

JERUSALEM

Korrespondenz

Bi-annual report of the Austrian Pilgrims' Hospice



After 160 years we finally
reach our initially intended size.

**A project of the
century indeed!**



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Cover-photograph: © APH

Dear Friends and Guests of the Austrian Pilgrim Hospice of the Holy Family in Jerusalem!



Photo: © Photostudio Floyd

We have renamed ourselves: since 1st July 2018 our tradition-rich house once again bears its former name “Pilgrim Hospice”. The fact is that we have been called “Pilgrim House” for a long time, but since the reopening of the guest-house in 1988, the term “hospice” has become so engrained that we would not wish to renounce it. On the other hand it has also become misunderstood. We receive enquiries about volunteering with reference to practical experience in palliative care and have encountered groups who suddenly become totally silent in our hallways in the mistaken belief that our guestrooms house people in the last stage of their lives. So “Pilgrim Hospice” seemed like a reasonable compromise in seeking to clarify matters and to return to our beginnings.

However, there is also a second factor to consider here: a focus on pilgrims; and a departure from the normal business of tourism. The latter is not our job, others do it better. Our mission is to care for pilgrims, individually and in groups, from Austria and from those countries that have contributed to the construction and preservation of our house throughout the course of our history, a mission for which considerable courage is required. In days of unrest and war we remain dependent on every guest since their stay helps us to continue to offer our services.

The theme of the current Correspondence is “Jerusalem,” inspired by the heated political debates of recent months, from Trump to new laws in Israel. We invited a Muslim woman, a rabbi, a Catholic priest and a journalist to depict “their Jerusalem”. Thanks to Carla Amina Baghajati, Yehuda Stolov, Andreas Fritsch and Alexandra Förderl-Schmid.

As of the coming Advent season, the new translation of the Holy Scripture will be used in many churches. Their stories play out here in the Holy Land, right on our doorstep. Father Dr. Gregor Geiger brings us closer

to the new and surprising aspects of this text in the current editorial.

And of course we are happy to inform you regularly about events in our house over the past six months. Like any relationship, the friendship between the Pilgrim Hospice and You requires cultivation. Some of you do this through generous donations to our Casa Austria, for which I would like to thank You very much! Together we are entering a positive era.

Yours



RECTOR MARKUS ST. BUGNYAR



JERUSALEM
Erleben. Gestalten!

Österreichisches Pilger-Hospiz

The new standard translation

a critical assessment

By GREGOR GEIGER

During a visit to the Holy Land, many pilgrims and visitors develop a new approach to the Bible; and when they pick up the Bible upon arriving home or hear it quoted in worship, they read and hear it with different eyes and ears. Memories and images are associated with places, and some passages in the Bible, perhaps even some that are difficult to understand, are rendered more familiar. The official Catholic translation of the Bible into German, the so-called “standard translation”, which dates back to 1980, was published in a revised version at the end of 2016.

Whomsoever, like the author of these lines, has from infancy been familiar with the standard translation, for reasons of faith, liturgy or study, may at first feel scared by the thought of a revised version. Those of you who are acquainted with the Bible not only in translation, but also in the biblical languages of Hebrew and Greek, will welcome the new version. The reflections and thoughts of the people to whom the eternal Word of God is addressed are subjected to changes. And given the benefits accrued by studying the biblical text, languages and environment, a revision of the standard translation after more than 35 years is clearly timely.

My impression is that radical and pointless changes were generally avoided, but here and there meaningful improvements were made. In some places the language is “more biblical” and thus less fluent. That being said, the Psalms were radically altered.

The Old Testament name of God, YHWH, which according to Jewish custom is not spoken out loud, was previously translated either as “Lord” or as “Yahweh”. The new version renders it “LORD” (in capital letters). This rendering, already familiar in German-speaking regions from the Lutheran Bible, is to be welcomed for several reasons: it corresponds to the Jewish-Hebrew tradition of referring to God as *Adonai* (literally: “my Master”). It renders the name in consistent fashion. It avoids some of the peculiarities which could sometimes be heard in the oral delivery, since in German there is no h at the end of a syllable. It is required by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. Last but not least, it is to be welcomed for interreligious and ecumenical reasons, since it is in harmony with the Jewish and Lutheran traditions.



Photo: © P. Dr. Gregor Geiger

In recent decades, gender-inclusive language has become very popular in German-speaking countries. The new version takes this on board wholeheartedly, but without exaggeration: there are no word-internal capital I conventions and no cumbersome double entries. When letters are addressed to addressees in the New Testament, the Greek word *adelphoi* is used. This is the plural of *adelphos*, “brother”, translated literally as “brothers” in the previous version, whereas in the new version it is mostly rendered as “brothers and sisters”. This change takes account of the fact that in Greek the plural of the (male) “brother” can mean both (male) “brothers” and persons of both sexes, i.e. “siblings” (for which there is no separate Greek word) or simply “brothers and sisters”. It is a matter of taste whether one renders *adelphoi* “siblings”, “brothers and sisters” or “sisters and brothers”. The word pair in the new version indicates that sisters are also intended in the Greek text, even if not explicitly mentioned. Of course, an address to “siblings” is not common in the German language. Nonetheless, I prefer it to the word pair. The new version has the courage to use a “more biblical” language, even if it is unfamiliar to German language sensibilities.

Casa Austria

After 160 years we finally reach our initially intended size. A project of the century indeed!

By **MARKUS ST. BUGNYAR**

During Ramadan in particular, but also during the wedding season of our Muslim neighbours, one realises more acutely than ever the importance of well-insulated windows and doors. The Old City of Jerusalem can be very noisy, a fact we were already cognisant of at the time of the last general refurbishment of our main building. Our new Casa Austria also has to cope with these issues, and choosing suppliers and service-providers was not an easy task. The windows and doors in the main building are from Austria. For warranty reasons, we are working on Casa Austria together with an Israeli company, which in turn orders finished products from Italy (I am curious to see if this cooperation between the Orient and Europe will lead to a punctual completion). The final step of the work on Casa Austria is planned for the end of November whence residents can move in and space in the old main building can be rededicated.

The date for the official inauguration was set for April 25th 2019; His Eminence Christoph Cardinal Schönborn will preside over this ceremony and lay the keystone. I am taking this opportunity to cordially invite you to the ceremony which marks a truly historic moment. Only now have we finally managed to com-

plete the building of the Austrian Pilgrim Hospice. With the addition of Casa Austria, we are at the capacity that our founding fathers always had in mind to ensure the profitability of this institution. Of course, I am particularly pleased that this memorable moment in our history falls on the feast day of St. Mark the Evangelist.

Please allow me a personal say at this point. You will most likely have learned from media sources about the donation of our federal government. We are very grateful and happy to have received such generous support. Among the responses were some critical voices that I cannot fully comprehend. Considering that these taxes are also paid by Christians in the homeland, and mindful of our many guests and visitors, it is only right that the public sector also participates in helping to secure the future of the Austrian Pilgrim Hospice.

