



EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERSUSALEM

Lieutency, Canada-Toronto



The Bulletin

May A.D. 2026



Upcoming Events

Saturday May 2, 2026 -Virtual
Marian Retreat.

Friday June 5, 2026-Dinner of the
Ordinary

Refer to details in attached post-
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EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

Lieutency, Canada-Toronto

Foreword

Preparing the Heart with Mary

As we prepare to gather for our upcoming virtual Marian retreat, this bulletin offers us a brief moment to pause - amid our many commitments - and turn our hearts more intentionally toward Our Lady.

At the Annunciation, Mary received God's call with a ready and willing heart. Before any action, before any mission, there is this interior readiness - a heart willing to listen.

On the eve of our retreat, we are called to enter into that same disposition. Like Mary, we are invited to set aside distractions, to quiet our minds, and to make space for God's presence. The fruits of the retreat will depend not only on what is offered, but on how deeply we are willing to receive.

I am truly grateful to Dr. Geoffrey Bond, Sir Chris Marshall and Sir Francis Asakome for their generous service in helping bring this bulletin to fruition. May this time of preparation open us in deeper grace, and may Mary guide us gently to her Son.

In prayerful anticipation,

Teresa Morier DC*HS
Spiritual Lead, EOHSJ- Toronto Council





EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM
Lieutenancy, Canada-Toronto

Introduction

Dear Members and Friends of the Toronto Lieutenancy,

It is with great joy that we introduce *The Bulletin*, a new publication of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, Toronto Lieutenancy.

As Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre, we share a singular vocation: to sustain the Christian presence in the Holy Land and to deepen our own spiritual lives in service of that mission. *The Bulletin* is born from the conviction that a well-informed membership is an engaged membership, and that the bonds uniting us are strengthened when we share in one another's news, achievements, and aspirations.

In these pages, you will find reports on the life and events of our Lieutenancy, celebrations of milestones within our membership, and — perhaps most importantly — news from the Holy Land itself. The Christians of the Holy Land, whose ancestors have kept the faith alive in the very places where our Lord walked, taught, suffered, and rose again, depend upon our prayers, our generosity, and our awareness of their daily reality. *The Bulletin* will serve as a window into their lives, ensuring that the people we are called to support are never far from our hearts and minds.

We also hope that *The Bulletin* will be a source of fraternal encouragement. Whether announcing an investiture, recounting a pilgrimage, highlighting the work of the Latin Patriarchate, or simply marking the faithful service of a fellow member, each issue will reflect the vitality of our Lieutenancy and the enduring importance of our mission.

We invite every member to contribute — to share news, reflections, and stories that enrich our common life. *The Bulletin* belongs to all of us.

May Our Lady, Queen of Palestine, intercede for the peace of Jerusalem and for the fruitfulness of this new endeavour.

Dr. Geoffrey Bond
Lead EOHSJ-Toronto Bulletin





Acknowledgment

This bulletin would not have reached your hands in its present form without the generous help of several people behind the scenes, and it is a pleasure to thank them here.

Heartfelt thanks go to Sir Chris Gervasio-Marshall, whose careful review of the technical content saved me from more than one misstep and sharpened the accuracy of what you've just read. His expertise, patience, and willingness to give his time are very much appreciated.

Equally warm thanks are due to Dame Debra Gervasio for proofreading the text with a keen eye and a steady hand. Her attention to the small things — the stray comma, the elusive typo, the awkward turn of phrase — has made the whole a pleasure to read.

Thanks to H.E. Dr. Colin Saldanha for the vision and encouragement to proceed with the project.

Finally, I cannot thank Sir Francis Asakome enough, who was my mentor in introducing me to the world of website creation and design.

Together, we have all made this project possible.

To each of them: thank you. Any shortcomings that remain are my own.

