrating Jesus birth and to see them loved and cared for in a peaceful environment and also for families to see the hard work of the staff at St Luke's who treat all as though they are one family. The work of St Luke's is God's work.

Imad: The most beautiful thing I've witnessed in Lebanon recently is the fact that all the different political parties have miraculously been able to sit at one table together and decide to put the well-being of Lebanon ahead of all other interests in electing Michel Aoun as Lebanon's next president. Taking over two years, I hope that this miraculous, beautiful spirit of cooperation will never fade away.

10). David/Imad: What would you like the readers of the newsletter to pray for?

David: Pray for the work of St Luke's, that the children will continue to be supported and know they are loved by the staff and God. For its profile in the local community to be raised. Pray for both congregations at All Saints as they continue to support each other and worship together in unity and love.

Imad: Most of all, I would like us to pray for peace in the world, the heavenly peace that was incarnated by a heavenly will and ultimate love, the love that the Father who gave up his only son Jesus Christ to suffer so that we may have the good tidings and the experience of the heavenly love and reconciliation. Also, to pray for our Diocese, for our Archbishop Suheil, for our priests and churches, our institutions and hospitals, and all who are working hard to spread the good news through Christ's word and deed. Lastly, I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to share my thoughts and experience with our readers...God bless us all.

DIOCESAN HOSPITAL IN GAZA GOES GREEN

New solar panels ensure more constant electricity supply

In November, an important infrastructure project was completed at the Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza City. Since 2014, the Diocese of Jerusalem and the hospital have been appealing for and raising funds to install solar panels to ensure a more secure electricity supply for the hospital. The solar panel project was launched in response to the devastation caused by the 2014 Gaza War and the increasingly catastrophic lack of electricity in the area.



Because the power supply in Gaza is so inconsistent, often running for only a third of day, the solar panel project represented an imperative objective for the Diocese and the continued life-saving ministry of the hospital. For those in the medical field, to run a functional hospital requires a secure supply of electricity along with many other basic necessities like pure water, sterilized equipment, and disposable medical supplies. In Gaza, the things that many of us take for granted are in extremely high demand because they all need to be imported from Israel or Egypt, where trade is heavily restricted.

One notable source of support within the Anglican Communion has come from the link-Diocese of Dublin and Glendalough, which has held several seasonal events raising over €200,000 to support the hospital!

JESUS LOVES THE CHILDREN

Christmas card contest winners announced!

This fall, the Diocese of Jerusalem sent out its annual call for design submissions to display on its seasonal Diocesan Christmas cards. Schools, parishes, and institutions were asked to have children work on art pieces that represented the Christmas spirit of celebrating the birth of the Savior Jesus Christ. With hundreds of submissions to pick from, Archbishop Suheil decided on two designs to feature on this year's cards. This year's winners are from the kindergarten classes at the *Ahliyyah and Bishop School, Amman* and the *Arab Evangelical School, Ramallah*. Congratulations to this year's winners and a thank you to all the students, faculty, and institutions that participated and made this year's contest a big success. Merry Christmas everyone!



PRAYER FOR THE REGION

Heavenly Father,

In a world of confusion, we pray for your wisdom

In a world of pain, we pray for your healing

In a world of conflict, we pray for your peace.

May your peace fall afresh on all in this region,

and the Peace of Jerusalem inspire all humanity to live in harmony.

We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ,

Amen



The Diocese of Jerusalem
wishes you a
Happy Christmas!



The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, which is part of the Anglican Communion, in the province of Jerusalem and the Middle East covers five countries - Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, and Israel. The Diocese consists of 27 parishes and over 30 institutions, with its Cathedral, St. George the Martyr, situated in Jerusalem. The Diocesan institutions include hospitals, clinics, schools, and vocational training programs. The Diocese through its institutions and parishes serve the community by caring not just for the able-bodied, but also for those with special needs, including the deaf, the disabled, and the elderly. It is through serving the poorest and most marginalized in the community that the Diocese seeks to convey Christ's message of love, peace, and justice for all regardless of their identity. The Diocese greatly appreciates your support and prayers. If you would like to support the work of the Diocese, please contact us at info@j-diocese.org.

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