We are talking about 675,000 Euros from the government (and I permit myself to mention that these talks began with the previous government) and a matching sum on the part of our federal states. Thus, a total of 1.35 million Euros. As a token of our thanks, state and federal coats of arms now appear on our honourable donor wall beside those of our numerous private donors.

The media also reported, however, that this would round off the funding of our Casa Austria. This (mis)information does not come from us and harms us. Rightly, people now ask why we are continuing to ask for donations. Well, it's quite simple: this 1.35 million is not to complete the funding of our project, which amounts to 3.5 million, but was used entirely to pay off a loan that we had to take. The Bishops' Conference contributed 300,000 Euros and all the other private donations together currently amount to 237,097.40 Euros; the remainder was covered by the Hospice itself and the reserves of the board of trustees.

View of the Casa Austria towards the east.



Photos: © APH



Spread over two levels of the Casa Austria we offer 12 new apartment units.

In addition, in the run-up to this project we also had to contend with the expense of two construction opposition proceedings and an archaeological rescue excavation, which we hope will bring us more visitors in the future and thus more revenue in this area. The reported 3.5 million Euros are therefore purely the construction costs of Casa Austria and not the total project costs. A “rounding off of funding” can be spoken of only if these details are not known. In order to be completely transparent to our friends, I am taking this opportunity to set things straight. With the completion of the building and of Casa Austria we are writing Hospice history. Together we are fulfilling this first and extremely helpful goal that will secure the future of our home in the Orient. I cannot thank you enough for being here to help us!

And at the same time it is clear: the old main building has to be tackled now. We cannot increase our capacity without improving, enlarging and renovating the dining room and kitchen. And not only that: our guests will agree with me that a renovation of the bathrooms is not megalomaniacal, but sorely-needed. Nevertheless, we have to do things in a measured fashion. Some of this work is already in the planning stage and will be tackled soon for the sake of efficiency, while other things can certainly wait a while. Our planned projects will need your help more than ever. Having a new and modern building in the garden while the main structure

obviously needs to be renovated cannot be the end of this story.

But we have reason to be extremely optimistic! We are on schedule and within budget for Casa Austria. And we have many friends we can rely on. I'm very grateful that I can count on you too!

May I make a specific request? Please talk about us with your friends and mention our need for support. I am in Austria on a regular basis to give talks about the house, the region, and about the Christians in the country, and also to report on the progress of our work here. Make use of my visits; invite me to your community. I would gladly come. Every invitation and every gesture helps us to maintain the Austrian Pilgrim Hospice for coming generations of pilgrims.

The current issue is all about the Holy City. And we have our own house here.

We can be proud of that together!

Helping Hands

The most beautiful stories are still written by life itself; and in this case it was a very beneficial one for us.

By **MARKUS ST. BUGNYAR**

At the beginning of the year, the renowned restorer Cäcilia Seilern visited us in the Austrian Hospice as part of a pilgrimage group. Her trained eye immediately alighted upon our oil paintings, noting in addition their need for cleaning. While this had not gone unnoticed by us, so far (and especially given our current financial needs related to construction work) we had been deterred by the associated costs.

We could not turn down Ms. Seilern's suggestion: she came to Jerusalem again for a few weeks and worked as a volunteer in the house with a special assignment to take care of our paintings. Photos impressively illustrate their before-and-after state. The portraits of our founding fathers Emperor Franz Joseph and Archbishop Joseph Othmar von Rauscher in our Viennese Café were cleaned, as well as a painting of Crown Prince Rudolph by the hand of Johann Victor Krämer.

The work on the famous picture of the Tyrolean Pilgrim (until recently in the foyer of the house, currently we are looking for a new location for it) brought to light some surprises. Clearly this picture was painted over a bit too "thoroughly" some time ago, masking a painting underneath that seems to have a distinctly different effect. We will continue to investigate this discovery at a later point.



Significantly more effort was required for the restoration of a portrait of Pope Pius IX, the third of our founding fathers; in several places the canvas had to be mended. And the two small portraits of Jesus and Mary in the hallway leading to our house chapel now have a much fresher appearance.

This highly specialised volunteer work has brought new splendour to the house and also helped us save money for necessary work. Our sincere thanks to Mrs Cäcilia Seilern.

Do you also have a skill that you want to share with us here? Carpenters, gardeners, maintenance men are always wanted. Let us know. We look forward to hearing from you.

In this context, I would like to introduce you to a new addition to our paintings. From the estate of a deceased great-aunt, Dr. Margarete Bugnyár, we have received "The Rich Catch" by Josef Carl Berthold Püttner (1821–1881). Her godchild and heir, Dr. Barbara Sauer, also warrants my thanks. On account of the size of this picture, the above-mentioned "Tyrolean Pilgrim" first had to be moved; it will probably be hung closer to the chapel.



In tender fine-tuning the dirt of the last decades was removed.



Photos: © APH

Together and for each other

By **VICE-RECTOR SISTER BERNADETTE SCHWARZ**

A pilgrimage house with 124 guest beds (there will be more as soon as the new building is finished) and a Viennese Café open to the general public cannot function without a dedicated staff. In addition to the 7 Austrians doing their civilian service here and one or two volunteers, we currently employ 31 local staff. We attach great importance not only to contact with the local population, but also to providing active support in the form of employment, guaranteeing our staff a reasonable income at the end of each month.

As to why our local employees like working work for us:

“I have to take care of my parents. They are already old and have almost no income.”

“We are four siblings. The cost of my education is high and my parents cannot afford to pay the tuition for all the children, so I try to contribute to family finances through my part-time job.”

“I’m glad that I can work in the Austrian Hospice and have a secure job to look after my family. It is important to me that I can work here in a Christian place.”

A breakdown of statistics:

- **13 women and 18 men**
- **14 are married**
- **12 Muslims and 19 Christians of different denominations**
- **19 full-time employees and 12 part-timers**

In the kitchen 4 local chefs provide food for both our in-house guests and visitors to our coffee house. The latter offers cooked dishes from 10:00am to 9:00pm. The workday starts at 6:00am. At 7 o’clock the homemade dough for the apple strudel is already being prepared.

Male employees outweigh females in the offices, on reception and, of course, in building maintenance. In the coffee house, too, young men “dream up” frothy cappuccinos, mélanges and smoothed Caffé Lattes.

Female employees are found in room service and in the laundry. Most of them are married and have chil-



Photo: © APH

dren at home. They appreciate that they can work part-time and be with their family afterwards.

Eight of our employees have been here for more than 10 years, one already for 30 years, an indication that they feel secure here with us and that we appreciate their work and dedication. This is a good sign both for our employees and for us as an employer. We will continue to strive for a good relationship together and for each other.



