



THE TANTUR ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE

The Fullness of Spring and Summer

Dan Koski, Tantur Staff



With our two Easter dates being so distant from one another this spring, it seemed that summer was right on the heels of the second Holy Week. While somewhat of a logistical inconvenience for the Christian churches, communities and institutions of the Holy Land, it did generate a good deal of enthusiastic discussion on the benefits of observing Great Lent, Holy Week and “The Feast of Feasts” on the same date.

In short order, however, our attention turned to other concerns with the Pan-Orthodox Synod held in Crete, then followed by the announcement that the out-going Franciscan Custos, Fr. Pierreatista Pizzaballa, who completed a successful and extended term of office in April, would step in as the interim Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate, following the end of HB Patriarch Foud Twal’s term of office, having reached the customary retirement age of seventy-five.

As the title implies, the appointment of Pizzaballa is a transitional move until Pope Francis appoints a new Latin Patriarch. In turn, the office of the Custos has since passed to Fr. Francesco Patton, OFM.

We’ve had a busy spring and early summer ourselves; two wonderful continuing education programs along with our University of Notre Dame undergraduates, with more than a few academic institutions partnering with us for their educational tours in the Holy Land. Our springtime scholars, Sara Lu and Timothy B. Sailors, have been tending to their work and taking part in our new initiative, “Tuesdays At Tantur,” with a great deal of enthusiasm. And as always with this time of year, the roses are in bloom and the hot sunny days seem to stretch on forever.

It has been a full spring and summer, with more to come. May it be as pleasant and enjoyable in your part of the world as it has been at Tantur.

Tantur at a Glance

2016 Continuing Education Programs Begin With Cold Weather, Warm Hearts



Our 2016 Six Week Program (above) began during an abnormally chilly late winter, but their warm enthusiasm brought an early spring to our Hill, with 17 participants from 7 nations. For the second year in a row, the program enjoyed exploring Jordan rather than the Sinai, in particular the Rose-Red city of Petra.

Our Easter Encounter program (below) began practically at the start of spring due to the relatively early arrival of Holy Week on the Gregorian calendar in late March. As often occurs, the program included carry-over participants from our Six-Week CEP. 27 pilgrims from 6 nations and 3 denominations joined the Easter Encounter program.



When Thanks Is Not Enough

Helena Vicario

I must confess I didn't entirely believe all the testimonies describing Tantur as a life-changing experience. Perhaps I am far too rational, or perhaps I'm simply aware that usually these kinds of experiences generally appear when one is *not* expecting it.

Nevertheless, I wasn't really all that skeptical as I travelled to Tantur last July for a one month experience. I was overwhelmed with another sort of emotion, as I regarded - and I still do- the staying in Tantur as a gift from God.

I was able to participate in the program thanks to the generosity of a French Christian institution, *Association pour l'Unité des Chrétiens*, who provided a full sponsorship for the program. I was not alone. I was sent with three other theology students: one other Protestant and two Catholics. We were four young people who have decided to give our lives to Jesus Christ. And this decision alone united us beyond our different denominations.

This present from God enabled me to walk on the same paths of Jesus, to see the most important places of his childhood and

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Helen Vicario was part of our July 2015 Continuing Education Program. Along with three other young French participants, she was able to partake in the full experience, including a visit to the Haram Al-Sharif in Jerusalem's Old City (depicted above).

Tuesdays at Tantur

An exciting new joint initiative by Tantur Ecumenical Institute and the University of Notre Dame Jerusalem Global Gateway begins.

This spring, the first and third Tuesday nights at Tantur have become evenings of intriguing discussion and interaction, as both local resident and international visitors join the Tantur community to discuss topical theological, geo-political, social and historical subjects in a unique forum. Entitled "Tuesdays at Tantur," the combined resources of the Tantur Ecumenical Institute and the University of Notre Dame Jerusalem Global Gateway program have come together to provide a forum for presentations by authorities on local subjects, with the intent to open up a space for conversation, active listening and debate in an egalitarian manner. Facilitators for Tuesdays at Tantur have so far included Rev. Dr. Robert Smith, Dr. Bernard Sabella, Austrian Representative to Ramallah, Dr. Andreas Nasi, and Dr. Asher Kaufman. Responses to "Tuesdays" have been overwhelmingly positive, with conversations often lasting beyond the scheduled end to the evening, and some presenters returning as audience participants for other evenings. "Tuesdays" will resume after July in the autumn, and may well become a regular feature of the open academic life at Tantur.



