

Bible Lands

Summer 2022

Magazine of the Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association

www.jmecca.org.uk



Jerusalem



Cyprus & the Gulf



Iran



Alexandria



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THE JERUSALEM AND THE MIDDLE EAST CHURCH ASSOCIATION

(JMECA)

Founded in 1887

'The Object of the Charity is to benefit the public by encouraging support in prayer, money and personal service for the religious and other charitable work of the Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East and the Episcopal/Anglican Province of Alexandria in communion with the See of Canterbury.'

Reg. Charity no. 1158476

www.jmeca.org.uk

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Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Association.

Front cover photo: Mount Tabor – Basilica of the Transfiguration.

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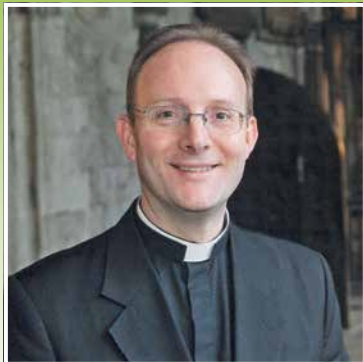
Vacant

Diocese of the Horn of Africa

The Rt Rev Kuan Kim Seng (Commissary)

Diocese of Gambella

The Rt Rev Kuan Kim Seng (Commissary)



Editorial

Rt Rev Anthony Ball, Chair of the JMECA trustees, writes:

Aren't we all a bit weary of COVID – its practical and psychological effects as well as the way it has of intruding into most conversations? Whether or not you (like me until last week) have managed to avoid infection, you are likely to have friends or family who have not been so fortunate. Symptoms range from the almost imperceptible to fatal (mine are on the mild end of the spectrum, thankfully!) and one of the things many are now having to come to terms with is "long-COVID". The Church, too, is grappling with the after-effects of the pandemic, with the two Anglican provinces supported by JMECA being no exception. The implications look to be far-reaching and, as individuals and a charity, we seek to stand with the leadership and people of the provinces as they respond to the opportunities and challenges before them.

A key element of our solidarity can be exercised through prayer – and the Praying Round the Provinces section offers one way to focus that prayer over the coming months. We can also express our solidarity in practical ways – one of them, being pursued by JMECA, is by increased financial support. JMECA (and the other charities managed through the Jerusalem and the East Mission Trust, JEMT) saw investments increase in value over recent years and, despite a recent dip, we determined to release some of that (more than £700,000 in additional grants over three years) to help dioceses plug some of the gaps in income that have appeared. Whilst by no means a complete answer to the many prayers, we are blessed to be able to offer some much-needed breathing space to allow a strategic assessment and response to complex consequences of COVID.

This edition of Bible Lands reminds us, if such was needed, of the importance of the Church's mission and ministry in the region. It showcases some of the ways in which both of the provinces are getting on with the business of proclaiming the gospel and sharing Christ's compassion in their diverse settings as well as looking back at the journey travelled. That is an appropriate image for Philip Hooper's piece, and the farewells to Bill and Edith Schwartz, Mary June Nestler and, from the JMECA office in Farnham, Shirley Atkins showing the breadth of the ways in which commitment to work in the region manifests itself. A message reinforced as we also record the passing of Dennis Gurney, John McDouall and Mahtab Soodmand. All inspirations in one way or another to those currently serving.

Andy Bowerman, The Mission to Seafarers' Regional Director, is another presence whom we shall miss as he takes up the role of Dean of Bradford. It was great that his final regional gathering could overlap with the Provincial Conference described in these pages, allowing clergy from both provinces to be together and creating another link with the previous Jerusalem and the Middle East Clergy Conference in Egypt, prior to the creation of the Province of Alexandria. The 'Stronger Together' theme of the Conference in Jordan can readily be extended to the wide network of friends and supporters that make up our readership. Thank you for your faithfulness!

It is fascinating to see how the theme reappears in the account of the visit to Ireland to engage with Church and Community Transformation (CCT) and how that account resonates with the theme of this year's Diocese of Egypt Synod – 'A Living Church for a Better Society' – prefigured in the Sunday School news item we report and now adopted as a vision to guide the diocese's development over the next ten years. Their Synod also discussed the issue, described in the CCT article, of how to connect the many diocesan ministries with the life of the parishes. Not that such a reminder that there is much to learn by sharing experiences between as well as within dioceses and provinces is needed. Stronger Together, indeed!

It is just such an insight that has prompted us to look again at the role Bible Lands fulfils, as part of a wider review of the charity's communication strategy. Questions such as whether the magazine is a vehicle for communication and sharing between the provinces or primarily about them, with an 'external' readership, and how that relates to the various ways in which the different diocesan 'friends' organisations function are all under consideration – alongside that of whether digital or print is most effective. The editor would be happy to receive your feedback on those questions and/or submissions of articles for inclusion in the next edition. Our gratitude to Stephen and all the contributors for the work that has gone into producing this edition. Enjoy reading and enjoy your summer!

+ Anthony Ball



Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East



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 diocese supports 35 institutions, which include hospitals, clinics, kindergartens and schools, vocational training programmes, as well as institutions for the deaf, the disabled and the elderly, reaching out to interfaith neighbours in mutual respect and cooperation.



Provincial conference near the Dead Sea, Jordan

After eight years, and several challenges (not least Covid), the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East was finally able to gather together in April for a Clergy and Spouses Conference at the Dead Sea in Jordan. As the Province adjusts to its new formation, following the independence of the new Province of Alexandria, it was good to gather and learn more about who we are, as dioceses, parishes, and ultimately people, serving together *in Missio Dei*.

We gathered as clergy and spouses (and a small number of children) from across the dioceses of Jerusalem, and Cyprus and the Gulf, coming together in worship, prayer and fellowship, around the theme of 'Stronger Together'. The two diocesan bishops are an embodiment of this strength in friendship and collaborative working, and Archbishop Michael and Archbishop Hosam shared responsibilities throughout, leading presentations of their own diocese's mission and ministry, and helping clergy and spouses to understand more of both parish and institutional work. Archbishop Michael made clear his sadness that due to the situation in Iran, there was no representation from that diocese. But he made clear his hope that a new bishop for Iran might be found quickly.



After such a long gap between provincial gatherings, new clergy (such as Mark Derry and MD Johnson in Doha) are new to the diocese, having arrived since the previous provincial gathering. Many had yet to meet diocesan colleagues in person, given the online nature of diocesan gatherings over the past two years.

Two renowned guest speakers were invited to address the conference: the Rev Professor Jenn Strawbridge bringing a global Anglican perspective; and Mon Jamal Khader of the Latin Catholic Church offering a local voice. Mon Jamal spoke on themes of presence and participation of the church in Middle Eastern society, ecumenical and interfaith relationships and the accompaniment of Christ walking the Emmaus Road with us on our journey of faith. Rev Strawbridge led Bible studies on 1 Peter, a topic she has been deeply focused on as she leads the preparation of studies for the upcoming Lambeth Conference. Mixed groups gathered to discuss the topics raised.

Our time together in worship and prayer afforded the opportunity to share some of the diverse liturgical

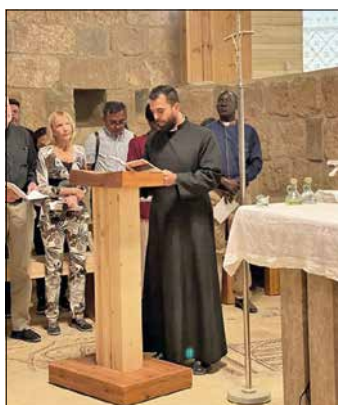
traditions of the province, including joining together in a sung Arabic Eucharist (using transliteration for the English speakers) as well as forms of Evening Prayer from Cyprus and the Gulf, and a local Eastern form of Compline. We were also able

to worship together at two Holy Sites – renewing our baptismal vows together at the site of Jesus' baptism at the river Jordan, and celebrating a closing eucharist at the memorial Church of Moses at Mt. Nebo. The culmination of our time together made our Easter Alleluias all the more joyous, and there was a palpable sense of community in our time of prayer and praise together.

In addition to the emphasis on prayer and study, there was time to relax! An optional trip to the remarkable mosaics of the ancient town of Madaba was happily taken up by a group, whilst others took the opportunity to float on the Dead Sea or use the hotel facilities. Because the schedule was full, giving space for the clergy and spouses to rest was particularly important.

We were glad to share in the joy of our unity with a number of guests who partner with us in the work we do in the Middle East. Archdeacon Paul Feheley represented the Episcopal Church; the Rev Davidson Solanki from USPG, and Dr Clare Amos from JMECA were with us throughout the conference, and the Provincial Synod that followed directly after it. The Mission to Seafarers also dovetailed their regional gathering with ours, joining us at the Baptismal Site and at Mt. Nebo. And it was a delight to share in a part of the wider world of the Anglican Communion, with participants from Egypt to India worshipping with us.

After two previous attempts to get the conference off the ground, it felt like a vindication for the perseverance it took the planning committee to organise the gathering this time around. The work of Archdeacon Christopher Fitcher and the Rev Canons Fuad Dagher and Wadie Far was invaluable in making it all possible.



Particular thanks go to USPG and JMECA for helping to fund some of the cost of travel for the conference. This was very welcome, given the financial challenges both dioceses have faced in light of Covid-19, honouring existing



commitments as well.

