



THE ASSEMBLY OF CATHOLIC ORDINARIES OF THE HOLY LAND
Latins, Melkites, Maronites, Syrians, Armenians, Chaldeans, Custody of the Holy Land

Prot. 32 (3)/2024

Final statement

Assembly Plenary Meeting in Jerusalem at the Latin Patriarchate

28-29 October 2024

The Assembly of Ordinaries of the Holy Land met in plenary session on October 28 and 29, 2024 in the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The Assembly was chaired by the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, H.B. Pierbattista Card. Pizzaballa. The bishops of the various rites (Latin, Melkite, Maronite, Syrian and Armenian Catholics), the Custos of the Holy Land and representatives of religious orders took part in the meeting. The Apostolic Delegate Msgr. Adolfo Tito Yllana, the Apostolic Nuncio in Jordan and Cyprus, Msgr. Giovanni Pietro dal Toso and the Chargé d'Affairs Msgr. Giorgio Ghezza were present as guests.

After the opening prayer, presided over by Msgr. Willam Shomali, the Ordinaries reported on the latest news and concerns about the difficult situation we are experiencing at this time in the various parts of the respective jurisdictions. Everything is being done to help those who are suffering the most from the consequences of the war. The personal and social wounds are deep, and it will take a long time for them to heal. We must preserve our Christian identity without allowing ourselves to be carried away by hatred and violence. The pastors are aware of their duty to help the faithful to remain firmly anchored in faith and Christian hope in an often-catastrophic situation.

In the first session, the updated regulations of Caritas Jordan were presented in accordance with the requirements of the Church's regulations and the country's own laws. The situation of Caritas Cyprus was also presented, whose regulations need to be updated in accordance with the ecclesiastical regulations.

In the first part of the meeting on Monday, November 28, the Ordinaries were informed about the work of some commissions and committees that depend on the Plenary Assembly. Fr. Frans Bowen resigned as head of the Commission for Ecumenical Dialog. The many years of work he has done with dedication and self-denial are acknowledged. Msgr. Willam Shomali referred to the various initiatives carried out in dialog with Islam and with Father Piotr Zelazsko in dialog with Judaism. Msgr. Yacoub Ephrem Semaan presented the work that the Justice and Peace Commission has done recently.

After some discussion about the commissions, it was decided to reconsider the role and composition of the commissions, the number of mandates, the chairpersons, etc. To this end, it was decided that all commissions and their respective chairpersons end soon their mandate. In a few weeks, the Assembly will appoint new chairs who will submit the names of the members of the commissions to the next Assembly for approval. The Assembly will publish a letter expressing its appreciation to all members of the commissions for their not always easy but fruitful work.

The Chairs of the Commissions will present to the Assembly an updated roadmap for the objectives of each Commission. The term of office should be four (4) years and may be renewed once. This criterion also applies to all other offices for which the Assembly is responsible.



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In the second part, Msgr. Rafik Nahra presented various initiatives to be carried out in the next Jubilee Year 2025. Each jurisdiction will carry out its own activities, but there will also be some joint activities, such as the start of the Jubilee in Nazareth on December 29. Some activities will be organized together with the Orthodox for the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea. It is important that we work together so that we start the jubilee year with a truly religious spirit. A special committee will soon be appointed to coordinate the activities.

A simple concelebration took place at 6:30 p.m. with the members of the Assembly presided over by the Latin Patriarch. Several priests, seminarians of the Latin Patriarchal Seminary, consecrated men and women and lay people prayed for the fruits of the Assembly.

On Friday, the 29th, the day began with a Mass presided over by the Apostolic Delegate, H.E. Monsignor Adolfo Tito Yllana. In the first session of the morning, Ms. Razan Kafiety informed the Ordinaries about the work of the Legal Office and the Office of Safeguarding dependent on the Assembly. The Legal Office was able to hold various meetings, workshops and conferences and help several congregations to be up to date on accounting and labour law issues. In the area of safeguarding, following the publication of the Assembly's Code of Conduct, various institutions were supported with workshops and training for members so that they are aware of the Church's guidelines in this regard and update their own codes of conduct based on the Assembly's guidelines and the reality of each institution.

In the last session, the start of the beatification process of Sister *Marie de la Trinité*, a nun of the Poor Clare Order from Jerusalem, was approved.

Fr. Koubrianos Hanna Kubrianos OCD was appointed Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the Holy Land by the Holy See.

The Ordinaries took note of Fr. Mark Madden's report on the Holy Land Coordination, an annual meeting of bishops from several countries who come to the Holy Land to express their interest and commitment to the life of the churches in the Holy Land. They will visit the Holy Land in January 2025 and hope to meet with church leaders and various institutions.

We thank God for these days of prayer, fraternity and work and ask for his help and the intercession of the Virgin Mary to always enlighten the shepherds of the Church in the Holy Land.



Pierbattista Pizzaballa

Pierbattista Card. Pizzaballa
Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem
President of the ACOHL

M. Gallardo
R.P. Marcelo Gallardo IVE
Secretary General ACOHL