Dr. Geoffrey Bond

Marian Retreat

Hosted by the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem
Lieutenancy of Canada - Toronto



Featured Speaker

Most Reverend Bryan Bayda

Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Toronto and Eastern Canada

Date
May 2nd, 2026

Location
Zoom

Time
10:00 am



Lieutenancy Canada - Toronto

EOHSJ TORONTO INVITES YOU TO

Dinner of the Ordinary 2026



Guest of Honour

**His Eminence
Frank Cardinal Leo**

Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto
Grand Prior of Canada - Toronto Lieutenancy



Speaker

Very Rev. Kevin Storey, CSB

Superior General
Congregation of St. Basil (Basilian Fathers)

MC

Dame Catherine Pawluch DCHS

You are cordially invited to an evening of engaging fellowship and grace at the historic Albany Club. Join us for the Dinner of the Ordinary 2026 as we welcome our guest of honour, His Eminence Frank Cardinal Leo, Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto. Together, we gather to celebrate our community and the enduring spirit of service that defines our Catholic faith.

DATE

Friday, June 5th
2026

VENUE

The Albany Club
91 King Street East
Toronto, ON M5C 1G3

PROGRAMME

6:00 pm — Cocktail Reception
7:00 pm — Dinner

DRESS

Black Tie



EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM
CANADA - TORONTO LIEUTENANCY

THE HOLY FATHER AND THE ORDER

Papal Audience — 23 October 2025

During the Jubilee Year of Hope, Pope Leo XIV received the Knights and Dames of the Order in a memorable audience at the Vatican. The Holy Father reflected on the Order's origins in pilgrimage and service, noting that its members continue the mis-



sion of protecting the Holy Sepulchre and supporting the Church of Jerusalem with humility, dedication, and a spirit of sacrifice. He expressed particular gratitude for the Order's sustained support of the Latin Patriarchate, including its seminaries, schools, universities, and charitable works — especially during the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing conflicts in the region.

“Be guardians of the Tomb of Christ, with the hopefulness of expectation, the zeal of charity, and the joy of those who walk in hope.”

— Pope Leo XIV, 23 October 2025

Invoking Saint Augustine, the Pontiff urged members to persevere in their mission and to press forward in goodness without straying, turning back, or stopping.

Closing of the Jubilee Holy Door

6 January 2026

On the Solemnity of the Epiphany, Pope Leo XIV sealed the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica, bringing the Jubilee Year to a close. In his homily, His Holiness drew a striking parallel between the Magi who followed the Star of Bethlehem and the millions of pilgrims who passed through the holy doors throughout the Jubilee, describing them as modern-day seekers who sense the need to go forth and search, even amid the risks and dangers of a troubled world.