Dr. Paul Mendes Flohr, noted lecturer on 20th Century Jewish philosophers, hosts a "Tuesdays at Tantur" in our Chapel Seminar room. The discussions have been well-attended by both international visitors and local Jerusalem-area residents, with engaging, lively discussions.



June in Israel-Palestine

Kathleen Kelly, Ottawa Canada

An alumni of our one-month summer continuing education courses reflects on her experience at Tantur, and offers some poignant advice for future participants.

I was fortunate enough to participate in the June 2015 program at Tantur Institute in Jerusalem. I was one of a diverse, friendly and compatible group of twelve people – from five different countries and five different Christian traditions who experienced many field trips, lectures, conversations and encounters with the many people who find themselves at Tantur. These include people on sabbatical and sometimes their families who visit, students from U of Notre Dame and other youth groups, participants in various other workshops, and a friendly and helpful staff.

The current Rector is Russell McDougall, C.S.C. Because of their commitment to ecumenical and interreligious dialogue as well as peacebuilding the staff is made up of people from diverse traditions including Palestinians living in Bethlehem which neighbours and is visible from Tantur yet is surrounded by a wall and checkpoints to travel through.

We took turns leading and sharing in evening prayer. Sundays we were free to join local faith communities for worship. We usually headed off in small groups to various places. I experienced Eucharist with some others at 3 different places in Jerusalem: the Notre Dame Centre (where mass was offered in English), Dormition Abbey (in German) and the Melkite Cathedral (in Arabic). In spite of the large number of Christian churches that commemorate gospel events, the number of resident Christians is small; about 2% with most of the population either Jewish or Moslem. Most of the Christians are of the Eastern tradition, with Roman Catholics being referred to as "Latin." Hence weekends are Friday and Saturday (Called "Shabbat," when most things in Jerusalem are closed).

Some of the highlights for me were the several visits to the West Bank, including meeting and hearing from students studying at Bethlehem U (run by the Christian brothers) where we had many first-hand experiences to view and hear about the plight of Palestinians. Lectures by Fr. Gregory Collins OSB, Abbot of Dormition Abbey, Fr. David Neuhaus SJ, a professor who was raised Jewish, and the five-day trip to Galilee area with a very good guide who covered not just the Christian pilgrimage sites but the geo-political and social realities were also powerful. In Haifa we saw the headquarters of the Bahai religion and in the north experienced the smaller communities of Druze, Circassians and Bedouins. From the north we could see countryside glimpses of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. The many local guides and Tantur staff have their ear to the ground in terms of safety issues, which for now, tend to be localized and not widespread. After a short time at Tantur I felt safe, as media reports here don't always reflect the reality.

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June in Israel-Palestine

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I've just skimmed the surface of my month at Tantur, and would recommend the program to anyone looking for more than a shorter Christian only pilgrimage which continues to work for many. Mobility rather than age (three of us were 72) is a requirement as there is a lot of walking, stairs and uneven pavement and often long field trip days. You can view more information at www.tantur.org and if you go to the program section you can view sample itineraries, details of field trips, costs etc.

For specific logistical and thematic questions regarding our one-month programs, you may contact our Programs Office at tanturpo@tantur.org.



When Thanks Is Not Enough

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youth. When someone is in love, perhaps nothing is more important to him or her than going and seeing the places where their beloved has been, where he encountered both joy and sadness, where he made his first steps. This experience alone had me longing to travel and stay in Israel.

But as is always the case with God's presents, with God's blessings, it gave me so much more than I had imagined. I am not the same person that came to Tantur, not because my life has changed so much - I still study theology to be a pastor, I still have to confront difficulties and doubts, I still receive each day the tenderness of God - but because this experience opened me in ways I would not have dreamed of.