Photo: © APH

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sister Bernadette Schwarz, born on 24th November 1948 in Schloss Brunnwald/Vorderweissenbach, 1970 profession to Sister of the Cross, from 1971 to 1998 Treasurer for the Province Oberösterreich-Salzburg, from 1999 to 2008 Procurator in the Benedictine Dormition Abbey in Jerusalem.

Since 1st March 2008 responsible for household management and since 1st September 2011 vice-rector of the Austrian Pilgrim-Hospice of the Holy Family.

Jerusalem's contribution to the **UNESCO International Jazz Day 2018**

Photos: © Petra Klose



By **PETRA KLOSE**

Every year the UNESCO Jazz Day is celebrated around the world on April 30th, recognizing the role of jazz in promoting freedom, creativity and intercultural dialogue, uniting people from all corners of the globe. We were proud to be once again part of this great worldwide initiative and very happy to host the UNESCO International Jazz Day in Jerusalem.

This year's performance featured the Austrian ensemble *Sinfonia de Carnaval* and took place at the Imperial Salon of the Austrian Hospice in the very heart of Jerusalem's Old City. Known for their creative and stylistically open approach, the musicians took their many listeners of the crowded hall on a rich and varied jazz performance journey that crossed multiple genres through a wide range of improvisations.

Looking at the audience which included participants of different nations and religious backgrounds, we strongly believe that it is hard to imagine a place more appropriate for the mission of the UNESCO Jazz Day than Jerusalem. It is a historic city fraught with tension and political crisis, but at the same time, a crosspoint of cultures and filled with lively traditions and rich artistic heritage.

In the light of the sad current political situation we hope that our artistic contribution therefore reflected the meaning of the UNESCO Jazz Day and that all



The UNESCO international Jazz Day has already a certain tradition in our house.

people continue to hear the positive message that jazz music is sending around the world.

The UNESCO Jazz Day in Jerusalem was presented by the Austrian Hospice and organized in partnership with the Willy Brandt Center as well as the UNESCO National Office Ramallah and supported by the Austrian Cultural Forum Tel Aviv.

A chance for the young generation

On June 27, 2018 Pavol Praženica, one of the most gifted young pianists today coming from the Czech Republic, did truly excite us.

By THE EDITOR

Despite his young age he already achieved great success and has won many national and international piano competitions. Among them the *International Franz Liszt Piano Competition* in Weimar and the *International Béla Bartók Piano Competition* in Vienna. In addition he became laureate at many national and international piano competitions such as the *Piano Competition Amadeus* in Brno or the *International Piano Competition* in Königs Wusterhausen.

He has been playing the piano since the age of 5 and is currently studying at the Prague Secondary

School of Music in the class of Libuse Ticha MgA PhD. Apart from that, he is studying at Prague's Academy of Performing Arts in the class of Prof. Alena Vlasáková and has various other teachers, musicians and institutions working with him.

Another asset of Pavol is his multilayered repertoire – it includes works of all stylistic periods. Apart from his love for solo piano music he is devoted to chamber music and cooperates with violinists Larisa Palochova and Natalia Toperzcerova. In April this year he won the special award for the best piano accompaniment at International Singing competition of Rudolf Petrak in Zilina in Slovakia.

He regularly performs at concerts organized by Prague Secondary School of Music and as an invited soloist of Prague Philharmonic Children's Choir.

We were able to host Pavol thanks to our cooperation with the Representative Office of the Czech Republic in Ramallah. Seeing him performing pieces from Beethoven, Debussy, Smetana and Liszt in the setting of our imperial Salon truly was an event not to be missed.

Photo: © APH



On the **Via Dolorosa**.

Presence and history of the Austrian Pilgrim Hospice in Jerusalem



Photo: © Photostudio Floyd

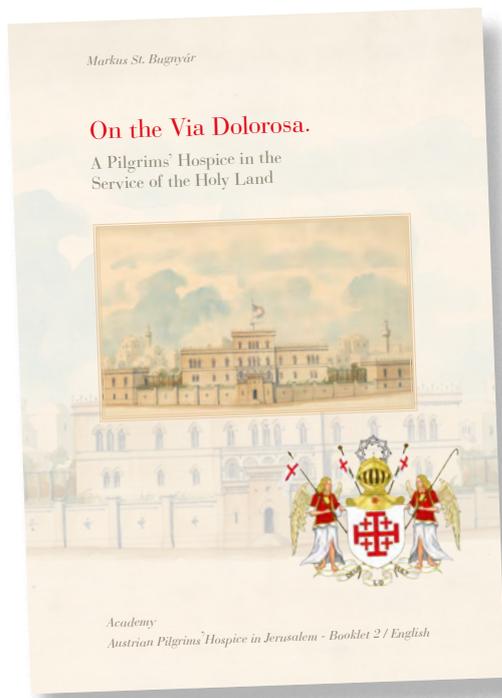


Photo: © APH

By **MARKUS ST. BUGNYÁR**

Issue 2 in the series of publications of the Academy of the Austrian Pilgrim Hospice has already been published in a second edition. The first edition was made possible through the generous help of individual Austrian Knights of the Holy Sepulchre and went out of stock surprisingly quickly. The second edition of this booklet on the history and current status of the Austrian Pilgrim Hospice sees the addition of a separate para-

graph dedicated to the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, whose help from the time of our last refurbishment until today has been unerring.

This issue was conceived under the title “On The Via Dolorosa” as a guide to our new permanent exhibition on the history of the house on the second floor (only if temporary exhibitions are shown here the permanent exhibition is not viewable). Our volunteers were instrumental in the preparation and implementation of this project, especially Maximilian Preslmayer.

For the first time in our history we now have a publication in English for our non-German-speaking friends, aimed at helping them understand our house in all its many facets. Our mission is to serve as a guest-house, but we are also committed to social enterprises through our role as an employer. The Academy is dedicated to working with local music schools to promote talented children and adolescents and to formulating historic pilgrim themes. And last but not least, our voluntary service brings young people from Austria into contact with survivors of the Shoah and with issues relating to the conflict in the Middle East.

Based where we are, in a central location in world affairs, we have an obligation to do our best for our guests and for locals, a task which is not always easy.

The next issues of this series are already in the planning stage. We are working on an elaborate chapel guide as well as an edition of our house chronicles. Stay tuned, as they nowadays say. By the way, you can also follow our daily updated events on Facebook and Instagram!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Markus St. Bugnyár (born 1975) has been the rector of the Austrian Pilgrims' Hospice in Jerusalem since April 2004. His term of office has witnessed the general renovation of the sisters' house and the expansion of the Viennese Café. As the driving force behind the Hospice Academy, he organizes intercultural concerts and scientific symposia and publishes material on the history and present of the pilgrims' hospice.