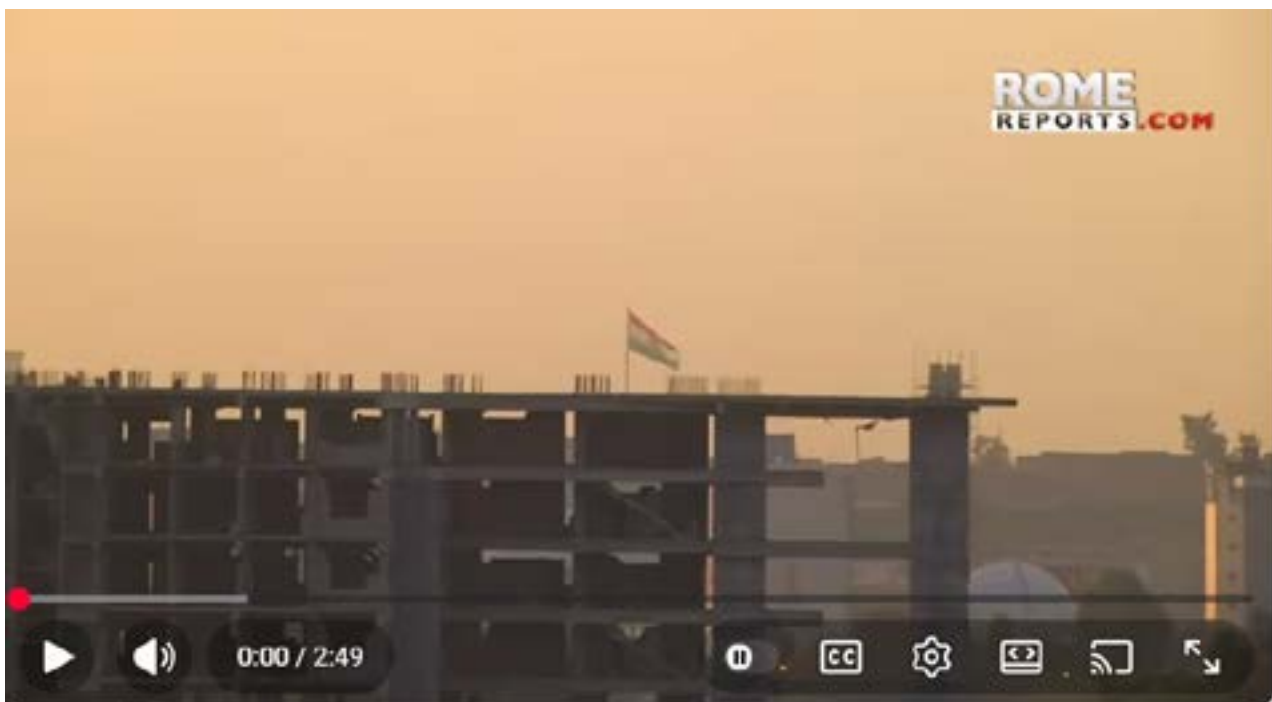
JERUSALEM CROSS 2025–2026



The latest edition of the Order's annual magazine, the *Jerusalem Cross* 2025–2026, was published in March 2026. It features a wide-ranging reflection by the Grand Master, His Eminence Cardinal Fernando Filoni, on what he describes as a transformative year—one marked by the Jubilee, the death of Pope Francis, and the election of Pope Leo XIV.

Key contents of the edition include a historical and geopolitical overview examining the long-term exodus of Christians from Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, and Palestine, emphasizing the urgency of safeguarding Christian communities through education, economic support, and international solidarity. The magazine also features a series of articles examining sixty years of *Nostra Aetate*, with a focus on Catholic relations with Jews and Muslims. Additional highlights include an account of the Jubilee pilgrimage to Rome, the story of a canonized Knight Grand Cross whose life of charity in Pompeii is held up as a model of lay holiness, a report on the Order's youth formation initiative, and a chapter explaining the new General Regulations, the creation of a Historical Committee, a Compendium for Ecclesiastics, and the new Order Foundation under Italian law.

Financial reports from the Grand Magisterium highlight rising donations exceeding twenty million euros, alongside an assessment of the profound and growing needs of Christian communities affected by conflict. Priorities include rebuilding in Gaza, supporting schools, and sustaining pastoral life across the Diocese of Jerusalem.



Cardinal Filoni in the Holy Land: "Christians were here. No: Christians are here. Click on YouTube Video to see

News from the Holy Land



Cardinal Pizzaballa (photo the Patriarchate of Jerusalem)

Easter Sunday Homily

Jerusalem, Holy Sepulchre, April 5, 2026

Acts 10:34, 37–43; Col 3:1–4; Jn 20:1–9

Dear brothers and sisters,

Here, inside this Sepulchre, we are not facing a symbol: we are facing a real emptiness. An emptiness that is not an absence, but a proclamation. An emptiness that unsettles us, because it takes from our hands what we would like to hold on to. Easter begins this way: not with an explanation, but with a rupture. Not with emotion, but with a disorienting question.

Today's Gospel immediately sets us in motion. Mary Magdalene arrives "early in the morning," when it is still dark. She goes to the place where she thinks she will find Jesus. It is a gesture full of love, but also full of habit: she looks where she had left him, where death had placed him. And she finds the stone rolled away, the tomb open, and above all, she does not find the body. And then she utters the phrase that is, at its essence, the first word of every true faith: "We do not know..." (Jn 20:2). We do not know where they have laid him. We do not know.

Here we see the first Easter challenge, in the most sacred and fragile part of our memory: God does not allow himself to be possessed. The Risen One is not where we expected him to be. He is not confined by the boundaries of our certainties. The Risen One goes before us. This is the powerful message of Easter: it is not we who protect God; it is God who sets us free.