The experience can be summed up through the eyes of Rev Canon Wadie Far who said 'as a priest for only four years, I have not had the opportunity to attend any provincial events...this in-person conference was such a great

opportunity to learn more about the different dioceses. This interaction helped us all to see how similar we are, despite the different places we do ministry, we still face some of the same challenges, and it made it apparent that we are "Stronger Together" by sharing our experience. Hopefully we will have many more shared events in our province, not only for the clergy but for parishioners and ministries as well'. The Rev Ian Nicholson commented on the 'nice balance of teaching, historical visits and time to relax' as part of 'time away from our usual work pattern'.

As the conference came to a close, Archbishop Hosam Naoum committed to continuing the online Zoom gatherings that were begun in the run up to this in-person conference, with the hope to host two per year, and stating his hope that we would return to a pattern of gathering every three years per Province, to learn, share and worship together. After a week of reunions of friends who had not seen each other in years, the final meals were shared between provincial friends, between Nablus and Sharjah, the Galilee and the Gulf, with some Cyprus and the Gulf clergy taking the opportunity to remain in the diocese of Jerusalem a little longer and to enjoy the hospitality of the clergy and staff in Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, as others left, the Provincial Synod met, enjoyed by our partners, as the two diocesan Bishops shared their vision for the mission of the province and its dioceses, in pastoral ministry and in the wider work of diakonia and reconciliation. At the conclusion of the Synod, in another sign of being stronger together, and in light of the effects of the pandemic, Archbishop Hosam proposed a motion that the Synod extend the term of Archbishop Michael Lewis as primate for a year, until 12th May, 2023, and elect Archbishop Hosam Naoum to serve for five years from 13th May, 2023. The Synod unanimously passed the motion, with Archbishop Hosam stating his desire to learn about primatial work from Archbishop Michael during the year. As the provincial communique notes 'the motion encapsulated the sense of celebration with which the province moves forward on its continuing journey of faith, mutual love and friendship'.

Joel Kelling with Rev Wadie Far

Photos: Joel Kelling, the Rev Nael Abu Rahmoun

Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East

Jerusalem goes to Ireland

Three years ago, the diocese of Jerusalem hosted an Envisioning Day in Ashrafiyeh, Amman, in partnership with Tearfund. The gathered clergy and lay leaders from Anglican churches in Jordan and Lebanon discussed concepts of integral mission and asset-based development, as well as the challenges of engaging in such processes in a context where Christians make up only a small percentage of the population. Despite this, Christians play an outsized role at an institutional level, through schools, hospitals and rehabilitation centres – but this tends to remain separate from the day-to-day activities of the parish churches.

As a result, a team of interested participants started to gather to contextualise and translate existing materials from European and East African contexts for use in the Middle East. However, just as they began to build momentum, the Covid-19 pandemic led to lockdowns across the world, which was particularly severe in the diocese of Jerusalem. Remarkably, this may have opened opportunities that would not have been possible in a world where gatherings and travel were more 'normal'. Additional participants joined from Lebanon and Israel (who cannot easily meet in each other's home countries), widening the experience and context of the learning environment.

In March 2022, after nearly three years of preparation, delay and many Zoom calls across different time zones, a group of us from the diocese of Jerusalem were encouraged and excited finally to make it to Northern Ireland for a study trip. The aim was to learn from a wide range of churches that have engaged in the Church and Community Transformation process and are flourishing and reaching out into the neighbourhoods in which they are located.

We arrived to see the experience and impact of the CCT process up close, to learn from those who had benefitted from it and were continuing to be agents of transformation in the communities around



them. It was also an exchange, in which our experience from the Middle East could be shared and where we could reflect on the vulnerability and risk-taking involved in being peacemakers.

The churches visited varied vastly in terms of context and assets. Willowfield Parish in East Belfast had been declining, but now has

a refurbished building and extension for community activities and is home to a large team of paid staff and volunteers. It is now not only thriving as a congregation, but reaching into the community and providing help in a wide range of ways – including educational support, teenage mental and physical health support, and debt advice – living out the gospel in an impoverished neighbourhood and transforming lives.



Just down the road sits St. Christopher's Anglican Church, its walls peeling. While appearing derelict from the outside, inside you can find The Larder, a community food centre led by Louise Ferguson and a small handful of volunteers, promoting dignity while facilitating access to good food regardless of capacity to pay. As well as encouraging and empowering lay leadership, the foodbank has brought the church back to life, even as its congregants worship amidst the fridges and shelves of food.



The church visits demonstrated the possibility of changing the prevalent mindset in the Middle East of the 'one-man show' (as described by the clergy) towards teams made up of young and old, men and women, as well as how clergy and vestries could empower such leadership.



The work of reconciliation was another aspect of CCT we engaged with, as we were confronted with the 'Peace Walls' that keep communities apart and echoed the Separation Wall built inside of the West Bank. The echoes of the Palestine-Israeli conflict are strong in Northern Ireland, down to the Palestinian flags that appear in murals across Republican areas and the Israeli ones seen in Loyalist areas streets away. This use of proxy actors reduces people to symbols, diminishing their humanity.

The complexity of the Middle Eastern identity in this space was not lost on our group, which was broadly speaking Protestant yet also included Palestinians. Except for myself, all the group were Arabs, and some were additionally citizens of Israel. The Rev Na'el Abu Rahmoun, from Christ Church, Nazareth spoke on these multiple identities that he holds, as part of the Stronger Together programme that St. Mark's Anglican Parish in Newtownards is engaged in.

The group spent an evening sharing their experiences as Middle Eastern Christians with the community gathered there. It was an opportunity to reciprocate the learning we had been doing, to provide a fuller picture of the realities of life in Jordan, Palestine and Israel, and to reflect on the relative unity of the Christian community in the region and our role as salt and light despite the small Christian population. It was a great time of fellowship, being present as Christians with one another and growing friendship through reaching out – something of a microcosm of the work of CCT in itself.



Our visit coincided with the celebration of St. Patrick's Day (March 17th) and it was a very special privilege to join the pilgrimage from Saul (the site of the first church founded in Ireland) to Downpatrick Cathedral (where St. Patrick is believed to be buried). Mary al-Kopti, from St Paul's Ashrafiyeh, read one of the Bible

readings at the opening Eucharist and many of the clergy took turns to carry the cross at the head of the pilgrimage to the cathedral.

As we returned from Belfast to our homes across the Middle East the Rev George al-Kopti continued exploring some of the opportunities to reach out

into the community beyond the church. This was a conversation he began with me on our way out, reflecting on how the church can provide a space for those who are otherwise alone or neglected. These may form part of the vision of St. Paul's Ashrafiyeh, through the dreaming of dreams and plans for a way ahead. But first we will continue our work of translating and contextualising resources for use in the diocese.

In September we plan to begin the training of those who will carry out the process of CCT in four pilot parishes in the diocese. We particularly will be looking to encourage youth and women to be trained in this work. Through this, we hope to see a transformation beginning inside the church (away from the 'one-man show') and eventually engaging confidently with, and serving the needs of, the community around us.

Joel Kelling

Photos: Joel Kelling, Rev Nael Abu Rahmoun, Rev Jamil Khader

From JMECA and the provinces: 'Thank you' Shirley A!



In March this year, Shirley Atkins retired after five and a half years in the Farnham JMECA office. She originally saw the job advertised in a Guildford diocesan newsletter and says, '...on researching this historic charity...I became more interested, applied and was lucky enough to be chosen for the post!' Shirley adds, 'One of the biggest problems was that both me and my boss – Shirley Eason, are called Shirley, so we were soon affectionately referred to as 'The Shirleys'!

In addition to dealing with administrative matters,

'Shirley A' enjoyed the trips to Westminster Abbey for JMECA meetings. Office life can be stressful and Shirley admits that visits from two furry friends Inca and Bailey (her golden retrievers) were always welcome!

Bible Lands and JMECA send 'Shirley A' many thanks and wish her all the very best for the future.

Part-time Administrative Assistant needed.

Based in the JMECA Farnham Office, Surrey. Find out more on the JMECA website <https://www.jmecca.org.uk/get-involved/farnham-office-vacancy>

Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East

‘Walking the talk’ for the Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza

In the grey light of dawn, a flock of birds flew across the waters of the Sea of Galilee and I reflected that Our Lord had walked across them to his terrified disciples two millennia ago. It had been a short night as we had arrived at our hotel in the early hours due to a delayed flight from Heathrow and we had to be up in time to get to Nazareth by 7am for a communion service at the Basilica of the Annunciation.

It was 1999 and our pilgrimage was led by Rev Martin Warner then the administrator of the Anglican Shrine to Our Lady in Walsingham, Norfolk and now Bishop of Chichester.

Over the next few days, we visited many sites of the events of Christ’s ministry all of which were deeply moving.



An especially strong memory is of our boat trip on the Sea of Galilee on such a clear day that we could see Mt Hermon across the Syrian border, one of the possible sites of the Transfiguration. My wife Elizabeth and I have been fortunate to make three more pilgrimages to the Holy Land since then but have never again seen the mountain’s snow-covered, flat-topped mass. We subsequently visited Mt Tabor, the other possible site, and admired its beautiful basilica and magnificent views of the surrounding countryside.



Our journey down to Jerusalem followed the West Bank’s border with Jordan before climbing through the mountains to reach that city. This was, I reflected,



the same countryside which the Virgin Mary must have walked through on her way to visit her cousin Elizabeth after the Annunciation.