Erich Lessing: 50 Years of Photography



By THE EDITOR

The exhibitions on the top floor of the hospice, which are part of our cultural programme and change regularly, are for many of our guests a highlight of their hospice visit. The current exhibition which was opened in the presence of Dr Heinz Fassmann on June 9th 2018 by Hannah Lessing, Secretary General of the Austrian National Fund for Victims of National Socialism (and incidentally the daughter of Erich Lessing!), Maria Gierlinger-Landa of the Austrian Cultural Forum in Tel Aviv and rector Markus St. Bugnyar, is no exception. The retrospective showcases the works of the Austrian photographer and national award winner Erich Lessing from 1945 to the late 1990s. The photos, black-and-white and also colour, depict personalities from the international political arena, from the Austria of the post-war years, as well as from the Hungarian revolution.

ACADEMY

Our Academy addresses the history and significance of the Bible, the Holy Land and the role of pilgrimage in scientific publications, exhibitions and lectures, as well as the contemporary history of the Middle East. The chief focus is on intercultural dialogue and music education in cooperation with local partner institutions.

Erich Lessing was born in Vienna in 1923 to a Jewish family. As a 16-year-old faced with the rise of National Socialism he fled to British Mandate governed Palestine. After deciding to become a photographer he tried to obtain a visa for France to attend a film school there. When this proved difficult he decided to return to Austria and to devote himself entirely to photography.

With the help of his wife, the Austrian *Time Magazine* correspondent Traudl Wiglitzky, Lessing succeeded in finding work at the *Associated Press* agency. Later, he became a member of Robert Capa's *Magnum* agency, which brought together the most famous people on the photography scene. As a result of that, he soon found work on major international magazines such as *Life*, *Look*, and *Fortune* in the United States, on *Quick* and *Stern* in Germany, and on *Epoca* in Italy.

He moved on to specialize in the photography of international politics. He photographed, for example, the first meeting of the Council of Europe for *Quick*. Although Lessing was internationally active and after the mid-1950s Vienna became little more than a stopover en route to Eastern Europe, he is still arguably the most famous photographer in Austrian contemporary history.

You can visit the exhibition "Erich Lessing: 50 Years of Photography" until September 2018 on the 2nd floor of the Austrian Pilgrim Hospice.

Federal Minister Heinz Fassmann was present at the Vernissage.



Photos: © APH

Jerusalem – the third most holy city in Islam



Photo: © Monika Resler/Tyrolia Verlag

By CARLA AMINA BAGHAJATI

Al Quds – “The Holy One” – is the Arabic name for the city of Jerusalem, an appellation which has also entered into languages such as Turkish and Persian. It is a telling name that bespeaks the deep religious affiliation of Muslims with this city. Structurally, the Dome of the Rock with its golden dome dominates the cityscape and recalls the centuries-long Muslim presence. Headlines regularly depict the political conflicts that are played out around the sacred sites of the three Abrahamic religions. Little is known, however, about the religious background that makes Jerusalem a place of such ardent longing for Muslims.

Jerusalem was the first direction of prayer for Muslims before it was replaced by the Ka’ba in Mecca. Of course, the emotional connection goes much deeper. The Qur’an states: “Blessed is He who led His servant by night from the inviolable mosque to the remotest mosque, whose surroundings we have blessed to show Him some of our signs. Indeed, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.” (Surat al-Isra, verse 1) The text refers to the so-called night journey and subsequent Ascension of the Prophet Muhammad when he was transported in a single night from Mecca to Jerusalem and was carried aloft from there to Heaven. Emphasis is also placed on the special character of the place itself. The area of the Temple Mount in Arabic is called the *haram al sharif* (“Noble Sanctuary”). The mystical experiences of that night shape the Muslim practice of faith and at the same time reaffirm their self-conception as a religion that is in line with the revelations of earlier prophets. Not only did the Prophet first offer a prayer with other messengers of God, such as Moses and Jesus, over whom he presided as an Imam, but deep religious truths were

brought even closer to him in the heavenly vision during which the five-fold ritual prayer was established. A detailed account of this can be found in the second central source of faith of the Muslims, *the Hadith*, which records exemplary traditions from the life of the Prophet Muhammad.

Just a few centuries after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, a special literary genre developed which embellished the merits of Jerusalem, partly in legendary fashion. Whether in song or through other artistic media, Jerusalem is and always has been seen as an extraordinary source of inspiration for the entire Muslim cultural world, giving rise to basic yearnings for peace, closeness to God and a unifying identity. Rationalist reform tendencies in the theology of the twentieth century reopened the debate as to whether the Ascension was in fact a physical experience or rather a powerful vision and thus meant in a more spiritual sense. Both sides quote consistent arguments. There is agreement about the derivations for the practical life of faith.

The stone from which this incomparable journey is said to have emanated is located inside the Dome of the Rock, *qubbatu’s-s-alya*, which was built in 687 AD and is the oldest monumental sacred building in the Muslim world. Many pious legends have emerged in connection with this rock, confirming its significance: the rivers of paradise sprung up beneath it; it is spiritually closest to heaven and will usher in the end of days. So it is not surprising that many Muslim rulers were attracted by the symbolism of the place and that building activity unfolded apace. The second caliph, Omar, is said to have built the first building on the site. However, the fifth Umayyad caliph, Abd al Malik, was more influential. Not only did he build the splendid Dome of the Rock, but he promoted the significance of Jerusalem as a religious focus for Muslims.

Like the Dome of the Rock, the other famed Muslim structures, notably the Al Aqsa Mosque, show how



Photo: © Sebastian Vogel

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carla Amina Baghajati, born 1966 in Mainz.

Converted to the Islam 1989, studied comparative literature, English language and history, later also Arabic and graduated at the Conservatory of Vienna in drama studies. Co-founder of the initiative of Austrian Muslims in 1999 and the Platform for Christians and Muslims 2006, one of the first two women in the committees of the IGGÖ, since 2002 member of the Supreme Council, responsible for media relations honorary for many years, now women's representative. Teacher of religion in schools as well as in further education. Since 2014 inspector for Islamic religious education at the AHS Vienna and since 2018 head of the education authority for Islamic religion. In 2015 her book "Muslimin sein – 25 Fragen, 25 Orientierungen" was published by Tyrolia.

generations of rulers sought to testify to the attachment of Muslims to Jerusalem. Umayyads, Fatimids, Mamluks and Ottomans all understood the symbolism of the place and were guided by it in their building and embellishment activity. Each sought to create a unifying bond for the culturally and ethnically very diverse populations that they controlled.

