

Prayer, Pounds and Pilgrimage!

Mainly associated with the cloaks worn on formal occasions, members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem (known as 'Knights (and Dames!) of the Holy Sepulchre') are committed to tasks of a very practical nature in the Holy Land as well as prayer and pilgrimage.

During a recent pilgrimage in Israel and the West Bank, the pilgrims, including a group from Portsmouth and Arundel and Brighton dioceses (photo) had many opportunities to meet and talk not only with Catholics living in the area but also Muslims and Jews. At Ein Arik Primary School (photo), near Ramallah in the West Bank, there was a chance to tour the school. One pilgrim commented that 'The staff in these schools do an amazing job with tiny resources. The teachers are paid a pittance compared to the Israelis.' The children enjoyed dressing up, and refreshments were provided for the guests.

A visit to Bethlehem University provided the opportunity for the pilgrims to speak to the staff and students, described as 'wonderful students with unexpected optimism'. And breaking new ground for the Order, Dr Paul Worthington gave a well-received formal talk, attended by both students and faculty, entitled 'Being an effective professional in the modern workplace'. Paul is a petroleum scientist with an international reputation, with an important message for able Christian high-flyers in the West Bank.

The Order has a long history but in the nineteenth century was given its current role of supporting the Latin Patriarch's work for the maintenance and advancement of Christianity in the Holy Land.

A visit to the seminary at Beit Jala for Mass and dinner, and discussions with the seminarians, left a sense of optimism that, despite the difficult circumstances, there are still young men wishing to be ordained.

Money to support the Latin Patriarchate (equivalent to a diocese) from the Order in England and Wales comes from regular donations from members, from crib collections and from the generosity of those parishes who support the Order and its aims. Worldwide, groupings of the Order (called Lieutenancies) support its objectives in the Holy Land in similar ways. It is, however, important to meet and talk with the local people and to see at first hand how useful is the money we raise.

For further information please look at our website: www.khs.org.uk, or the website of the Latin Patriarchate: www.lpj.org