



Society of Jesus seal in tiles at the Jesuit Center in Amman, Jordan

Our Jesuits in the Middle East

New England Jesuits began work in Amman, Jordan in 1987 as part of the church's work through the Pontifical Mission for Palestine. There were a growing number of Roman Catholics (called Latin Rite Christians) in Jordan needing pastoral care, which involved the Jesuits' undertaking of a new parish, Sacred Heart. Sacred Heart meets in four locations each week,

and one Sunday Mass actually takes place on Friday, the day many Christian workers have off due to Muslim prayers. Recently, a group of Latin Rite Christians at Aqaba have formed, and they are now included in the pastoral plan of the Jesuits in Amman, despite a long journey across the desert.

By the 1990's, it was clear that the Jesuits could offer additional ministries by providing a "Center" for adult faith formation and advanced catechesis. Several Jordanian and Palestinian lay persons have been trained at Boston College's Institute for Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry, and these people have formed the core of the catechetical team, with support from various Jesuits. They offer courses and retreats at the Center and elsewhere, and they have been very supportive of the Christian life of



Over 500 Dhafir, Iraqi Chaldeans attended midnight Mass Christmas Eve in the new floor of the Jesuit Center in Amman

young adults in Jordan. Recently, the Jesuit Center expanded its meeting and worship spaces to accommodate a growing number of courses and registrants.

With the war in Iraq, Jordan has become the temporary

home to many Iraqi Christians, who are members of the Chaldean church. This has expanded the pastoral work of the Jesuits in Jordan to provide pastoral and liturgical care for the refugees.

New England Jesuits currently in Amman, Jordan include: Fr. Alfred J. Hicks, SJ, local Superior and Director of the Jesuit Center; Fr. Kevin G. O'Connell, SJ, pastor of Sacred Heart Parish; Fr. Stephen Bonian, SJ, Fr. Clarence J. Burby, SJ, and Fr. Denis R. Como, SJ. ✠



Chapel and altar at the Jesuit Center in Amman

Message from Fr. Como

January 25, 2007

Greetings to all of you

I have been here in the Kurdish section of Iraq for a week and somehow I feel that it is been longer than that but that doesn't mean I am bored.

I volunteered to teach English to the Iraqi Chaldean seminarians here at their new seminary site when their seminary building and life became more than dangerous. Besides the seminary there is also a Catholic College which certainly helps the educational life and requirements for the Iraqi Sisters. So I teach four hours of class every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday! It is tiring but very enjoyable. They are so dedicated and wide-eyed. They could all be my grandchildren! I try not to think about what they will face when they get their degrees and venture back into the villages and cities of Iraq.

Many of you might recall that during my last four years in Amman, Jordan, I began re-learning the Chaldean Mass (Iraqi Catholic Community Liturgy) that I had last used in the 1960s. Now at the seminary I have been con-celebrating with Iraqi priests every morning, reading and chanting the Chalden Breviary with the seminarians ... and I do not hesitate to say that God is working over time with me right now. Last Sunday I concelebrated Chaldean Mass with the Bishop and 700 people from the villages in the hills near us.

Later, I celebrated and preached at the Mass for the English-speaking workers in this city. There is still a small group of people from Manilla. They were very happy to realize that there is a big community in Amman

For the last three days we have been celebrating the Fast of the Ninivehites, which commemorates Jonah being sent by God to this people who were not very good. Jonah told them to fast, or else. He did not like them and was furious when they listened and fasted. The whole city converted after the fasting. The city is located on the edge of the modern city of Mosul in Northern Iraq. The melody of the songs commemorated is traced back to Jonah's time.

Finally, Fr. Kop, a Redemptorist priest, sends his greetings to all the Jesuit Fathers who were in Baghdad many years ago. He is still teaching at a weathered 77 years of age.

