



## March 2015 Newsletter

*The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem*

**Peace to you in the Name of the Lord**

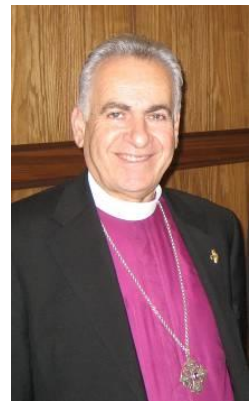
**Greetings from Archbishop Suheil Dawani**

Dear Friends,

The Eastertide season reminds us that this is a season of new life and hope, which is so needed in this Region. We need to keep hope strong in our hearts and minds and encourage our congregations to see this as a time of renewal and change of attitudes. We pray that this will also be true for all of our politicians.

We have been very aware of the persecution and killings of so many Christians in the Region and we pray for them and their communities that as they go through the pains of their Holy Week, they will know the assurance of resurrection.

This month we marked the Installation of Revd Canon Dr. Lawrence Hilditch as Canon Theologian at St. George's Cathedral. We value his Ministry, both here in the Cathedral and as Director of the Anglican International School and will look forward to his enhanced ministry with us in his new role.



We also shared our Clergy Retreat which was led by Clare Amos, the author of *Peace-ing Together Jerusalem*. We all greatly valued her input and thought provoking sessions as she took us through Mark, Luke and John's Gospel passages relating to Jerusalem, with the final session being based on her book.

As we travelled through Lent and Holy Week, we had a series of Lectures based on the theme 'Held by his Pierced Hands'. These were given by various members of the Clergy in the Close. I will share more with you next month about our Easter celebrations and those we shared with our Orthodox brothers and sisters.

Salaam, Peace

+ Suheil Dawani

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Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

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*March 2015 News Items*

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6 March 2015

**Baptism in Jordan River**



We had our very special annual gathering Baptism in the River Jordan which takes place during the season of Epiphany. Clergy from all the parishes in Jordan were present along with over 600 parishioners.

The whole occasion was a great time of celebration.



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15 March 2015

**Installation of Canon Theologian**



The Rev. Canon Dr. Lawrence Hilditch was installed as Canon Theologian at the Cathedral of St. George the Martyr, Jerusalem. Canon Hilditch has been licensed to the Archbishop for some years since he came to work at the Anglican International School in Jerusalem, where is now the Director. He brings considerable experience and theological understanding to the post and will be able to share the fruits of these more widely.

16 – 18 March 2015

**Clergy Annual Retreat**



The Annual Retreat, which had been deferred from February because of snow, took place at St. George's College and was led by Clare Amos. Most of the clergy from Israel, Palestine and Jordan were able to attend, but again regretfully those from other parts



of the Diocese were not able to do so. Clare Amos, who has spent many years in Jerusalem, was at one time Course Director at St. George's College and now works for the World Council of Churches. She is also the author of *Peace-ing Together Jerusalem*. Over the two days, Clare shared insights about Jerusalem from Mark, Luke and John's

gospels and also from her own experiences. The time together was greatly valued by all who attended.

19 March 2015

## School Board Ramallah



The Archbishop chaired the Board of the Arab Evangelical Episcopal School in Ramallah. The Headmaster, Iyad Rafidi and all the Board were present. Ibrahim Faltis also attended and participated in the meeting. It was recognized that the School is doing very well.

20 March 2015

## St. John's School Board Haifa



The Board of St. John's School, also Chaired by the Archbishop, took place. The Headmaster, Mr Aziz D'eem, and all the Board were present. Ibrahim Faltis presented a future strategy and vision for the School which was accepted. The Board was also attended by Revd Canon Hatem Shehadeh and Revd Emad Diabes.

23 March 2015

## Sharing Perspectives Course at St. George's College



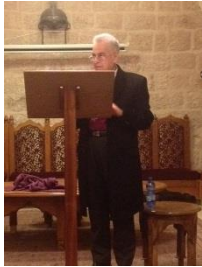
For the third consecutive year, St George's College has hosted a course for Muslims and Christians in the Holy Land. Greater understanding between Christians and Muslims is vital to overcoming the challenges which face us in the twenty first Century and has intense benefits for society as a whole, as well as for individuals everywhere. The group came from the UK under the leadership of Bishop Richard Cheetham, Bishop of Kingston in the Diocese of Southwark. There were 22 participants and the main objective of the Course was to provide a unique context for Christian-Muslim dialogue by enabling leaders from both faiths

to visit holy sites in and around Jerusalem and to reflect together on their importance from both faith perspectives. They also heard from local people about their experience of life and faith in the Holy Land, gaining insights and a depth of understanding which will support them in promoting Christian-Muslim dialogue and work in their communities back home. The Archbishop and his wife Shafeeqa spent



an evening with the group listening and sharing their own experiences.

## **Lenten Meditations and Lectures:**



A series of Lectures took place on Sunday evenings throughout Lent and into Holy Week, under the title 'Always Held by His Pierced Hands'. Various members of the Clergy in the Cathedral Close led the nine Lectures, which were usually followed by a light supper of soup and bread. The themes were – Hands in Prayer, Hands of Protection, Open Hands of Acceptance, Hands which Gather in, Hands which Hold, Pierced Hands, Hands raised in Praise and Hands which Point. Each presentation was very much appreciated and many insights were gained from them.

*31 March 2015*

## **Heads of Churches Meeting**

The Heads of Churches met at the Patriarchate to discuss their Easter Message which was to be sent out to all the Heads of Churches. The main text of the Message was a recognition of the reality of the location where the Resurrection took place which is not merely an object of archaeological curiosity, but remains a living focus of Christian worship. It is a place where God's grace has been manifested in numerous ways down the centuries and for that reason also it deserves respect. There was also recognition of the level of violence still being perpetrated in the mistaken name of religion in parts of the Middle East in recent times. It was recognized that those who engage in such barbaric behaviour dehumanise not only their victims, but themselves. However, the joyful proclamation of the Resurrection at dawn on Easter Sunday assures us that the last word lies not with violence and inhumanity, but with God's purpose of love, justice and hope which runs like a thread throughout history and will find its ultimate fulfillment in the coming fullness of his Kingdom.

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The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, a diocese of the worldwide Anglican Communion, extends over five countries, including Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Israel, within the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East. There are 27 parishes that minister to the needs of their communities, centered on the Cathedral Church of St. George the Martyr in Jerusalem. The church supports 33 institutions, which include hospitals, clinics, kindergartens and schools, vocational training programs, as well as institutions for the deaf, the disabled and the elderly, reaching out to interfaith neighbors in mutual respect and cooperation.