Our base in Jerusalem was a kibbutz outside the city. It was very comfortable but too far out for making independent trips into the city. There were excellent views of the countryside between Bethlehem and the city, then happily free of the separation wall.

Two particular parts of our visit come to mind. First, following the *Via Dolorosa* and therefore Our Lord’s journey from condemnation by Pilate to his crucifixion on Calvary. Many churches have fourteen stations marked on their walls commemorating this journey. Lenten devotions have for a long time involved following these stations. To walk the traditional route in the old city of Jerusalem was, to say the least, deeply moving.



Secondly, we were able to go onto the Temple Mount itself and visit the two mosques there. In particular we were able to go inside the Dome of the Rock and admire its incredible beauty. Something we have never been allowed to do since.

Inevitably, we revisited sites on our subsequent visits but this didn’t stop them still being so moving. After saying some prayers on a terrace next to the basilica on Mt Tabor we were suddenly engulfed in a cloud just as in the description of the Transfiguration in the gospels.

How marvellous that improved relations between

Israel and Jordan have made it possible to visit the traditional site of Christ's baptism by St John. It was also so encouraging to see several new churches on the Jordanian side.

On our first two visits our guides had been nationalistic Israelis, whilst in the more recent visits they were Palestinian Christians. We therefore learnt steadily of the latter's problems as second-class citizens in Israel itself and especially the West Bank. Most disturbing was that so many of the younger generation were planning to emigrate. We first saw the West Bank Wall on our way from Tel Aviv airport to Tiberius in 2017 and of course we were to encounter it much more when we reached Jerusalem. We also learned of the steadily increasing numbers of Israeli settlements in the West Bank.



On our last two visits we were able to attend Sung Eucharist at the Cathedral of St George the Martyr in Jerusalem. At a reception afterwards, I first learnt of the Al Ahli Hospital which the diocese runs in the Gaza Strip. It struck me how vital its work must be in such a desperately poor area especially in treating women's cancers.



What could I do to help? On our return to England, I gave this much thought. I had for many years walked parts of the South West Coast Path which runs from Minehead in West Somerset round Land's End in Cornwall to Poole in Dorset. I must have covered about 100 miles of it but by the spring of 2017 I realized that with my 70th birthday less than two years away I had better get on with completing its 630 miles. In doing so, why not ask friends for sponsorship and thus raise funds for the hospital? So, over the next five summers I spent three or four days each month walking a section of the path till I reached Minehead last October. To my delight my friends were very generous and I burst my original target of £1 for each mile I walked with a final total of £860! I initially sent payments via Embrace the Middle East and then by JMECA.



What of the future? A friend and I will be walking Offa's Dyke which runs for 177 miles along the English Welsh Border this summer and I will be appealing for more sponsorship. Thereafter who knows! There is a path round the Welsh coast which at 850 miles would keep me going till I hang up my boots. All I can say is that I am determined to continue to raise all I can for the Ahli Arab hospital.

Philip Hooper

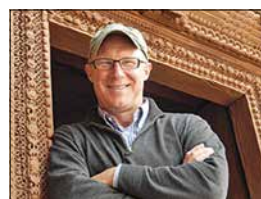
Course Director changeover



Bible lands joins with St. George's College, Jerusalem and many around the world in sending a huge 'thank you' to the Rev Canon Dr Mary June Nestler who has recently retired from St. George's College as Course Director and Lecturer in Contextual Biblical Theology. Her inspirational teaching has been appreciated by all on college courses – and all in the close. Thank you, Mary June – and all best wishes for the future.

Rev Dr Rodney Aist, her successor, took up the

position on 1st May this year and has been on the college staff before. Rev Aist said, 'I'm grateful for the opportunity to return to St George's College. As a pilgrim, guide and scholar, my most transformative moments in the Holy Land have always been in the company of others, and as a place of gathering, it's the people, the staff, pilgrims and the Living Stones that



makes St George's College and the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem special.' We wish Rodney and his wife Janet well for their future at the college.

Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East



Bishop Michael Lewis explains that the Diocese of Cyprus & the Gulf covers Oman, the Yemen, the seven United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq and the whole of Cyprus. “In every part of the diocese, except in Cyprus and Iraq, the congregations are largely expatriate, made up of Christians from Pakistan, India,

Sri Lanka, the Philippines and the African continent. Many do not come from an Anglican background but find a welcome church home in our Anglican congregations. Through some intricate and special relationships, the Diocese is often responsible for churches and congregations which are not Anglican, some of which are still working out their relationships to the Bishop and Synod. Worship is largely in English but in some locations we have liturgy in Arabic, Syriac-Aramaic, Tamil and Urdu.”



Prudence and Ambition

Cyprus Synod 2022 – Archbishop Michael’s Presidential Address

Here we are again in synod-by-zoom, and zoom is curiously both more and less intimate than real presence. It’s more intimate because on zoom faces, and our looking at one another, are close, concentrated, and continuous (provided we don’t turn off our video). It’s less intimate, much less intimate, because human beings need full, real presence to have a chance of reading one another really and fully. These aren’t novel observations but they matter, not least when there’s mourning to be done, or concerns to be shared, or a celebration to be had, or a transition marked.

The Very Reverend and Venerable Dr Bill Schwartz OBE – will retire at the end of April. I venture to say that there’s been no one quite like him in the history of this Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, and I’m talking both quantity and quality. He’s been in the Eastern Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Middle East in the service of Christianity for fifty years, give or take. For the diocese he’s functioned as layman, as deacon, and as priest, in roles ranging from Diocesan Secretary to curate in Kyrenia to leading our presence in Saudi Arabia to spearheading the building of the Anglican Centre as parish priest in Qatar to becoming a canon to taking on the burdens that come with being Archdeacon in the Gulf to finally combining that

task with the Deanery of St Christopher’s Cathedral in Bahrain. His wife Edith has been alongside him for all but the very last part of that half-century, when she committed herself to helping with the care of her grandchildren in California, and to Edie as well as Bill we mark our love.

So, if this were an in-person synod, imagine the fulness of our mixture of celebration and sadness at this, the most representative gathering of the totality and spread of the diocese. As it is, I know that in his parish of Bahrain his ministry will be marked in a heartfelt way when Julia and I are there in mid-March, and on this island a meeting soon after that will allow some of the people who have worked with him over the years to tell him face to face what they think of him (I haven’t written my script, yet).

But I said I had in mind not just quantity of years but quality: and what I mean is quality of perspective and vision; and this is where this Address moves from the personal to the corporate, the communal. Bill looks forward. Back in the early 80s he was a pioneer in using computers, not just because he’s one of nature’s practical techies but for the good of the whole Church. Most of all, a mantra of his that I endorse and now repeat is that, when the Church, the diocese, a parish, considers a proposal or scheme either for a building project, or for congregational or vocational development, or for appointments of staff including clergy, we must be asking ourselves, ‘How

will this serve the Anglican Church and the cause of Christianity in this place and these places ten, twenty, fifty years in the future?’

The undoubted fact that in many ways life feels pretty fragile at the moment shouldn’t blind us to the fact that the life of human beings has felt, and been, fragile for much of past history; indeed, stability, comfort, and predictability have been the exception rather than the rule for our forebears, in all centuries. That’s certainly true of this diocese and of the configuration of Anglican Christian presence that preceded it.

I think these times call for a dialogue between prudence and ambition, and at all levels. By ambition I mean something like trust in action: trust, faith (for Christians they’re the same word) that God is working the divine purpose out as year succeeds to year, even as 2019 to our consternation succeeded to the events of 2020 and 2021, even as they’ve now succeeded to this year of 2022; trust and Christian faith that God wants, and will with our cooperation if we use our God-given intelligence and resourcefulness, ensure our presence, worship, witness, ministry, mission, service and corporate life in this region and diocese for 2032, 2042, and 2072 every bit as much as now, even if in evolving shape.

I said corporate life. It’s wonderful that those who find our churches, and stay, come from so many varieties and traditions of the one Christian faith. It’s a given of Anglicanism that our doors are open to anyone, and our altars to anyone baptized, and that our clergy and people are encouraged to engage with any enquirer of any background about the unique revelation of God in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and his Body the Church. Even though we usually keep any number of lists (subject to GDPR or whatever the initials are) we’re essentially not a membership Church but a place and a society of free attendance by anyone who wants to come in and be either alongside us or of us.

Now, there are other expressions of Christianity, other Churches, congregations, and fellowships, that sincerely take a different line. But we don’t, by definition. Anglicanism is to be firmly orthodox at its core, but our orthodoxy, expressed in the sacraments, the universal Creeds of the Church, the liturgy, and respectful, imaginative engagement with the Tradition of which we are simply the current manifestation, is to be inviting and generous.

The Anglican Communion is just that: a Communion, of Provinces that are either contiguous with a nation or even part of a nation, for instance Kenya, York and Canterbury, Hong Kong, or with a whole region, for instance Southern Africa, Central Africa, Alexandria,

and ourselves in Jerusalem and the Middle East. Within each Province, which is headed by a Primate (me in our Province at the moment), are several dioceses each headed by a diocesan bishop (me in Cyprus and the Gulf for the last fourteen years). The bishop’s core calling is to be the focus of unity, even when there are disagreements. The bishop is the president of diocesan synod. Synod consists of three Houses, seen especially when formal voting is needed: the House of Laity, elected to represent their particular parish in the wider counsels of the diocese (though not to be mandated delegates of that parish), the House of Clergy, gathered as the expression of all the ordained ministers who hold the bishop’s licence, and the House of Bishops, to be the expression at synod of all those within the geography of the diocese who actively share the Holy Order of the episcopate (in this diocese, with no assistant bishops, that’s a House of one).

