



GRAND MAGISTERIUM – VATICAN
EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF
THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

The consecration of the new church in Jubeiha, Jordan: a moment of shared joy



On May 12, Cardinal Fernando Filoni, during his visit to Jordan, consecrated St. Paul's Church in Jubeiha, a church that the Order has largely financed in the past few years, at the request of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, responding to the needs of the growing Christian community in this area close to Amman.

The joy of the parish community on this day is a great satisfaction for the Knights and Dames of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre who have generously contributed to this project and who join in prayer to the intentions of their Christian brothers and sisters in Jordan.

Below is the homily delivered by the Grand Master during the consecration mass.

Dear Excellency, Dear Brothers of the Priesthood,

Distinguished Civil and Military Authorities, Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The consecration of a church is always a very significant moment in the life of a Christian community. In fact, the presence of a sacred temple reminds us of God's desire, even before that of men and women, to be amid his people, to live in their midst, to welcome their prayers and to speak to each one who wishes to hear his voice. Bishop Saint Irenaeus, Doctor of the Church, added that God's holiness, His glory, is the living man and woman, that is, the man and woman who prays and who expresses the richness of his and her faith in the Community; in this way not only the individual,

but the whole Community lives the gift of God's presence in both personal and community life and even in History. A presence that had already begun to be manifested in the life of Abraham and the People whom God had chosen to initiate Revelation, which then became fully visible in Christ through his Incarnation.

With the Ascension, Jesus did not abandon humanity, but rather assured the Disciples, and with them all those who would believe in their preaching: "Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Mt 28: 20 NABRE); these are the concluding words of the Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus, from the first moments of his life, always had a privileged relationship with the Temple of Jerusalem and with the places of worship in Palestine. As an infant, he was taken by Mary and Joseph to the Temple, which he later visited as an adolescent on pilgrimages from Nazareth to Jerusalem; during his public life in the Holy City, he loved to go to that place which he called "My Father's house" (Jn 2: 16) and "House of prayer" (Mt 21: 13), strongly criticizing those who had turned it into a marketplace. The Temple, in fact, was the point of reference for the faith and unity of the People of God and enshrined the most sacred site where the Ark of the Covenant was initially located; Jesus shed tears, foreseeing the destruction and suffering that that place and the Holy City would suffer over the centuries, yet he spoke of a new "temple of his body" (Jn 2: 21), in relation to his resurrection, through which he would give life to a new Covenant and to the new People of God.

Jesus loved places of prayer, such as synagogues: in the one in Nazareth, he was schooled and there, proclaiming Isaiah, he announced the fulfillment of the prophecy: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor[...] and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord" (Lk 4: 18–19).

The Apostles also loved to pray in the Temple of Jerusalem, where they began their evangelizing mission, strengthened, and enlightened by the Holy Spirit that the Lord had sent at Pentecost. With that preaching, the new "spiritual Body" of the risen Lord, the Church, took shape, as Saint Paul would have well explained in his Letters to the Colossians and the Ephesians: a new Body, that is, the Church, of which Christ is the head and the beginning and we, through baptism, become its living members.

This sacred building in Jubeiha, which is being consecrated today, has therefore the purpose of gathering the People of God in prayer; it is the sign of God's presence that continues to act by giving his grace through the sacramental signs to those who desire it and vivifies his blessing in this Parish.

This sacred building had become necessary and convenient from the moment when, about forty years ago, many Christian families had moved to this new neighborhood, coming from various parts of Amman and other places. Father Labid Deabis, who was pastor for twenty-four years, and then Father Ibrahim Batarsa, always dreamt of having for the Christian Community, which was gathering and living here, the sacred building that we now consecrate, dedicating it to the greatest missionary apostle, Saint Paul.

The Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, represented here by the Lieutenant General, the Governor General and the Delegation accompanying me, wanted to bring to life the desire of the Latin Patriarchate by making financial commitments for its construction, being sensitive to the pastoral needs of the Parish. The Order of the Holy Sepulchre, therefore, in accordance with the mission entrusted to it by the Supreme Pontiffs, in addition to its annual support for schools, where Christian and non-Christian boys and girls attend, in addition to its support for charitable works, wanted to offer this place of worship as a sign of affection and encouragement to the Christian Community in Jordan. To all the Knights and Dames, scattered throughout the world, goes our common gratitude.

Now you, dear faithful of this Parish, also for the completion of this work, assume an important task. Although relatively a minority, the Christian presence will and must always be a prophetic presence, that is, capable of proclaiming the mystery of Jesus, Son of God, who brings peace, mercy, forgiveness, respect for the rights of all, coexistence, and fraternity among peoples. Christians do not engage in empty proselytism, but bear witness to their faith by example, by honesty of life, by charity towards the poor and the needy, by caring for the elderly, especially if alone, the sick and the imprisoned. This is the noble vocation to which, dear faithful of Jubeiha, you are called.

Now it is up to you, then, to continue the witness of faith and goodness in this your and our land of Jordan, loved by God and blessed by the presence of Jesus, who began his public life here. May yours be a witness of true fraternity. Pope Francis in the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, signed in Abu Dhabi with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar in February 2019, said that we are called to be instruments of fraternity among all people of good will, against all forms of violence, oppression, extremism, sometimes encouraged by religions themselves; may yours be a testimony to the greatness of the faith in Jesus Christ, which unites hearts and raises the human spirit to the Lord.

Allow me to conclude these words by expressing to you my personal sense of joy in consecrating this Church in Jordan where, for five years, I served and formed bonds of friendship, in my former capacity as Pontifical Representative—from 2001 to 2006. God does not allow life's events to unfold randomly, there is always a deeper and wiser logic to it, baffling our disbelief.

I extend cordial well-wishes to His Majesty the King, His family, and the noble People of this Country. I thank the civil and military Authorities for their presence and for the specific contribution granted in view of this Church's construction.

To priests, religious men and women, whom I have come to appreciate during my stay in Jordan, for their generous witness and commitment, goes my blessing.

Fernando Cardinal Filoni

Grand Master

(May 12, 2022)