However muddled the political discourse may appear, on a religious level hope will persist as long as inter-religious dialogue recognises and builds on the religious sentiments of the past and present, and does not ignore ill-fated entanglements between religion and politics. Education is a necessary constituent of being able to embrace such a viewpoint, especially the knowledge that each of the Abrahamic religions has its own claims to certain places onto which it superimposes its own symbolism. United Nations Resolution 181 of November 1947, with its notion of a neutral administration, as well as other UN resolutions, should continue to be discussed in the context of resolving the status of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem

Meeting place between the world and the divine

By **YEHUDA STOLOV**

In the Jewish geography Jerusalem is the center of the world. Jerusalem is the place where the creation of the earth began and is the meeting place between the world and the divine. Jerusalem was the place where the binding of Isaac occurred and the home of the first and second Temple. When Jews pray, no matter where they are in the world, they always face Jerusalem. Therefore the orientation of all world synagogues is directed towards Jerusalem. And not only that Jews always pray towards Jerusalem, each regular prayer also includes specifically praying, three times a day, for the return of the Divine presence into Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is not only the spiritual focal point of Judaism but also the social center of the Jews. The Talmud says that Jerusalem has the quality of making all the Israelites friends, which can be the cause, as well as the result of the fact that it was not divided between the different tribes and remained a place for all of them. In ancient times this was manifested every year during the three Pilgrimage Festivals, when Israelites of all tribes and from all parts of the land would come to celebrate in Jerusalem and meet each other. It is remarkable to note that during those times, the permanent residents of the city were expected to host the pilgrims without any charge. At the same time, construction of public spaces, such as roads and walls, were not paid by the city's inhabitants, like in any other place, but with the remains of the annual Temple's collection. Another consequence of the centrality of Jerusalem is the Halachic rule: If one spouse of a married couple, whether the husband or the wife, wishes to move to Jerusalem from another country, or even another city, he or she can impose this move on their partner and if the partner refuses, they can initiate a divorce and have the upper hand regarding payments associated with the Ketubah (=the marriage contract).

But in Judaism, Jerusalem is not only the center for the Jewish people, but for all human beings. It is not a coincidence that anyone who visits the city feels its deep spirituality, since the whole idea of establishing it as a Jewish center is meant for it to benefit the whole of humanity. Already when King Solomon established the



Photo: © Yehuda Stolov

First Temple, nearly three thousand years ago, he asked God that (Kings, 8, 41-43): “Moreover concerning the stranger that is not of Thy people Israel, when he shall come out of a far country for Thy name’s sake; for they shall hear of Thy great name, and of Thy mighty hand, and of Thine outstretched arm – when he shall come and pray toward this house; hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to Thee for; that all the peoples of the earth may know Thy name, to fear Thee, as doth Thy people Israel, and that they may know that Thy name is called upon this house which I have built.”

Similarly, the yearning for the Third Temple includes humanity-wide re-established connection with God, as Isaiah describes (56, 6-7): “Also the aliens, that join themselves to the LORD, to minister unto Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it, and holdeth fast by My covenant; Even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be acceptable upon Mine altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”

These qualities sometimes seem to be more apparent in the concrete reality of Jerusalem and sometimes less, but they are always there as a potential and as a call. Even though the media tends to highlight Jerusalem when a negative event happens; in the routine reality the relations between most of the people during most of the time can be described as ‘passive peace’. In other words, people of Jerusalem do not harm one another a lot but they also do not have active friendships across community lines. Here comes the Interfaith Encounter Association (www.interfaith-encounter.org) into the picture. From the perspective described above, the mission of the Interfaith Encounter Association is to create

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Yehuda Stolov is the executive director of the Interfaith Encounter Association, an organization that works since 2001 to build peaceful inter-communal relations in the Holy Land.

Dr. Stolov has lectured on the role of religious dialogue in peace-building throughout the world. He also published many papers on related issues.

Dr. Stolov is a member of the International Council of the International Association for Religious Freedom and was a member of the steering committee for the United Nations Decade of Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace. He holds a B.Sc. and a M.Sc. in Physics and a Ph.D. from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

conditions that enable people to overcome prejudices and fears, replacing them with genuine understanding and respect, which leads to friendship and care for each other. People and communities move from passive peace to active peace and their common love to Jerusalem changes from being a source of competition and conflict into being a connecting factor.

The inter-communal bridge of good neighborhood is being built, brick by brick or one encounter at a time, via ongoing groups that meet monthly and bring together Jews, Muslims and Christians from different communities. Through recurring meaningful conversations, of joint learning and exchange around issues of existential significance, people learn to get to know each other directly and deeply, which builds solid bonds of friendship between them.

We pray that these and similar efforts will bear good fruits in the near future and that Jerusalem will become known as the City of Peace, as its name indicates in Hebrew, and as the world center for connecting with God.



Photo: © Philipp Schindlwick

Jerusalem

In addition to three religious viewpoints, the perspective of a journalist

By ALEXANDRA FÖDERL-SCHMID



Photo: © A. Föderl-Schmid

For Israel's founder, David Ben Gurion, the conquest of Jerusalem was never a dream. Even before the founding of the state on the 14th May 1948, he told UN officials that he had no intention of taking Jerusalem. Historian Tom Segev, who wrote a biography of him entitled "A State at All Costs," says that while Ben Gurion knew that the "Holy City" was imbued with a religious aura, he personally did not identify with it.

Ben Gurion did not want to jeopardise the founding of the state by conquering Jerusalem. "We will not fight for the Old City. That is to say, we shall accept a state in the boundaries fixed today," he famously said to his Cabinet. In his diary, after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, he noted: "It does not matter if we do not go to the Western Wall for three months." He was referring to the Wailing Wall at the foot of the Temple Mount.

Even then Moshe Dayan was campaigning for the conquest of Jerusalem.

"We have returned to our holy places, never to part from them again."

MOSHE DAYAN

Under his leadership, Israeli soldiers finally conquered East Jerusalem on June 7th 1967 in the course of the Six-Day war, when the Jewish Quarter and the Wailing Wall were still under Jordanian control. "We have united Jerusalem, the divided capital of Israel, and we have returned to our holy places, never to part from them again."

By law, the two parts of the city were combined in 1980 and Jerusalem declared the "eternal and indivisible capital" of Israel. The President, Knesset and the Prime Minister are all based in Jerusalem. Given that no state in the world has until now recognised this occupation and annexation, foreign embassies are located in Tel Aviv.

By relocating their embassy to Jerusalem in time for the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the state,

the US has deviated from the consensus of the international community. The UN Partition Plan of 1947, which was to divide Palestine into a state for Jews and Arabs, proposed to treat Jerusalem as a corpus separatum, that is, as a territory separated from the surrounding area under special administration. The final status was to be clarified only in peace negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Even if Jerusalem is called "Ir shalom", the city of peace, peace has been rare in the past three millennia: armies have fought for -or in- this city 118 times, have conquered it 44 times, and besieged it 23 times. Jews ruled here for 1000 years, Christians for 400 years, Muslims for 1300 years. This city is sacred to all three monotheistic world religions: for the Jews, it is Zion, the focal point of the Jewish religion; for Muslims it is Al Quds, the Holy One; for Christians the city of the Passion of Jesus.