Synod is to model the way the wider diocese must be, and the parishes within it: solidarity around and overseen by the bishop, whose particular calling is to know, guard and promote the faith once delivered to the Apostles, and people and priests who share their cure of souls with the bishop who can’t be there all the time but is the chief pastor of each parish as well as of the diocese as a whole, working together in their complementary roles, so that the Body, though made up of individual parts, may be a single organic whole. Autocracy by either bishops or clergy or councils is as foreign to authentic Anglicanism as congregationalism, and always must be.

This way of Anglican identity as well as governance, which is also called our polity, is intended, I hope I don’t need to say, for the glory of God, the flourishing of his Body the Church, and the good of all humanity. It means that we can never be content to define ourselves by locality alone, even while honouring place and particularity as blessed by the incarnate Son of God. It also means that we are eagerly to seek the good of the whole world. In these times, when the pandemic has reminded us that all borders on the planet are relative but when the temptation could easily be to circle the wagons, we who are Christians, let alone we as this Anglican diocese, know that won’t do, precisely because the earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof. In that spirit let’s now go forward into all the sessions and days of this synod with both prudence and ambition, and relish the chance to consider together how best to love and care for Creation, whose Creator has always loved and will always love and care for us, way beyond even fifty years, into life eternal.

+ Michael Cyprus & the Gulf

Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Archdeacon Bill and Edith Schwartz

The Very Rev and Venerable Dr Bill Schwartz has recently retired from Cyprus and the Gulf after more than forty years. Archdeacon Bill has been a lively, well-known and influential figure across the diocese for as long as most people can remember, serving in a number of different roles, sometimes simultaneously. Bill and his wife Edith are much-admired members of the Anglican/Episcopal family throughout the provinces and will be greatly missed.



Archdeacon Bill and Edith arrived in the Middle East in 1976 on a posting to Egypt where Bill managed an American Semester Abroad programme. Due to stay one year, they went on a trip to Cyprus, eventually extending to three years. The rest is history! They became involved in numerous projects including one sending Bibles to China.

Gradually they became more and more involved in the local churches in Cyprus and the Gulf. Bill became a lay reader and he and Edith were attached to a number of different parishes including Limassol, Paphos, Nicosia and Kyrenia. Gradually, Bill became involved in the Provincial Synod in which he was a well-known and influential figure in the next several decades.

In 1989, Bill was ordained deacon at St. Helen's, Larnaca and priest at All Hallows' by the Tower in London. He became an Honorary Canon of St. Christopher's Cathedral, Bahrain in 2006 and was later Chaplain in Qatar, playing an important part in the creation of the Anglican Centre and the Church of the Epiphany. In 2009, he became Archdeacon of the Gulf, a position he held until recently along with that of Dean of Bahrain. Bill was awarded the OBE for his services to the people of the region.

Bill and Edith have served the diocese and province faithfully through thick and thin, bringing love and care to all in their tracks, not least through difficult times. Originally from the United States, they have now retired to San Diego.

On behalf of the provinces, the dioceses, the parishes, the people – and of JMECA – *Bible Lands* wishes

Bill and Edith all the very best for a long and happy retirement.

Bishop Clive Handford writes:

When I moved to the Diocese, Bill's help in arranging the logistics was invaluable. Up to that point there had never been a bishop's house. The diocese had decided that one should be purchased. Bill arranged our temporary accommodation and, with Georgia and Anetta, identified a number of properties to consider. Bill's practical skills were apparent and came to be much appreciated in the next years.

As diocesan Treasurer, Bill kept a close eye on the finances. He was instrumental in introducing computers, thereby increasing efficiency significantly. He was very keen that I should be up to speed on their use. I fear I was not a very apt pupil but I have been grateful ever since.

There were in Cyprus a number of Christian agencies and para-church groups. Bill's background before he became an Anglican/Episcopalian gave him a natural understanding and rapport with them. A number of their leaders became active members of several of our congregations.

When Ben Chase left the Canterbury Group, I suggested that Bill might move there. It was a group which had mostly been ministered to by Americans. While bringing with him all his background and skills, it would be a situation where he could develop 'parish' experience. I hoped that the facilities there would be good for the family. Bill was able discreetly to conduct a regular Anglican Eucharist for a group of people some distance away. That this was appreciated, among other things, was seen in his award of an honorary OBE.

Before retiring, I was able to recommend Bill's appointment to Qatar. Following Ian Young's long and significant ministry there, Bill was able to lead the parish to the next stage, resulting in the building of our first church there.

Constant through all the years was Edith. She and Bill formed an exemplary partnership. In a real way, Edith had a ministry of her own, extended helpfully when she became a Reader.

The Church in the Middle East owes a great deal to Bill and Edith for their long and faithful ministry. With thankful hearts we pray that their lives in retirement will also be richly blessed.

(See also Archbishop Michael Lewis's comments in his Presidential Address on page 10.)



New archdeacon in the Gulf

Archbishop Michael is delighted to announce that

the Rev Dr Michael Mbona, parish priest of St Paul Kuwait, has been licensed as Archdeacon in the Gulf with effect from 1 May 2022. 'I greatly look forward to working collaboratively with Fr Michael on my senior team, and know that he will bring perspective, wisdom and diligence to everything he undertakes,' says the archbishop.

Welcoming the Stranger

A spiritual retreat at the Katafiyio Retreat House in Cyprus

Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.

(Matthew 11:28-30 The Message).



In the spring of 2021, I was weary, tired and burned out. I was worn out personally from the recent death of my mother and wrapping up my parents' estate; emotionally exhausted from the staggering death toll of the Covid-19 global pandemic; and professionally drained from a grueling season at church without a lead pastor. Planning a sabbatical was frustrating as I made plans to visit one country, only to learn that that country had closed its borders due to a covid outbreak. I knew I desperately needed to get away but where could I go?

By 'accident', I found Katafiyio while searching the internet for biblical approaches to welcoming refugees. An article entitled, 'Welcoming the Stranger in Christ Church and St. Paul's', drew me in... and drew me to Katafiyio. I emailed Maggie Le-Roy, Retreats Facilitator for the Anglican diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, to inquire about a guided retreat. While trusting



an internet recommendation can be dicey, Katafiyio Retreat at Angel's Hills was even more beautiful than the pictures. The grounds are expansive, offering many acres of hiking trails; breakfast was cooked to order each morning, and dinner was served on the terrace overlooking a beautiful vista of hills turning golden as the sun set. My room was spacious, with air-conditioning and a mini-refrigerator.

What a gift Katafiyio and Maggie were to me! Balm for my heart, nourishment for my soul, renewal for my vocational ministry, encouragement for the new work stirring within me. I stayed one week at Katafiyio and each morning Maggie gave me a different exercise to focus my soul on a scripture.

Scripture repeatedly reminds us to welcome the stranger, the sojourner in our land. But I think



scripture also includes welcoming the stranger within us, the shadow side we each carry, the interior self we often do not want to acknowledge. A spiritual retreat can provide rest for our soul as well as a safe place to welcome the stranger within. Katafiyio offered respite for both.

As I entrust my soul to God, allowing it to rest in the perfect union of the Trinity, it becomes safe to acknowledge the interior stranger. The love of God

Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East

creates a feeling of safety so that it becomes safe to look within, to ask with compassionate curiosity, 'I wonder why this has such a hold on me...' or 'I wonder why this stirs such anger and fear within me...'

When we know we are really, truly loved, we can begin to deconstruct our faith, to enter into a season of liminality, to allow the Holy Spirit to bring us from disorientation to reorientation. The love of God wrapped around me like a silken shroud, giving way to swaddling clothes, bringing new life in Christ in the beautiful setting of Katafiyio. God's love gives us a secure foundation to take a long loving look at our sin and disordered affections.

A spiritual guide is so helpful when we journey to our interior heartland. Maggie in her role of spiritual director provided a torch to illuminate shadows in the corner of my soul, offered sage wisdom in asking questions leading to deep conversations with the Spirit, and creative and playful exercises to connect with the creator God.

This spiritual work at Katafiyio was powerful and palpable. I 'saw' the Holy Spirit as I sat by the pool one afternoon, working with the bubbles Maggie had provided, watching beautiful, translucent, fleeting bubbles float by me. Wanting to capture the magic of this moment, I tried to take a picture of the bubble but kept missing the moment. I realized that if I wanted to see the work of the Holy Spirit, I needed to look ahead



– to look to where the Spirit was leading, where the wind was blowing, rather than at my hand holding the bubble wand. I was gently reminded that we walk by faith, not by sight, and encouraged to trust in the work of the Spirit.

The bubbles invited me into the playful work of God.

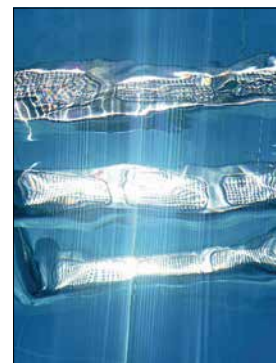
Perhaps this phrase seems like an oxymoron; God is serious, somber, and strict. This is the God I was raised with. But the God I love is also the God of creativity and play. Maggie's theological knowledge is as deep as her spirit-filled wisdom, and she pointed me towards Jürgen Moltmann, the German Reformed theologian, author of *The Theology of Joy*. Moltmann suggests the Christian life is not to be envisioned as a 'purpose driven life' but rather as a game of delight in the God who creates and redeems the world for nothing. My soul needed this time of playfulness, of entering God's presence like a child, laying my head in the lap of my Abba, to find a place where I am sheltered, safe, secure; a place where my true self can be encouraged and nurtured.