We, on the other hand, would like a kind of faith that does not turn our world upside down. We would like to find Jesus “in his place”: within our images, our formulas, our religious frameworks, which sometimes become cages, and within our nostalgias. And yet, at Easter, God does something we did not ask for: he withdraws. Not to flee, but to save us from a misunderstanding—that faith is something to be possessed, a form of control, a piece of evidence in our pocket.

That is why Mary runs. That is why Peter and the other disciple run. Faith, when it is true, is never without motion. It is a race after an absence that becomes a promise. They enter the tomb and see signs: the linens, the shroud, everything laid out with care. This is not a minor detail. It is not staged. Death is no longer a garment that conceals, but a garment that has been carefully set aside, no longer needed to be worn. It is as if the Gospel were telling us: look closely, because the Resurrection is not magic. It is a new freedom. Jesus was not dragged out: he came out. Death, for him, is no longer a prison; it is a garment left there, folded, useless.

And here, in the Holy Sepulchre, this too speaks to us powerfully. There are stones that block life. There are things we declare “definitive” far too quickly: failure is definitive; wounds, guilt, fear, hatred, and loneliness are definitive. Yet, in the Easter story, the stone is not just an object; it is the symbol of everything we consider closed off, with no way out. And Easter tells us: it is not.

Easter does not promise us an “easy” life. Easter promises us an open life. And to open it, God often must first take away our certainties. That is why the Resurrection unsettles us before it comforts us. Before it fills, it empties. Before giving, it takes away. It takes away the idea of a tamed God. It takes away a religion that is only habit. It takes away a hope that risks nothing.

And here we can understand Paul’s words to the Colossians: “Seek the things that are above” (Col 3:1). This does not mean abandoning the earth. It does not mean turning a blind eye to the world’s suffering. Rather, it means shifting our focus: ceasing to live with our gaze fixed on tombs—even our inner tombs—and learning to live as the risen. “Your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Col 3:3): that is, your life is not defined by your sins, nor by your fears, nor by your defeats. It is kept elsewhere, with the Risen One, in God. And precisely for this reason, it can open again, here and now.

The first reading, from the Acts of the Apostles, gives us another decisive key. Peter proclaims that Jesus went about doing good, that he was killed, and that God raised him from the dead; and he adds that this message is for everyone, without exception: “God shows no partiality” (Acts 10:34). No people, no language, no history is excluded from this hope. If death has been conquered, then no life is “too lost” to be sought. Easter is universal because it is born in a specific, concrete, real place—here—and for this very reason it can truly reach the whole world.

This is not an abstract thought. We are standing in the place where the stone was rolled away, yet we know all too well that many stones remain sealed around us. Too many tombs have been dug again by hatred, violence, and retaliation. In this Holy Land, which is the mother of faith and has also become a land of constant conflict, the question resounds with dramatic force: “Where have

you laid him?” For it seems that we place the Lord back in a tomb every time we believe that death has the final word over history, every time we resign ourselves to the logic of the enemy, every time we call an armed truce “peace” and the calculation of damage “justice.”

But Easter tells us this: the Risen One is not confined within our strategies for survival. He is a prisoner neither of our reasoning nor of our fears. He has already gone forth, and he goes before us. He goes before us in the courage to begin anew, in recognizing the face of the other, in laying down the defenses of our hearts even before we lay down our weapons. And so, while voices of death still rage around us, we have no other weapon than this empty tomb: to proclaim that nothing is final, that the last word belongs not to those who bury, but to those who rise again. The Lord is risen—and this is not a distant dogma, but a defiance of resignation. It is the only hope that can still open, here and now, the gates of peace.

And here comes the second Easter challenge: the Risen One is not an object of worship; he is a person who calls. He is not merely to be contemplated; he is to be followed. He is not to be held back; we must allow him to lead the way. Mary will have to learn this. The disciples will have to learn this. And we today, who are here in the place most steeped in Christian memory, must learn it with particular humility: even holy places can become museums if they do not become an exodus; the liturgy can become routine if it does not lead to conversion; and faith can be correct yet barren if it is not courageous.