It was during my staying in Tantur that I converted to pacifism, ecology, and ecumenical militancy. There are some words that I heard while there that still resonate. I am convinced that this staying in Tantur will shape my ethics during my ministry.

Maybe as me, you don't really believe that a place could change your life. If so, I can only recommend Tantur. You may end up being surprised.

Staff Shot

A Programmatic Farewell



Summers at Tantur are rarely without a goodbye or two from the international contingent of our staff, but this summer, we're about to have more than our usual share of them.

This July, we say fond goodbyes to Program Director Jeff VonWald and his wife, Program Support staff Julie Rossate, as well as fellow Program Support staff Janelle Neubauer.

Jeff, Julie and Janelle are all returning to the American Midwest, where they will continue on in new chapters of their respective ministries in mainline Protestant churches. Collectively, their time in the programs office will extend between January 2015 and July 2016. Jeff, Julie and Janelle all wish to emphasize the special moment of their lives that their time at Tantur has been, while we remaining at Tantur express our fond wish that the three of them, separately or together, will visit us on what we hope will be many happy returns to the Holy Land.

To reach Jeff, Julie and Janelle via their private emails, please see the last page of this edition of the newsletter.

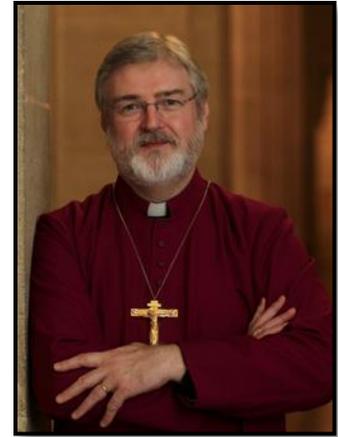


TANTUR ALUMNI SCHOLAR APPOINTED LEAD ANGLICAN BISHOP FOR ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN RELATIONS

Right Reverend Bishop Jonathan Goodall applies his vocational experience and personal experience by appointment of Archbishop Justin Welby, Church of England.

It was with great joy that the Tantur Ecumenical Institute learned of the Right Reverend Bishop Jonathan Goodall, Church of England, as lead Bishop for Orthodox Christian relations. Bishop Jonathan, a Tantur scholar during the rectorship of Fr. Tom Stransky CSP, has remained in close contact with Tantur throughout his ministry, which has taken on a decidedly ecumenical strain. In a Church of England press release, it was noted that Archbishop Justin Welby "hopes that the appointment of Bishop Goodall, who is both learned and a long-standing friend of leading

personalities in the Orthodox world, will signal to all Orthodox the vital importance of this aspect of ecumenical relations for the See of Canterbury and all in communion with it." Bishop Jonathan previously served as the Personal Chaplain and Ecumenical Secretary to the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Rowan Williams. Tantur Ecumenical Institute welcomes the appointment of Bishop Jonathan and notes his appointment as the realization of the Tantur vision of ecumenical theological study in practice. For more information, visit www.ebbsfleet.org.uk.



Rt. Rev. Bishop Johnathan Goodall has been a constant and dedicated friend of Tantur for a quarter century.

Tantur is an institute for ecumenical and theological studies, situated on a beautiful hill in Jerusalem near Bethlehem. It serves as a welcoming place in The Holy Land for visitors who come from all over the world seeking an oasis of learning, community, and hospitality.

TANTUR ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE

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Tantur has begun the process of transitioning its e-list for events and the newsletter to an automated email system. Our local event announcements will now be distributed through the e-service "Mailchimp," with the possibility of the newsletter list also being delivered as such in the near future.

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As of August 1st, 2016, the emails of Programs Director Jeff VonWald and Programs Support staff Janelle Neubauer will no longer be functional due to the successful completion of their contracts. Jeff VonWald may be reached for personal correspondence at jvonwald@gmail.com, Julie Rossate at jrossate@gmail.com, and Janelle Neubauer at janelle.s.neubauer@gmail.com.

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