Thanks for your prayers for me and the people I am really honored to be with. (Plus the food here is great Iraqi food.) — Fr. Denis Como, SJ

A.M.D.G.

ahicks @sjnet.org
Dear Fr. Hicks,
I was very happy + delighted to have met you with Mrs. Nichal + with Fr. Brother Tony remembers you well as well as Bernard Pappas. I am praying the Lord that you'll be back here again amongst all for the offering of B.C. It's our dream + hope from the bottom of our hearts to see you + our Jesuits back again. I shall remember you in my prayers.
With bunch of prayers
Please do pray for us Gladys Pappas

Fr. Grenier and Grace Regan at the Jesuit Jubilee.



Fr. Grenier and his friends at the Jubilee celebration.

Fr. Louis wakes at 3:30 AM to exercise and pray. He is out by 5:30 AM to celebrate Mass for Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity or the Sisters of Mercy. His day continues with his apostolic work: supporting and mentoring the novices, attending meetings of various boards, and his weekly trek to Above Rocks, one of his favorite places.

Before his Jamaican assignment, he taught at Cranwell Prep, Lenox, Mass. and Ted Kennedy was among his geometry students. (Fr. Louis admits that he was only one theorem ahead of his students!) He taught the president of Nicaragua as well. This man has experienced hurricanes, built and re-built churches and schools, led the growth of the Girl Scouts in Jamaica, fed the poor and influenced the entire education system. At 88, he serves on 35 committees and chairs ten of them! His leadership and credibility is sought throughout the West Indies.

His mentors – and heroes – in Jamaica were Fr. Edmund Cheney, SJ, and Archbishop John McEleney, SJ. Fr. Louis fondly recalls that Fr. Cheney “engaged people in a way that they felt part of the process; he instilled in me a responsibility and duty to carry on the same way. He was a true leader and teacher. I’d like to be remembered that way.” Of the archbishop, he reminisces that he was an ecumenical leader “even before the word became popular at Vatican II.”

When asked what remains on his agenda, his smile grew wide and the wisdom of his eyes looked up to the sky. He adds, “We need to stop the violence in Kingston and throughout the country, we need to feed the poor and we need to provide great access to education for the people.”

While visiting the Jesuits in Jamaica, the Provincial asked Fr. Louis how he managed to drive the long trips into the hills and to Above Rocks maneuvering the roads and hills in the early morning and late night. Fr. Louis replied, “It’s not so bad since I had my cataracts done.”

After our conversation, as I was leaving, he embraced me and said a prayer; I left feeling I had been in the company of greatness. This simple man in sandals is a giant in Jamaica and his humility, humanity and Christ-like spirit touches and moves all whom he encounters. ✝

A Renaissance Man in J A M A I C A

A Conversation with Fr. Louis L. Grenier, SJ

by Grace Regan

The New England Province annually honors those men celebrating anniversaries in the Society of Jesus, and in September, 2006 I was blessed to meet an amazing Jesuit: a man in sandals from Jamaica. There was something about his weathered, tan face and the warmth in his eyes that drew me to him. Fr. Louis Grenier, SJ, was celebrating 70 years in the Society of Jesus, and I found that this simple man in sandals was anything but simple. He is a wise, respected and revered leader in Jamaica and throughout the West Indies. At the jubilee celebration, his many friends from all over the country and Canada shared inspiring stories about this man and his many acts of kindness.

Faith Sharing in Jamaica

Ten parishioners from St. Ignatius Church in Chestnut Hill, Mass. accompanied by the pastor, Fr. Robert verEecke, SJ, and Fr. John Wronski, SJ, vocation director for the New England Province, spent a week with Fr. Peter McIssaac, SJ, regional superior of Jamaica, in West Kingston, Jamaica. Members of the group worked in St. Anne's primary school, visited with home bound elders and conducted physicals for children. For many of the children, this was their first opportunity to see a health care professional. The next issue of *Jesuits* magazine will feature their stories.



Fr. Robert verEecke, SJ, pastor of St. Ignatius Church and parishioners pack books and school supplies to bring to sister parish, St. Anne's in Kingston, Jamaica.

Sunday liturgy at St. Anne's parish.