That is why today, at the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, I would like to remind myself of just one phrase: The Risen One is not where we left him; he goes before us.

He goes before us when he calls us out of our tombs—not only those of physical death, but those of resignation, cynicism, and indifference. He goes before us when he invites us to stop defining people by their mistakes, history by its pain, or ourselves by our sins. He goes before us when, instead of giving us a quick answer, he sets us on a journey.

And then we can understand the meaning of the signs: the rolled-away stone, the folded cloths, the open tomb. They are like a message left there just for us: life can no longer be contained. It is not a matter of “looking to the heavens” to escape from the earth, but of looking at the earth with new eyes, with the gaze of those who have understood that the last word is not “an ending,” but “a beginning.”

Easter is not a phrase to be repeated; it is a door to be walked through. The stone has been rolled away. The passage is open. But we must decide whether to stay inside or go out.

In practical terms, stepping out means choosing forgiveness when it would be easier to harden our hearts; choosing truth when it would be more comfortable to conform; choosing hope when everything suggests the opposite; choosing to do good, just as Jesus “went about doing good,” even if it goes unnoticed, even if it brings no recognition.

For this is the judgment of the Resurrection upon us: it does not ask us whether we know how to speak of Easter; it asks us whether we live as those who have risen. It does not ask us whether we say the right words, but whether our hearts are alive. It does not ask us whether we know how to find God only in sacred places, but whether we know how to recognize him alive in the signs around us, where life and death intersect every day.

And so, once again, here in the Holy Sepulchre, at the very point where history changed its course, we do not utter words for the occasion. We make a decision. We make a proclamation that transcends us and precedes us:

The Lord is risen!

And precisely because he has risen, we will never find him where we left him. We will find him standing before us, calling us out.

Happy Easter!

+Pierbattista Pizzaballa
Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem



**Easter Message from H.B. Card. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem
click on You Tube- video to hear and see**



The Living Stones

“Just as the Church contemplates the mystery of the Lord’s Passion, we cannot forget those who today are truly sharing in his suffering. Their ordeal challenges all our consciences.”

— Pope Leo XIV, Palm Sunday 2026

A Holy Week Unlike Any Other

Easter 2026 has brought the plight of Holy Land Christians into sharp global focus. As the wider conflict between Israel, the United States, and Iran continues to escalate, the ancient Christian communities of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Gaza, and the West Bank are enduring some of the most challenging conditions in modern memory. Missile barrages, restricted access to sacred sites, settler violence, economic collapse, and accelerating emigration are converging to threaten the very survival of the Christian presence in the land where the Faith was born.

George Akroush, project coordinator for the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, described the current crisis as unprecedented, noting that he has personally lived through fourteen conflicts in the Holy Land. The Iranian retaliatory strikes on Israel that began in late February 2026 have upended daily life for all residents, but for the tiny and vulnerable Christian minority, the consequences are existential.

Barred from the Holy Sepulchre

In an event that reverberated around the Christian world, on Palm Sunday 2026 Israeli police prevented Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, and Father Francesco Ielpo, the Custos of the Holy Land, from entering the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The traditional Palm Sunday procession had already been cancelled days earlier. Israeli authorities cited security concerns related to falling shrapnel in the Old City of Jerusalem, where modern bomb shelters are largely absent.

Father Ielpo later stated publicly that the Custos of the Holy Land, as the Superior of the Holy Sepulchre, does not require police permission to access the Basilica, calling this a long-established right rather than a privilege. Following international outcry, a limited agreement was reached allowing Holy Week services to be broadcast worldwide, though physical access was restricted to official representatives of the churches.

Pope Leo XIV addressed the situation directly during his Palm Sunday Angelus, asking the faithful to pray for Christians of the Middle East who are suffering the consequences of what he called a brutal conflict and who, in many cases, cannot fully observe the liturgies of these holy days.

The closure of holy sites extends beyond the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Since the Iran war intensified, public access to Christian and Muslim sites throughout the Old City has been barred. The streets of the Christian Quarter are deserted and shops shuttered. Palestinian Christian shopkeepers who depend on pilgrim traffic are facing ruin after years of repeated disruption—beginning with COVID-19, continuing through the Gaza conflict since October 2023, and now the wider regional war.