And so began the journey to find my true home. One day, Maggie gave me clay to play with. My first creation was a tall sheltering tree, but the lack of mobility made me feel trapped. My deepest desires begin to find voice, as I realized that perhaps my true desire is to be a grounded pilgrim, rooted but not fixed in one place. Next, I made a shell to symbolize this desire, but this wasn't quite right either, so I tried a bird, representing my desire to be free and fly. How did it turn out? The bird lost its head and one wing fell off; the shell was blobby; and my tree looked like a squat mushroom. Although these clay creations could be judged a failure artistically, they helped me engage with my deepest, God-given desires.

During another exercise, I sat on a gently-rocking gilder, meditating on John 15, pondering the vine growing above me. As I wrestled with the question, 'Where is home for me?', I came to realize home is the place where I can set down burdens and simply belong, accepting these unforced rhythms of grace.



Again and again, the Spirit met me in this beautiful setting of the Katafiyio Retreat at Angel's Hills, 'stirring the waters' of the pool, bringing healing to my soul, just as the angel brought healing to those in the Pool of Bethesda. As I prepared to leave Katafiyio, I asked the Spirit, 'What do you want me to take with me as I leave?' I clearly heard the Spirit's answer: 'Remember always, I love you'.



This bone-deep awareness of God's love has sustained me as I returned to my pastoral ministry in California. It has given me strength to endure another year of pandemic, to be present with people in their pain, to continue to hope, even when hope seems to make no sense. It has refreshed my soul and let me rest in the everlasting love of God. It is freeing me from my harsh inner critic to hear with more clarity God's affirmation that I am his beloved. I am so grateful for the ministry of Katafiyio and the spiritual wisdom of Maggie Le-Roy.

Sally Bryant

Diocese of Iran

Within the diocese the churches remain closed. The reasons for this are unclear. The diocese and the few Anglican Christians remain among the most isolated in the Communion – not having received a pastoral visit since the departure of the Vicar General in 2019. Archbishop Michael Lewis is seeking to obtain a visa to make his first visit to the country. We need to continue to hold the three deacons – Mr Shahram Dezhbod (Tehran), Mr Babamohammadi (Isfahan) and Mr Ashrafi (Shiraz) in our prayers along with Mr Payam Mousavi, who handles some administration in the diocese and the few employees in Tehran and Isfahan in our prayers. Repair work on buildings is frequently needed. Permission was received to hold two funerals in Isfahan followed by burial in the Armenian Christian Cemetery - for Shirin Noorvaksh, the mother of Payam Mousavi, and for Mahtab Soodmand.

Mahtab Soodmand the widow of Pastor Hossein Soodmand died in her home in Turkey in January. Mahtab, who was blind, was brought up in the diocese's Noor Ayin Hostel in Isfahan - her husband, Hossein was at one time evangelist in the Isfahan Christian Hospital. They were married by the Revd Arastoo Sayyah, martyred in February 1979. Hossein went on to pastor a church in Mashad which is where he was arrested and executed on 3 September 1990 for refusing to deny his faith and return to Islam. Mahtab and her family remained in Iran until recently when she came to Turkey with a son and daughter, who were able to travel with her body to Isfahan.

Bishop's House – a museum. The official residence and family home of Bishop Dehqani-Tafti, former Anglican bishop in Iran, expropriated in 1980 was inaugurated on February 3 by the *Mostazafan Foundation*, set up to support the poor, as the 'Isfahan National Museum of Arts' open to the public. This is part of a programme to restore confiscated buildings. Bishop Guli Francis-Dehqani, daughter of Bishop Hassan, commented: 'If it is to be a museum, I hope it will in some way reflect its history, which was that it used to belong to the Persian Christian Church.'

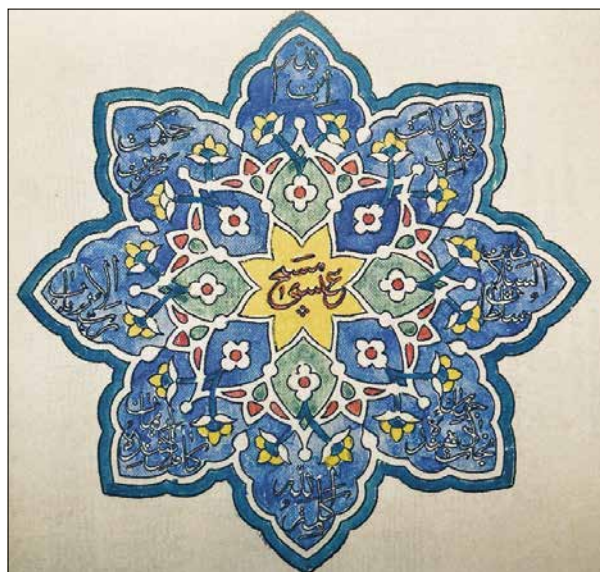
Mr John McDouall, former chair of the Finance Committee of the diocese and a generous donor to the diocese died at the age of 97 in London on May 24th. In Iran he donated land for a farm for the education of blind boys and for the Anglican Cemetery. Coming to London after the Islamic Revolution he supported Bishop Hassan in starting the monthly London Persian service. After Bishop Hassan stood down, it has continued to this day

largely because of John's organisation and leadership for many years which included sending out monthly reminder letters in beautiful Persian script. The service is now led by the Revd Aptin Samadi, Chaplain to the Persian Community in London. He was a man of deep spirituality, immense generosity, thoughtfulness and kindness, given to hospitality and to prayer.

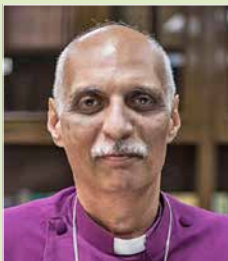
Two Anglican families are seeking refugee status in Turkey. **Mr Hekmat Salimi**, 72, was banned from having contact with any Christians in 2012. He was a lay reader who had led the reopening and refurbishment of the Anglican Church in the Isfahan suburb of Julfa in 2009, after it had been closed for 30 years. This led to renewed pressure against him, as well as his work with the house-churches that had opened after the Iranian authorities began banning churches from holding services in the national language of Persian. Eventually the restrictions became too much, and he travelled to Turkey in 2016, to be joined by his wife and daughter, where he has been seeking asylum which has thus far been refused and he is now threatened with deportation back to Iran.

Mr Ismail Maghrebinejad, an active Christian from the Anglican Church in Shiraz, is also in Turkey where he took refuge following arrest, trial and imprisonment in Iran for alleged membership of an organisation hostile to the regime. He too is seeking asylum which has yet to be granted.

As prayers are offered for the diocese and all other Christians in Iran, so those who have had to leave the country and are in need, also should be included in our prayers and concern.



Province of Alexandria

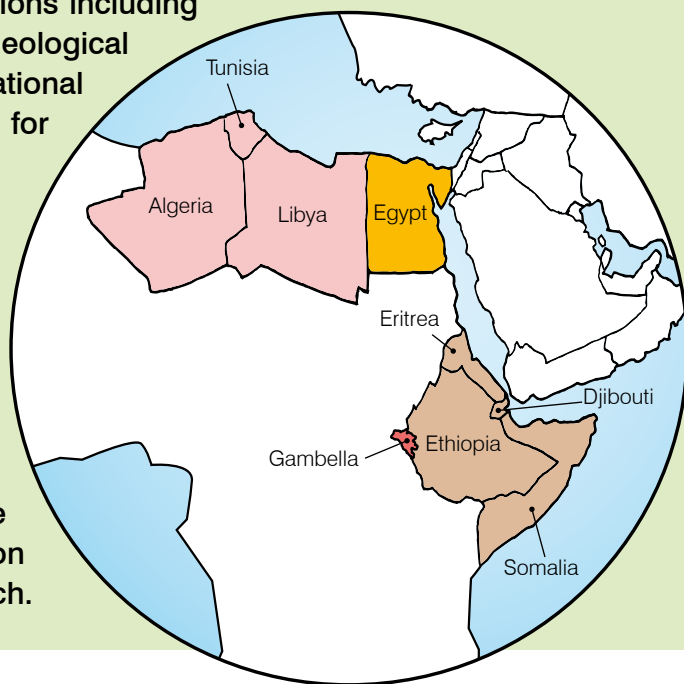


From its beginning in 1839, the Diocese of Egypt was committed to serve others as Jesus did. The new Episcopal Anglican province of which the diocese of Egypt is now a part, continues this commitment to serving all people holistically regardless of their religion or social status. Numerically, we continue to grow and in this strategic part of the world we have a great opportunity and responsibility to be ambassadors of our Lord Jesus, demonstrating in 'Word and Deed' what our faith means to

us. The province supports numerous institutions including hospitals, clinics, nurseries, schools, a theological seminary, micro-enterprise ventures, vocational training programmes, as well as institutions for the deaf and the disabled.