Nowhere else is historicity as intense as in the Old City, which covers an area of only one square kilometre and has been enclosed within its current city walls since the 16th century. The four quarters, the Muslim, Christian, Jewish and Armenian, hark back to times when the groups still lived strictly separated lives.

The Temple Mount, around which so many conflicts revolve, is for Muslims the "Haram al Sharif", the Noble Sanctuary. According to Islamic tradition, the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven from this spot. On the Temple Mount next to the Dome of the Rock is the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third most important mosque in Islam after Mecca and Medina. The remains of the western retaining wall of the ancient temple platform today form the Wailing Wall, so important to Jews.

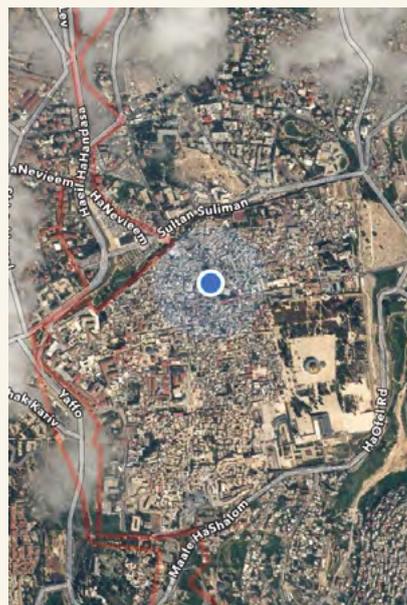
In 1099 Christian Crusaders moved into Jerusalem. The recently restored Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which stands at the site of the crucifixion and the tomb of Jesus, is one of the most important holy shrines in Christianity. But in 1187 Sultan Saladin drove the Crusaders out of the city, which they considered the centre of the world.

One hundred years ago British troops occupied Jerusalem. In the aftermath of the First World War, London received the Mandate for Palestine from the League of Nations, the forerunner of the United Nations. The British were to organise the establishment of a Jewish state. However, it was not until 1948 that the state of Israel was formally founded; on the very night of the founding of the state, troops from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Syria invaded Israel. The war for Palestine, called the War of Independence by the Israelis, ended with the 1949 Armistice Agreement. Green ink was used to demarcate the borders. The new de facto external borders of Israel thus became known as the Green Line. It is still regarded today by the Palestinians as the border for their future state.

The 1993 Oslo Agreement gave Palestinians renewed hope of becoming a state. But political declarations of intent were not followed up by real steps towards a two-state solution. On several occasions discussions collapsed because the Palestinian leadership was not satisfied with offers made. Meanwhile Israel continued to build new settlements on Palestinian territory. Today, from Gilo in the south to Pisgat Ze'ev and Neveh Ya'akov in the north, there is a ring of Jewish neighbourhoods around the eastern part of the city. On the other side of the so-called Green Line, 200,000 Jews currently live in East Jerusalem alongside 270,000 Palestinians. Incidentally, the land on which the US Embassy in Jerusalem currently stands is also partly beyond the Green Line, and thus not unambiguously on Israeli territory.

Even if the Americans remain open to a two-state solution and seek to implement it with their repeatedly announced peace plan, the move of the American Embassy to Jerusalem shattered the Palestinian dream that Nabil Shaath, an adviser to President Mahmoud Abbas, vocalised as: two states, two capitals and two Jerusalems – East Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital and West Jerusalem as the Israeli capital.

Photo: © APH



The Austrian Pilgrim Hospice in the very heart of the old city

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alexandra Förderl-Schmid, born in 1971, has been with the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* since September 2017 and reports about Israel and the Palestinian territories. Before that, she was editor-in-chief for ten years and later also co-editor of the Austrian daily *Der Standard* and the news portal *derStandard.at*. She has studied journalism, political science and history and has a PhD in “the dual broadcasting system in Germany”. In addition she has been Reuters/ APA Geiringer Fellow in Oxford in 2005. She was awarded the Austrian Kurt-Vorhofer Prize for Political Journalism, the Constitutional Award and the Ari-Rath Prize. Furthermore, she was instrumental in the reestablishment of the Press Council in Austria.

My Christian Jerusalem

By ANDREAS FRITSCH

We are experiencing a boom in tourism in the Holy Land. Last year saw a record 3.6 million tourists and pilgrims, and this year the figure is expected to be even higher. This boom can also be seen in the ecclesiastical field: reservations for holy mass and for religious services at the Holy Places have been rising steadily for several years.

Most visitors who come to the country as pilgrims visit Jerusalem and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. For those who seek to strengthen their faith and expect the Holy Places to be sites of pious reflection, the encounter with hordes of people can be unnerving. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre often resembles a menagerie, a market-place, a railway station during peaktime; a museum in which guides endeavour to make themselves heard by talking even louder than their counterparts.

Some disappointed visitors to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre may sympathise with German Emperor Wilhelm, who, disgusted by the bustle of the Holy Sepulchre on his visit to Jerusalem in 1898, concluded: "Under no circumstances can the grave of the Saviour have lain here."

Thank God those things are not always like this. For in the early morning or at night the Holy Sepulchre is uniquely fascinating. That's when I like to go there. At those times one can experience the true splendour of the place where Christ was crucified and where, only 40 metres away, He gloriously rose from the grave. It is precisely in these quieter times that you can detect something of what made this place the navel of the world for Christians of all nations and denominations, where you can sense that something happened that is of importance to you as an individual and to humanity in general. And then, in the silence of your heart, you may experience that same longing that made the Apostle Paul say: "I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and communion with His sufferings; His death shall mark me." (Phil 3:10)

Despite its crass commercialisation, Jerusalem remains for many people the place of yearning for God's presence. For us, who believe in Christ, Jerusalem is the place where we get in touch with Jesus Christ in a special way.



Photo: © P. Andreas Fritsch



Photos: © P. Andreas Fritsch

For many pilgrims this “getting in touch with Christ” is the leitmotif of their visit: to touch the places where Jesus taught the disciples on the foot of the Mount of Olives, where He celebrated the Last Supper, where He prayed in mortal fear, the path He trod from His condemnation to His crucifixion, where His body lay in the grave, the location from which He ascended to heaven. In their contact with the Holy Places, many people experience that Christ touches their hearts and sets something in motion.

In this context an episode from the visit of St. Ignatius Loyola to the Holy Land is enlightening. Shortly before his departure from Jerusalem, he insisted on returning to the Mount of Olives, where to this day the legendary footprints of Jesus can be seen in the Chapel of the Ascension. In his diary he describes himself in the third person, saying: “On the Mount of Olives there is a stone from which our Lord rose up to Heaven and on which the impression of His footprints is still visible. This was what he wanted to see again. After offering his prayers there with deep sincerity, he felt a desire to go to Bethfage. When he was there, it occurred to him that on the Mount of Olives he had not correctly determined where the right footprint was and where the left. So he went back there ...”