The Disruption of Pilgrimage

The war has virtually eliminated pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Tel Aviv's airport has been almost entirely closed since late February 2026, and the few travellers who wish to enter must do so overland from Jordan or Egypt. Father Juan María Solana of the Magdala Center, a Catholic pilgrimage centre by the Sea of Galilee, reports that his facility—which welcomed 135,000 visitors in 2017—has received no visitors at all since February 28. He estimates there are no more than ten pilgrims in all of Israel at present.

For Christians who invested their livelihoods in the hospitality sector—hotels, guesthouses, restaurants, and religious goods shops—the prospect of a prolonged war with Iran is devastating. Many are beginning to despair that the pilgrim economy will not recover for years, if ever, in their lifetimes.

A Vanishing Presence: The Demographic Crisis

The broader demographic picture is one of long-term decline that the current conflicts have dramatically accelerated. Christians once comprised more than 10% of the Holy Land population at the time of Israel's founding in 1948; today they represent between 2% and 3% according to the Latin Catholic Church. In Jerusalem specifically, the Christian share of the population has fallen from approximately 25% in 1922 to less than 1% today, representing fewer than 10,000 people in a city of nearly one million.

Wadih Abu Nassar, spokesman for the Council of Heads of Catholic Churches in Jerusalem, has attributed this decline to a combination of economic hardship, political uncertainty, settlement expansion targeting Christian properties, and attacks by Jewish extremists. Church leaders issued a joint statement warning that Christians in the holy city have become targets of frequent and persistent attacks by extremist groups, particularly since 2012.

How the Universal Church Can Respond

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) has launched an emergency Holy Week appeal to support Christian communities in the Holy Land and across the Middle East, seeking urgent donations for food, medical assistance, and pastoral care. Bernard Toutounji, the national director of ACN Australia and New Zealand, has urged Catholics worldwide to stand with those who continue to live and worship in the very places where Christ lived, suffered, died, and rose again.

The faithful are invited to respond in the following ways:

- Pray daily for the Christians of the Holy Land, particularly during the Easter season, that they may be sustained in faith and protected from harm.
- Support the charitable works of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Custody of the Holy Land, Aid to the Church in Need, and the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, all of which provide vital material and spiritual assistance.
- Advocate for the protection of the historic rights of Christian churches to access and maintain the Holy Places, and for the preservation of the Status Quo agreements governing sacred sites.
- Raise awareness in your parishes, councils, and communities about the crisis facing Christians in the Holy Land so that their witness is not forgotten.
- Plan future pilgrimages. When peace returns, the pilgrim economy will be vital to the survival of local Christian communities. Begin planning now to be among the first to return.



"I feel that we Palestinian Christians are still on the Via Dolorosa, at the stations of the cross. But we know that in the end, there is an empty tomb, there is a resurrection."

— Usama Nicola, Bethlehem

SPIRITUAL REFLECTION FOR EASTERTIDE

*“Protecting the Tomb of Jesus means supporting a Church made of living stones...
which remains a sign of Easter hope.”*

— Pope Leo XIV

As Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre, our vocation is anchored in the Easter mystery. The empty tomb is not merely a historical site we are called to protect; it is the living proclamation that death has been conquered and that hope endures even in the darkest of circumstances. This Eastertide, let us renew our commitment to prayer, to charity, and to bearing witness to the faith in our daily lives—knowing that every act of generosity toward the Church in the Holy Land is a participation in the Easter hope that Christ has entrusted to us.

□

PRAYER FOR THE HOLY LAND

*Lord God of Hosts, Whose almighty hand has so guided
the course of nations that out of conflict and tumult
there may come justice and peace for all peoples:
watch over and protect the people of the Holy Land.
Bless the works of all those who labour for peace and reconciliation.
Strengthen and protect the Christian faithful,
that they may be witnesses of your love.
Our Lady, Queen of Palestine, pray for us.
Amen.*