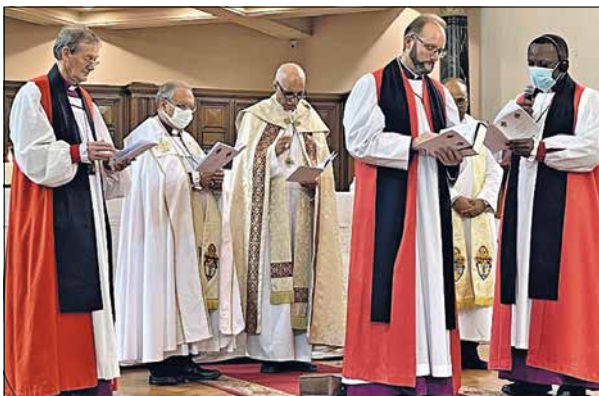
The five goals of the province are: to reach the unreached with the Gospel of Christ; to grow Christ's church by making disciples and equipping leaders; to serve our neighbours; to work for unity among all Christians; and to dialogue with other faith communities.

Support from the Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association (JMECA) to the province will be directed to helping with mission work, ordination training and medical outreach.



Consecration in Egypt... Rev Canon Anthony Ball becomes assistant bishop

On Tuesday 30th November, 2021 the Archbishop in the Province of Alexandria, the Most Rev Dr Samy Fawzy Shehata, presented Rev Canon Anthony Ball, who had been chosen to be Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Egypt. To the congregation gathered under the giant picture of the Last Supper above the altar of All Saints' Cathedral in Cairo, it seemed that Christ Himself, with his arms stretched out wide, was presenting the bishop-elect. All the bishops and



members of the Province of Alexandria, assembled in a semi-circle behind the altar, approved the appointment and required the bishop-elect to make the Declaration of Assent, which he duly did.

One scene from the Liturgy of the Word that followed the Presentation stands out in my memory: after the gospel reading, the bishop-elect came down from the High Altar and sat in the front row, facing Archbishop Samy – this move, this change of perspective turned the archbishop's sermon from an address to the assembled congregation into a conversation with his new assistant bishop, sharing his vision of the new Episcopal/Anglican Province of Alexandria and appealing for help in his service across ten countries: Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Chad, Mauritania, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somalia. The message was received, not just by the newly elected Bishop Anthony but also by the person sitting behind him: H.E. Gareth Bayley. It need not even have been translated since both the former diplomat now bishop and the current representative of Her Majesty, Defender of the Faith, speak Arabic. However, Rev Mark Senada's simultaneous translation enabled me to share this almost intimate moment.

Province of Alexandria

What follows are Father Mark's recollections of this moving point in the service of consecration. Archbishop Samy Fawzy preached a sermon from the New Testament during the liturgy. He recounted the scene of Christ with the disciples on a fishing boat, saying: 'Christ sat on the ship, and it was a sign to open his mouth and teach his disciples about salvation. Then he said to Simon Peter, "Go into the depths"'. It was a new invitation that required more extraordinary dedication and commitment.

The best way to fish is to fish at night, but Jesus advised them to go into the depths and fish the daylight, and it was a new experience for them, adding, 'We often hear the word of God and bargain, and instead of obeying the Lord we say: "We toiled all night and did not reap something"'.

The Lord speaks to us as a church and as a congregation. He gently pushes us with His words and actions to rise one step further; as a result, the disciples got so many fish that their nets were broken. Peter respected his master, loved Christ, and did not let the experiences and fears of his friends or his fatigue prevent him from responding to Christ.

It is a new invitation to a new way of life. Archbishop Samy Shehata addressed his words to Bishop Anthony: 'be ready for a greater commitment, a greater and deeper relationship with God, and a new life that the Lord has called you to build in the province of Alexandria'.

For the liturgy of ordination, the bishop-elect returned to the altar and stood before the archbishop, who first addressed the congregation and then the bishop-elect directly with the words: 'Anthony, we trust that you have weighed and pondered all this, and that you are now fully determined to devote yourself to this ministry to which

God has called you'. The bishop-elect, with full voice, declared he was ready to undertake the charge he had been given and to make the declarations required with the words: 'By the help of God, I will!'

On hearing his declarations, the congregation stood and the bishop-elect turned and faced us. Archbishop Samy then asked us, whether it was our will that Anthony should be consecrated bishop. The whole-hearted 'It is!' was followed by our confirmation that we will continue to pray for him and uphold and encourage him in his ministry.

The bishop-elect turned and knelt in front of the archbishop, who extended his hand towards Anthony and prayed: 'We praise and glorify you, almighty Father... And now we give you thanks that you have called this your servant, Anthony, who we ordained in your name, to share as a bishop in the ministry of the gospel of Christ, the apostle and high priest of our faith and shepherd of our souls. Therefore, Father, through Christ our Lord we pray...'. At this point Archbishop Samy, Archbishop *emeritus* Mouneer, Bishop Tim and Bishop Alistair laid their hands on the head of the bishop-elect, and Archbishop Samy said, 'Send down your Holy Spirit on your servant, Anthony, for the office and work of a bishop in your Church'.



Anthony Ball prayed while still kneeling, 'I am no longer my own but yours'. He stood and Archbishop Mouneer gave him the Bible. Bishop Alistair anointed him. Having been vested and presented with a cross and ring by Bishop Tim, the newly consecrated Bishop Anthony Ball turned to face the congregation and we greeted him with the words: 'We welcome you as a shepherd of Christ's flock. Build up the Church in unity and love, that the world may believe'.

Barbara Schwepcke

Confirmation and Licensing

Bishop Anthony Ball, Assistant Bishop for the Province of Alexandria, recently presided over the installation service of Rev. Martin Reakes-Williams in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (Diocese of the Horn of Africa).

Bishop Anthony also presided over confirmation services for new members of the church in



the Diocese of Gambella – for five people from St. Luke's Church, thirty-seven people from the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd, and twenty-two people from St. Barnabas' Church – as well as services admitting new licensed lay ministers. The Diocese of Gambella, in the lowland region of Ethiopia, has more than 140 churches serving six different tribes and many refugees from South Sudan.

Province of Alexandria

Meeting with Maronite archbishop



Archbishop Samy Fawzy recently received the Maronite Archbishop of the Diocese of Cairo, for Egypt and Sudan, Archbishop Shehan, at All Saints' Cathedral in Zamalek. They exchanged talks about the services of the two churches and the situation of the Maronite Church in Lebanon. They also attended the reception of Cardinal Patriarch Marbeshara Boutros Al-Rahi at the Maronite Church in Al-Daher region. At the end of the meeting, the two bishops reiterated their emphasis on the friendly relations uniting the two churches.

Rev Jeremiah Paul appointed archdeacon in Gambella



Since the formation of the Province of Alexandria in 2020, Archbishop Samy Fawzy has been developing the structure that will support its four dioceses. Sunday 14th November marked another step towards this goal when he assigned the Ven. Jeremiah Paul to serve as the senior priest and archdeacon in the Diocese of Gambella. In his homily, the archbishop said that Rev Paul is the first archdeacon in Gambella, a newly created diocese in the Province of Alexandria. The diocese covers a large area and includes over 140 churches that are served by 29 priests who will be supervised by the new archdeacon.

Rev Jeremiah Paul was born into a Christian family in Gambella in 1977. He started his church service early, being licensed as a lay minister in the Church of St. Luke in Gambella in 2003. St Luke's was the first Anglican church established in Gambella in 1996. A year after his licensing he was made a deacon

and served as such for four years before ordination as a priest. In 2005, Jeremiah began teaching the Bible to clergy and others, continuing until 2011. He then went to Cairo to begin study at the Alexandria School of Theology, where he obtained a Bachelor of Theological Sciences. During the years he spent in Egypt, he served as a priest for the Sudanese service at the All Saints' Cathedral, Cairo and worked for the refugee service in the church. After graduating in 2015, Pastor Jeremiah returned to Ethiopia where he began lecturing at St. Frumentius, the newly established Anglican Theological College.

Sunday school training



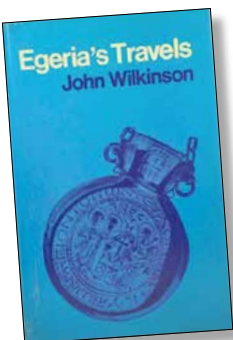
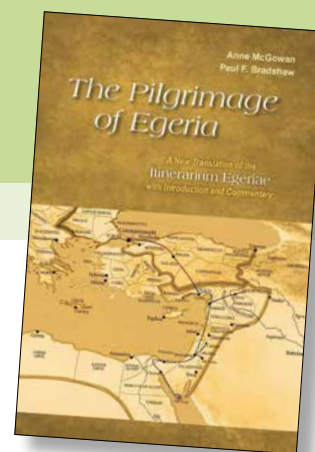
The Episcopal/Anglican Church in Egypt recently organized a conference to train Sunday school leaders from Episcopal churches in all governorates in the country. The conference focused on presenting a curriculum for Sunday school leaders, providing books for children and all-age teachers, and training on how to use them. About 70 trainees attended over two days at All Saints' Cathedral in Zamalek, in the presence of Archbishop Samy Fawzy and Reverend Yashua Bekhit, chair of the Sunday Schools Committee. Archbishop Samy presented the vision, 'A Living Church for a Better Society'. He stressed the importance of the Sunday School leader's role in achieving the vision and instilling it in the children of today so that it would animate the Church of tomorrow.



The Pilgrimage of Egeria. A New Translation of the *Itinerarium Egeriae* with Introduction and Commentary.