What Ignatius in his childlike piety experienced when visiting the sites of the Ascension is what many pilgrims experience at the Holy Places: that Christ Himself gives them comfort and renewed hope, that they are strengthened by his Spirit and that they are able to take into their hearts the impression they receive here. The other day an American pilgrim told me after Mass in the Holy Sepulchre: “It seems to me that a burden has been lifted from me.”

It is not that important to be able to prove the authenticity of each and every place. The knowledge suffices that here in Jerusalem I am very close to the places where the events depicted in the Bible took place and where Jesus worked. Sometimes I am amazed at where I live and work: in St. Anne’s I live in the place where Jesus healed the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda (Jn 5) and where I work, close to Jaffa Gate, opposite the former Royal Palace, is the place where Jesus was brought for interrogation by Herod Antipas (Lk 23:7–11) and where the three wise men from the East searched for the newborn King of the Jews (Mt 2:1).

The privilege of living in Jerusalem brings many wonderful encounters with it. The exchange between the native Christians and we who have been “grafted” here is always rewarding, especially since we have so many different and mutually enriching expressions of faith and prayer. A cohesiveness can often be felt among the Christian communities and denominations which is crucial to their survival as a small minority (Christians make up 2% of the Holy Land). It is a cohesion that does not signal a closed society, but makes it possible for us to be a catalyst for peace and reconciliation in an often tense atmosphere. The power to do so comes from the heart of Jerusalem, the grave of the resurrection, where the glorious truth is constantly attested anew: “He is not here; for He is risen, just as He said.” (Mt 28:6)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Father Andreas Fritsch grew up in Bühl (Baden-Württemberg). He studied theology in Innsbruck and Rome and worked as a chaplain in Vorarlberg for over ten years. He belongs to the community of the spiritual family *The Work* and has been living in Jerusalem for the past seven years, where he is active in the Franciscan Christian Information Centre and in assisting pilgrims visiting the Holy Land.

This year too we support **Four Homes Of Mercy**

Photo: © Mustafa Fawaz



By THE EDITOR

At first glance the Austrian Pilgrim Hospice appears to be a guesthouse for the devout on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, replete with a Viennese Café and homemade apple strudel. Although this description is factually true – one cannot and should not deny it – at the same time our existence as an Austrian Catholic institution in the Orient entails a far greater involvement. In addition to our many cultural projects, we also take our social responsibility very seriously.

This summer was no exception: in cooperation with Mustafa Fawaz of “Four Homes Of Mercy” we helped take a group of mentally and physically disadvantaged people out of their everyday existence for a few days to enjoy the summer – exposing them to exciting new experiences that were sometimes wet but always cool!

“Four Homes of Mercy” is a Christian charity dedicated to caring for disabled Palestinians of all ages. For the past 10 years the charity has organised an annual

camping trip to Tabgha near Tiberias, which we were very happy to support again this year.

At the crack of dawn, after all the wheelchairs had been stowed in the trunk of the coach, the 20 or so residents of the “Four Homes of Mercy” set off for an unforgettable week!

Together with staff members and a group of volunteers, the journey began with a short prayer and a visit to the monastery and to a lookout point over the beautiful Sea of Galilee.

After settling in there was plenty of time for fun and games. Water polo, swimming and a stage play were on the daily programme – as well as delicious meals.

We sincerely hope that we contributed to a joyful event through our support of this project and would ask you to never lose sight of people on the margins of our society.

Sebastian Kurz on a visit

Within his official visit to Jerusalem the Chancellor also found his way to the Pilgrim Hospice

By THE EDITOR

On June 10th 2018 Sebastian Kurz visited us for the first time in his new capacity as Federal Chancellor, together with Federal Minister Heinz Fassmann and accompanying delegation members. During their hour-long scheduled visit to the Old City, Rector Markus St. Bugnyar took the opportunity to give them an impromptu introduction to Casa Austria, still under construction, which is in part funded by a donation from the Federal Government.

The Pilgrim House conceives of itself as “Our house in the Orient”, a decidedly Austrian institution in the Holy Land. This Austrian flavour is enhanced to no small degree by the numerous volunteers who work here for different lengths of time. Our guests primarily know us for our guesthouse, our Viennese café, and incomparable terrace. We also take our social responsibility seriously and establish cultural initiatives that hopefully contribute to peaceful relations in the immediate locale. This is all made possible by the guests who stay with us. Our increased capacity will allow us to place new and additional accent on these areas.

The founding history of the Hospice finds its ultimate culmination in Casa Austria. This project finally allows us to reach the number of guestrooms intended at the outset; the financial implications thereof enable us to look more confidently and assuredly into the future.

Contributions from the public sector enabled us to pay back a loan significantly faster, which was a prerequisite for financing Casa Austria. We request all our friends, and all those who can help us through with their work and who identify with our projects, to continue to donate. Work on Casa Austria is still in progress and investment in the old main building is seriously needed.

We currently have a lot going on. We serve the interests of our guests, the interests of the Holy Land, which we help through the provision of jobs, and also the interests of our homeland, which has a foothold in this thrice-holy place in world history on account of our presence: a house rich in tradition, history and culture.

Photos: © APH



Chancellor Sebastian Kurz and Federal Minister Heinz Fassmann visiting Rector Bugnyar.

Political systems compared

A presentation from the voluntary service



Photo: © Simon Kaufmann

By **SIMON KAUFMANN**

Israel is a democracy with a parliamentary system of government. In such a parliamentary government system (e.g. in Austria and Germany), the government depends on the parliament, and there are often links between the government and the parliament. The head of government and the head of state are usually two separate offices.

By way of contrast, in the case of a presidential system of government (e.g. in the US), the government is less dependent on parliamentary approval, and the president, who is often the prime minister and head of state at the same time, can form the government independently of the composition of the parliament.

Israel does not have a constitution, but a number of Basic Laws govern the structure and organisation of the state which can be changed by parliament by simple majority (or sometimes 70 out of 120 votes). The Declaration of Independence stipulated the adoption of a constitution not later than the 1st October 1948. However, the War of Independence made that timetable unrealistic, and even after the war no constitution was not forthcoming. According to the Israel State Archives, Ben Gurion himself spoke out against a constitution for various reasons: "Right now there are more important things to do." "We do not need a higher register of laws – why should today's parliamentarians be any cleverer than those in 300 years time?"

The Legislative in Israel

The parliament in Israel is called the Knesset. The name Knesset is derived from the Knesset HaGadol, the Great Assembly in Jewish tradition, which according to the Bible existed for about 300 years after the return of the Jews from Babylonian exile (about 500 BC) and was made up of 120 Jewish scholars and prophets. For this reason, the Knesset today consists of 120 members.