Anne McGowan and Paul F. Bradshaw

Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2018



This new edition of 'Egeria's Travels' by McGowan and Bradshaw has already caused great excitement in the scholarly world. But anyone interested in Jerusalem, pilgrimage, liturgy, travel in the ancient world or women in antiquity, will be interested. The book is important to several disciplines and will surely continue to attract wide readership.

It was, of course, John Wilkinson, the first Dean of Studies at St. George's College, Jerusalem who provided a well-known English translation of 'Egeria' in 1971 (SPCK, which ran into later editions with Aris & Phillips) thereby establishing a special relation between this mysterious lady and St.

George's College. Now, we have a new edition bringing scholarly questions and available literature up to date. As well as providing a new translation of the text, there is an extensive critical introduction discussing all the fascinating questions about 'Egeria's' background and identity. Maps, diagrams and a detailed bibliography provide resources for further study.

The text concerned is basically a pilgrim journal written in Latin by a lady traveller probably in the fourth century. The only manuscript we have, dates from the 11th century. It seems to have been in Monte Cassino before moving to Arezzo in the 16th century. It was rediscovered there by the Italian scholar, G. F. Gamurrini in 1884. There is no beginning and no conclusion – the manuscript having been damaged at both ends. This adds to the sense of confusion about what is going on in the text. It opens in Sinai and moves north to Jerusalem and then on to what are modern Israel/Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Turkey – up to what was then Constantinople.

Concerning 'Egeria' herself there are important questions that still remain unanswered. The scholarly consensus is that she was a religious lady who travelled in the Holy Land in the fourth century and left behind a journal or travelogue. Beyond this, it is difficult to be sure about much detail. Even her name is a mystery, although there have been several attempts to establish who she was. Some have thought she might be Silvia of Aquitaine, or Galla Placidia. But the French scholar Marius Férotin made the connection with

Egeria (someone mentioned in a letter written by a Spanish monk in the 7th century) in 1903 and she is now generally accepted as the author.

Another difficulty is establishing the actual date of this lady's journey – and there have been many suggestions. The most likely time is towards the end of the fourth century or beginning of the fifth century. In 1967, another French scholar, Paul Devos, suggested 381-384 and this is now mostly thought to be correct, though other dates continue to be put forward.

And where did this mysterious pilgrim actually come from? Most scholars think western Europe somewhere, possibly Spain. She seems to travel freely and extensively but there is no indication of her wealth or profession. Her class and level of education are also difficult to establish. She writes home to her 'beloved sisters' but we cannot be certain whether she belonged to a religious community or not. This question has caused a great deal of speculation among scholars but still defies an answer. She doesn't seem to have any of her community with her (if she belonged to one). And she never mentions any of the difficulties or challenges of travel which she must have encountered. There were many pilgrims to Jerusalem in the fourth century and this one seems to fit into the general pattern.

One interesting element in the work is the way in which 'Egeria' travels from place to place, learning something about the location, praying and then reading scripture. This practice was kept wherever she went and it has become a hallmark of pilgrimage in the Holy Land, not least at St. George's College. Also, of particular importance for those interested in the history of Jerusalem are the descriptions of the services 'Egeria' attended in the recently-built Church of the Holy Sepulchre. We learn something of the layout of the buildings and of the liturgical practices of the day. The details in her accounts helped John Wilkinson construct his characteristic and meticulous drawings of this and other fourth-century churches in Jerusalem.

Overall, McGowan and Bradshaw build upon and update Wilkinson's work, providing a more literal translation but only disagreeing with him in minor

matters. They tackle all the questions in a lively, engaging and scholarly way and are totally realistic about all the questions that remain. This updated version of a most fascinating work will surely be the one to which future generations of English speakers

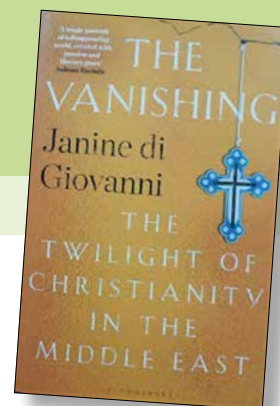
will turn again and again. It will help students pass exams and scholars update their work. And it will be a good read for pilgrims, travellers and church history buffs far and wide.

Stephen Need

The Vanishing: the Twilight of Christianity in the Middle East

Janine di Giovanni

Bloomsbury, 2021



Janine di Giovanni, an investigative reporter and former winner of the Courage in Journalism prize, tells the important story of the situation for Christians in the Middle East in four chapters, focusing on Iraq, Gaza, Syria and Egypt. All four have completely different demographics and histories but share the situation of being minorities in majority Muslim environments. Despite the fact that it is difficult to create a coherent narrative out of four such diverse scenarios, di Giovanni achieves this by her elegant journalistic and compelling style, backed up by accurate historical research. She also has the advantage of being a practicing Catholic who describes Christians with empathy, not looking at the communities as 'them'.

Her chapter on Iraq traces her experiences there from 2002 to more recent times but has an overconcentration on the bleak and helpless, especially after the invasion of Da'esh in 2014. My own visits to Erbil in the KRG (most recently in January of this year) tell another equally important story. In Erbil, the Christian community (led by the Chaldean Catholics) is building universities, hospitals, schools churches and community centres with astonishing vigour and hope, supported by large international donors. It would have been good to have heard more of this.

Gaza 2019 is a much more challenging story of a very small community under siege internationally. It is difficult to separate the demography of Christians in Gaza from the overwhelming odds against the thriving of any community in Gaza. This is the bleakest of the four chapters. The author writes, 'in Gaza, when you say goodbye to someone, you cannot know if you will ever see them again' (p.114).

Syria 2011-2019 is largely the story of the war in that country and how Christians have tried to survive it. Di Giovanni writes with insight of the *Tanzimat* period in the Ottoman Empire in the mid-1800s. These 'reforms' were largely forced on the Ottoman Empire by European colonial powers and created a divide between Christians and Muslims which had not been the case before. European power had therefore directly contributed to the decline of the Christian population in Syria. Lazy western journalism has contributed to this and the author comments that, 'the

widely held Western narrative of modern-day Syria is built off of reductive, insulting tropes' (p.161).

Egypt 2019-2020 changes gear – 'I don't think this is the end of the story' is the oft quoted remark. The picture is not uniformly bleak in Egypt or throughout the region, and there are many who believe that di Giovanni's title *The Vanishing* is to write the epilogue for Middle Eastern Christianity too early. She identifies faith and hope as great sustainers for those who are persecuted for their faith, and the significance of Easter for Christians. A wider picture would also have been produced had she included Lebanon and Jordan, though emigration of Christians from the region is also a uniting story. More importantly, di Giovanni alludes several times throughout the narrative to the key, unanswered question – is the diaspora life in the secular west a greater threat to the Christians of the Middle East than the situation in the countries from which they come? Only time will tell.

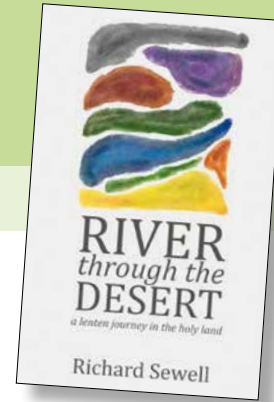
William Taylor

Janine di Giovanni is an American journalist and writer who lectures at the Jackson Institute for Global Affairs at Yale University. She has been the Foreign Correspondent for *The Times* (London) and is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and the Blake Dodd Prize among many other awards. She has received the National Magazine Award, the Courage in Journalism Prize, and awards from Amnesty International. She is the author of several other books including *The Quick and the Dead. Under Siege in Sarajevo* (1994), *Madness Visible. A Memoir of War* (2015, on Yugoslavia and the Balkans), and *The Morning They Came for Us. Dispatches From Syria* (2016). She has been a consultant for the UN Refugee Agency, the UN Democracy Fund and the Shattuck Centre on Conflict, Negotiation and Recovery, as well as for the International Refugee Commission.

River through the Desert – a lenten journey in the holy land

Richard Sewell

Jerusalem: St. George's College, 2022



This exciting new resource from the Dean of St George's College, Jerusalem reassures us that Lent can be a time, not only for disciplines but also for life-enhancing rediscovery of discipleship and prayer – as the desert for Jesus was not all about grappling with temptation but a formative time in which he listened to his Father and clarified the message coming from his lips as he emerged from his 'quarantine': 'the Kingdom of God is at hand!' The essential purpose of this book is to lead us onto Lenten pathways of hope, refreshment and renewal, as found in the Land of the Holy One: to discover and enjoy a 'river through the desert'.

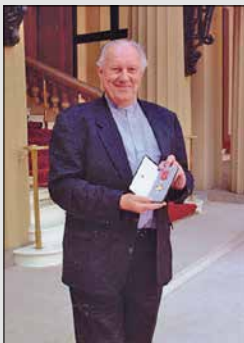
Writing in a personable, direct and highly readable style, Dean Richard invites us to revisit the biblical desert, well, mountain, sea, road and garden of Lent. The pandemic forced the closure of St George's College for two full years, but necessity is the mother of invention, and not being able to welcome students and pilgrims physically to the Holy Land, Dean Richard invites us to visit virtually, as beautiful short videos accompany each of the six chapters and immerse the viewer into each landscape. This is the special

bonus of this user-friendly resource, creatively employing the medium of video to deepen the unfolding journey of the book, which is also well-illustrated with colour photos. Each chapter is in four parts: an insightful reflection, video-link, Scripture (printed out), concluding with penetrating and challenging questions to consider, which powerfully encourage the pilgrim-readers to take another look at their lives of faith. These questions manage to avoid the ever-present danger among pilgrims to concentrate solely on their own personal lives of devotion: there are questions that alert us to society and the wider world – maybe a few more on issues of social justice might have been helpful.