The Knesset has parliamentary sovereignty. This means that it decides on every law and can change any previous law. Usually a simple majority is sufficient for this. By way of contrast, in Austria, for example, a general amendment of the Federal Constitution is only possible by plebiscite and not by parliament alone. In Israel, there is no law that provides for judicial review, i.e. that allows for a court to repeal a law based on contradictions with a Basic Law. Nevertheless, the Supreme Court has assumed this right for itself and has on several occasions repealed provisions of ordinary laws which contradict previously enacted Basic Laws.

The term of office is four years, but is subject to change at any time by the Knesset. Since 1988, there have always been early elections.

The Executive in Israel

The prime minister is appointed by the president, usually on suggestion of the Knesset. Between 1992 and 2001, the prime minister was twice elected directly, but this led to a further fragmentation of the Knesset. As a result, the direct election system was abandoned in the same year (2001). Ministers are selected by the prime minister. However, this must take into account the composition of parliament, as the government must be

approved by the Knesset. In Israel it is common for ministers to also be members of the Knesset. Legally, this is only a requirement for the prime minister and his deputy. The president, like the president of the Federal Republic of Austria, assumes mainly representative tasks and is elected by the Knesset for a term of seven years. Re-election is not permitted.

The Judiciary in Israel

The judiciary in Israel is subdivided into religious and secular courts. The secular court system has three levels, with magistrate and district courts on the first two levels, and the Supreme Court as the highest appellate court. Judges in secular courts are appointed by the president on the recommendation of a special selection committee. The committee includes members of the Knesset, government members and judges of the Supreme Court. The judges of the Supreme Court also meet on matters of principle as the Supreme Court and discuss the legality of government decisions, etc. Civil status issues such as marriage, divorce, adoption and guardianship fall within the jurisdiction of religious courts, which represent Jews, Muslims, Christians of various denominations and the Druze population.

The Electoral System in Israel

Israeli citizens over the age of 18 are entitled to vote. To vote, you have to be in the country on Election Day. Postal votes are not allowed. In parliamentary elections, all of Israel is a single constituency. The country is not divided, as for example in the case of Austria in national elections, into regional constituencies. It is thus irrelevant for the distribution of the mandate where a vote has been cast in the country. The voter votes for exactly one list drawn up by one of the parties or group of parties. The order in the list is fixed and cannot be changed by preference vote.

Many parties abstain from setting up selection lists. During the election process the voter is handed an empty envelope. In the polling booth he/she finds pieces of paper with the abbreviation, the name and possibly the election slogan of the lists standing for election. The voter places one of these pieces of paper into the envelope which he/she then seals and throws into the ballot

box. This system is intended to make voting easier for citizens who are not proficient in Hebrew.

Given the very low threshold for parties to obtain a parliamentary mandate, each Knesset is composed of MPs from many different parties. More than 10 parties are generally represented in parliament at any one time. By comparison, in Austria the National Council currently consists of parliamentarians from six different parties, but in the past Austria was generally represented by only three to four parties. Until 1988, lists in Israel had to receive only 1 percent of the vote to get a mandate. After 1988, the threshold was gradually increased and currently stands at 3.25 percent.

PEACE SERVICE

As part of our peace service we see our mission as providing survivors of the Holocaust and their families with the opportunity to talk about that chapter of our history in in-depth encounters.

In addition, our volunteers should have the opportunity to get to know the respective viewpoints of the parties to the conflict in the region.

The content of this article reflects solely the opinion of its author.

“When the sun came up”

With Jesus towards life

By **CHRISTOPH KARDINAL SCHÖNBORN**

When the sun came up. The title of the present volume is taken from the Easter report from the Gospel of Luke (see Luke 16:2). In the early morning, the women rushed to Jesus' grave and found it empty. Angels announced to them the resurrection of the Lord. A hope that carries us to this day.

Early in the morning, as the sun is rising, pilgrims make their way to the Holy Places, following in the footsteps of Jesus. This volume of sermons can serve as a valuable travel companion on their pilgrimage. Not only does it guide them to the most important sites in the Holy Land, but it also reveals the importance of these places: here, the Bible narrates, people encountered God and experienced comfort and salvation. The texts invite you to tarry in the holy places and to surrender to the powerful and moving words of the Holy Scriptures.

The reflections and meditations shed light on essential stages of God's history with man: from the call of Abraham to the life of Jesus of Nazareth, His ministry, suffering and resurrection in Jerusalem, to the beginnings of the Church. One's gaze finally turns towards the heavenly Jerusalem, from which John's revelation was announced. The texts also illuminate essential moments from the life of Jesus and the secrets of the church calendar.

This pilgrim guide could become your personal spiritual companion as you follow in the footsteps of Christ. It places Christ, who is our sun, in the centre. May you be touched by the light of Christ in your own life.

**Archbishop
Christoph Kardinal Schönborn**

Protector of the Austrian Pilgrim Hospice of the Holy Family in Jerusalem

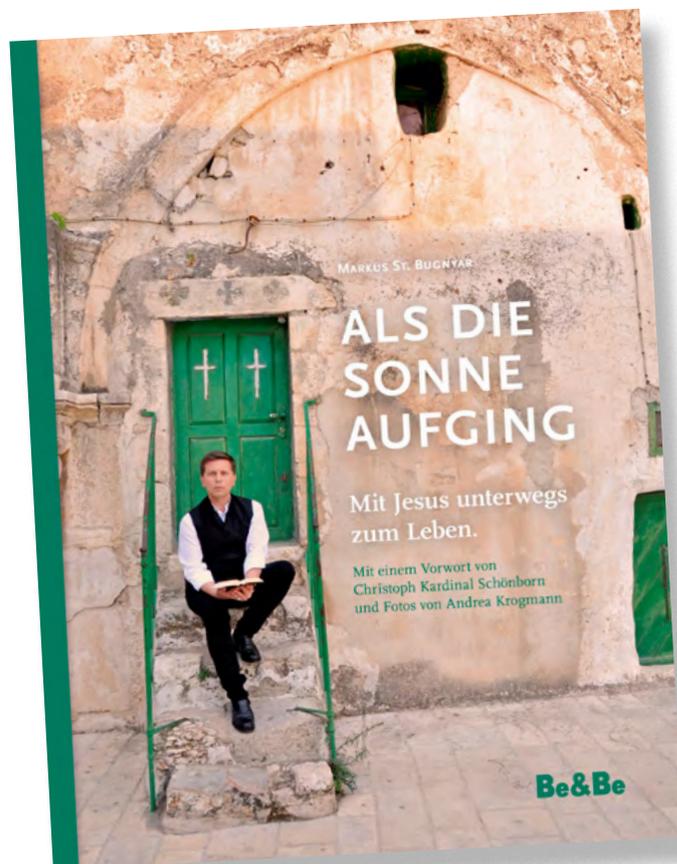


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I am very grateful to you!



Die Österreichische Gesellschaft vom Hl. Land

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