This is a resource – both for individuals and groups – that heartens and challenges. It will surely whet the appetite for a real-time visit to the Holy Land – via St George's College, of course!

Andrew D. Mayes

~ OBITUARY ~



Reverend Canon Dennis Gurney OBE (1931–2021)

John Pringle writes a personal reflection

'Hello, my friend'. Arriving for morning service at Holy Trinity Dubai you could not miss the burly figure of Dennis welcoming you as if you were the only person coming. If you tried, in good Anglican style, to creep into the back row you were liable to be physically marched up to the front with beaming bonhomie and plonked in full view of everyone! There was no arguing with this ex-farmer from Somerset.

But of course, you were not the only one arriving. Hundreds of worshippers from many traditions flocked to the Holy Trinity compound at all times of day and night to worship in the buildings that Dennis had built to house them. His welcome was to all, most of them far from their home countries, who wished to praise God with fellow Anglicans in the oasis of Christian fellowship that Dennis

had constructed almost single-handed by his enthusiasm and determination.

But his influence stretched way beyond the compound. He was a regular visitor to Dubai prison where he would take bibles to inmates, often persuading reluctant officials to let him in by taking a seat until they relented in order to get rid of him. He encouraged church formation further afield in the smaller Emirates and in Jebel Ali, a fast-growing suburb of Dubai. He set up and stocked a Christian bookshop in the compound, an essential stop after morning coffee which was also used by many non-worshippers throughout the week.

I went with him on pilgrimage to the Holy Land where Dennis insisted on early starts to see as much as we could in our ten days. With a clap of hands, he would call 'Chop, Chop' as we struggled back to our coach to get to the next destination.

My lasting memory is of a man who never stopped working but was always cheerful and full of enthusiasm for everything he undertook. He took God's work seriously but did it joyfully.

John Pringle

Praying round the Provinces



**The Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East,
and the Province of Alexandria, home to the three Abrahamic faiths
and the centre of the world's political conflicts,
ask your prayers for...**

● PROVINCE OF JERUSALEM AND THE MIDDLE EAST

1st The Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East. The President Bishop of the Province, the Most Rev Michael Lewis.

● THE DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM

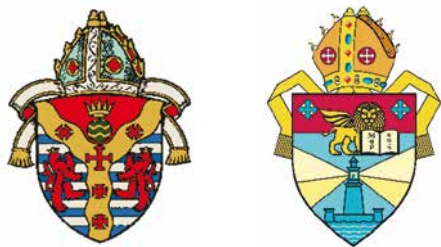
- 2nd The Archbishop and Dean of St George's Cathedral, the Most Rev Dr Hosam Naoum and his wife Raffa and family. For wisdom as he leads the church in Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. The administrative staff.
- 3rd The clergy serving the parishes and institutions in Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon and the congregations who keep the faith and sustain the churches in troubled times.
- 4th The hospitals and centres that tend the sick: the Diabetic Clinic Ramallah, St Luke's Hospital Nablus, the Alhi Arab hospital Gaza, and the Penman Clinic, Zebabdeh.
- 5th The schools that prepare the next generation: St George's Jerusalem, the International School Jerusalem, the Arab Episcopal School Ramallah, the Vocational Training Centre Ramallah, Christ's School Nazareth, St John's School Haifa, the Ahliyyah School for Girls, the Bishop's Kindergarten and the Bishop's School for Boys Amman, the Schneller Vocational Training Institute Amman, St Saviour's School Zerqa, St John Baptist School for Integration of the Blind Irbid, and St George's School Lod.
- 6th The centres of healing: the Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre, the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf Salt, the Jofeh Community Rehabilitation Centre Jordan Valley, the Father Andeweg Institute for the Deaf Beirut, St Luke's Centre for the Mentally Disabled Beirut, the Home for the Elderly Amman, the Episcopal Home for Children Ramallah.
- 7th The guest houses that provide hospitality and refreshment for pilgrims and all visitors: St George's Jerusalem, St Margaret's Nazareth, St Andrew's Ramallah, the Schneller Institute Amman and Christ Church Jerusalem.
- 8th Those who work for peace: the Peace and Reconciliation Movement, Kids4Peace, Sabeel and people from all sides who seek peace and pursue it.
- 9th St George's College Jerusalem and its courses: the Dean, the Very Rev Richard Sewell and his wife Julieann, the Course Director, the Rev Dr Rodney Aist, the Chaplain, and their families.

*Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed,
kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all your people the true love of peace.*

● THE DIOCESE OF IRAN

- 10th All in leadership roles in the Church in Iran.
- 11th The political leadership of the nation. The wellbeing of all people in Iran.
- 12th The congregations of the Episcopal Church in Isfahan (its suburb Julfa), Tehran & Shiraz. The cities where congregations have worshipped in past years – Kerman, Yazd, Ahwaz.
- 13th All involved in ministry among Iranians through media, literature, witness and leadership training.
- 14th The Diaspora of Iranian Christians scattered in many nations.

*Guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom those who take counsel
for the nations of the earth, that in tranquillity your kingdom may go forward,
till the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love.*



Praying round the Provinces

**Blessed Lord, who faced the time of trial
have mercy on our failings and out of our weakness
bring your strength.**

THE DIOCESE OF CYPRUS AND THE GULF

- 15th The Bishop, Most Rev Michael Lewis and his wife Julia. The diocesan administrative staff.
- 16th The Dean of St Paul's Cathedral Nicosia, the Very Rev Jeremy Crocker and his wife Beth. The Dean of St, Christopher's Cathedral Bahrain.
- 17th The Archdeacon in the Gulf, the Ven Dr Michael Mbona, the Archdeacon in Cyprus, the Ven Christopher Futchter and his wife Anne.
- 18th The clergy and people of Cyprus in Nicosia, Kyrenia, Larnaca, Limassol, Paphos and Ammochostos. The work of the Katafiyio Retreat House.
- 19th The clergy and people of the Gulf in Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, Dubai, Sharjah and the Northern Emirates, Oman, Doha, Aden and the clinic at Ras Morbat, and the scattered congregations of the Arabian Peninsula who keep the faith privately.
- 20th The Church in Qatar and the Epiphany Centre, Dohar. The congregation of Baghdad led by Canon Faiz Jerjes. The people of Iraq, of all faiths, and all the Iraqi Christians who are sheltering in other lands.
- 21st The political leaders in Cyprus, Iraq and the Gulf States, that all may seek and create just and stable governments.
- 22nd The Friends of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf.

*Almighty and everlasting God, creator and giver of all good gifts, mercifully hear our prayers
and grant to this diocese all things needful for its welfare.*

PROVINCE OF ALEXANDRIA

- 23rd The Province of Alexandria. The Archbishop of the Province, the Most Rev Dr Samy Fawzy, the Assistant Bishop the Rt Rev Anthony Ball.
- 24th The Diocese of Egypt. The bishop, the Most Rev Dr Samy Fawzy and his wife Madelaine and their family. All who work in and for the Diocese of Egypt.
- 25th The Diocese of North Africa. The vacancy for the bishop and all who work in and for the Diocese of North Africa.
- 26th The Diocese of the Horn of Africa. The Commissary Bishop the Rt Rev Kuan Kim Seng and his wife and family and all who work in and for the Diocese of the Horn of Africa.
- 27th The Diocese of Gambella in Ethiopia. Archdeacon Jeremiah and his wife and family and the Commissary Bishop Rt Rev Kuan Kim Seng. All who work in and for the Diocese of Gambella.
- 28th The Alexandrian School of Theology and its campuses throughout the Province. The Chair of the AST Board of Governors, the Rev Dr Ashley Null. All staff and students and their families.
- 29th The Friends of the Anglican Province of Alexandria, the Friends of the Anglican Church in Ethiopia and all friends of the dioceses.

*Strengthen the faithful, protect the children, comfort the sick, uplift the fallen
and bring us all to be of one heart and one mind within the fellowship of your holy church.*

- 30th The Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association. Its Chair, the Rt Rev Anthony Ball. The staff in the office in Farnham: Mrs Shirley Eason. All whose gifts, past and present, sustain it.



JERUSALEM & THE MIDDLE EAST

Archbishop Michael Lewis

ALEXANDRIA

Archbishop Samy Fawzy

Jerusalem

Archbishop Hosam Naoum

1. Palestine & Israel
2. Lebanon
3. Syria
4. Jordan

Cyprus and the Gulf

Archbishop Michael Lewis

5. Cyprus
6. Iraq
7. Kuwait
8. Bahrain
9. Qatar
10. United Arab Emirates
11. Oman
12. Yemen

Iran

Vacant

13. Iran

North Africa

Vacant

14. Algeria
 15. Tunisia
 16. Libya
- (also covering Mauritania and Chad)

Egypt

Archbishop Samy Fawzy

17. Egypt

Horn of Africa

Bishop Kwan Kim Seng

18. Eritrea
19. Ethiopia (Highlands)
20. Djibouti
21. Somalia

Gambella

Bishop Kwan Kim Seng

22. Ethiopia (lowlands)

JMECA

THE TWO PROVINCES

(Red line indicates border)