



# NEWSLETTER

The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

May 2010

## Bishop Suheil visits Lebanon

**Bishop Suheil Dawani on a diocesan Pastoral Visitation to Congregations and the Institutions in the Lebanon makes a Courtesy Call on the H.E. Prime Minister Hariri, meets with H.E. the Mufti of Trablous, and Co-chairs the Board of the Near East School of Theology.**

**Beirut, the Lebanon:** The Right Rev'd Suheil S. Dawani during his pastoral latest visit to the Lebanon, lying in the northwest portion of the five nation Diocese of Jerusalem, the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East took the opportunity of being in the Lebanon to make a Civic and Interfaith Calls on the new Lebanese Prime Minister and the Mufti of Trablous.

Bishop Dawani called on His Excellency, Prime Minister Saad Hariri at the Prime Minister's Office. He was accompanied by a Church delegation which included the Rev'd George Kobti, Pastor of All Saints Church, Beirut, the Rev'd Imad Zoorob, All Saints' Assistant Pastor and the Director of St. Luke's Center, H.E. Dr. Bassim Al Shab, Member of Parliament, Canon Samir Salameh, one of the two Vice Chairs of the (Diocesan) Church Council, Canon George Aweideh, a former Council Vice Chairman and Mr. Nicola Akel, the Director of Diocesan Offices.



Prime Minister Hariri warmly received the delegation with Dr. Fayez Sayegh, a principal advisor in his office. This was a first such visit to the Prime Ministry by Bishop Dawani since becoming the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem and at which time the Prime Minister was presented with an exquisite mother of pearl rendition of the "Al Quds" Holy Site of the Dome of the Rock Mosque and an accompanying Pictorial Book on the City's Holy Sites.



Bishop Dawani presents the Mother - of - Pearl special Rendition Of the Dome of the Rock Mosque to H.E. Prime Minister Hariri

In the meeting with the Prime Minister, Bishop Dawani spoke of the Anglican presence in the Lebanon among its people and assured the Prime Minister of the continuing pastoral role and support of the diocesan congregations and institutions as well as in meeting the spiritual needs of international expatriates who attend Beirut's All Saint Church. "Our work and ministry" Bishop Dawani explained, "beyond the pastoral needs of our congregations remains one of servanthood, especially that which the St. Luke's Center does provide in 'special education' to children".



The Diocese, the Bishop explained, has a long ecumenical partnership in the Near East School of Theology (NEST) with the *Evangelical, Presbyterian, Armenian Evangelical, Lutheran and the Anglican (Episcopal) Church* and that he presently Co-Chairs the Board of Director's. NEST is an accredited Institution of Higher learning and advanced training for its partner Churches as well as for Lay Church professionals. It has a historic link and close association with *the American University of Beirut*. It was out of NEST's predecessor, the *Abey Seminary*, that in 1866 grew the young *Syrian Protestant College*, now the highly respected *American University of Beirut (AUB)*. With the founding of the

College that has since blossomed into a "world class" University, NEST (in its web-site) stresses an important factor that has had a positive consequence for the entire region's Higher Education - it was decided "*that the seminary pursue only theological studies, while the College be responsible for general studies*". The Seminary has had several locations in the subsequent years and, in 1905, moved back to Beirut, adjacent to the AUB.



The Bishop in Tripoli with the Rev'd George Kobi Meeting with Sheikh Malek Shaar, the Mufti of Trablous (Tripoli)

Beyond the Ecumenical dimension of NEST whose Board Bishop Dawani co-chaired at its annual meeting with the Rev'd Dr. Salim Sahyouni, President of the *Evangelical Church Synod*, he then made an interfaith courtesy visit to His Excellency, *Sheikh Malek Shaar*, the *Mufti of Trablous* in Tripoli. This was a follow up to a recent Interfaith meeting held in Washington D.C. Both religious leaders had participated in the *Christian-Muslim Summit* hosted by the *Washington National Cathedral* early last March. The Summit had brought together "*a gathering of high-ranking Christian and Muslim leaders for candid discussion of matters affecting Christian-Muslim relations and peacemaking efforts worldwide*".

Bishop Dawani's pastoral visitation included two other meetings. The first was with the All Saints Church's Pastoral Committee. On Sunday he was the celebrant and preacher at both the Arabic and English languages Services with a Sermon being the Ascensiontide Pre-Pentecost Theme of *"Waiting for the Holy Spirit"*. The Bishop also hosted the congregation to a relaxed Dinner in the suburban hillside city of Juneh.



St Luke's Cenger board Members with the Bishop and Mr Akel

At the second pastoral visitation, the Bishop chaired the meeting of *the Board of St. Luke's Center* - among the thirty three diocesan Institutions in education, health care and social services. He praised the Center's unique work, exemplary communal service and ministry in "Special Education" to *"moderately mentally challenged children"* and assured the Board of the continuing financial support of the diocese. The Center located on the beautiful hillsides surrounding Beirut remains as stated clearly in the Center's own website - that it is - *"devoted entirely to the care and rehabilitation of mentally disabled children"* and is non-sectarian in its selection of and services to children" from several of Lebanon's Faith communities

## Awareness Foundation established in Jordan and Palestine

May 2010 saw an important development in the continuing life of the Diocese. A partnership with the Awareness Foundation was established. The Awareness Foundation is an organization based in the UK founded in 2003 in response to the disturbing increase in religious conflict and violence around the world. It is seeking to enable people make sense of their own faith and to understand others without fear and without compromising. Their mission is to advance the Christian religion throughout the world whilst promoting ecumenical and inter-faith understanding. It makes available financial support that includes sponsoring lectures, seminars, courses and publications and also makes available grants to individuals and organizations. After faithfully serving the Diocese of Jerusalem for many years, Revd Fa'eq Haddad has been appointed as the Director for Jordan and Palestine. The Awareness Foundation in partnership with the Diocese of Jerusalem shares the goal of supporting the Christian presence in the Middle East and to encourage Christians in the area affirming their need to retain this region as their home.

In indorsing this partnership Bishop Suheil of the Diocese of Jerusalem has said" *it is my hope that we can continue to spread our message of peace and hope around the world while drawing attention to the needs of the Christians who have maintained the Christian presence in this land since the time of the first Pentecost. Raising awareness of the presence and vital ministries of Christians in this region is an important factor in our road to peace"*



**At the signing of the Partnership agreement – Revd Nadim Nassar (Director) Bishop Michael Marshall (President), Bishop Suheil Dawani (Bishop of Jerusalem), Huda Nassar (Director for the Middle East) Revd Fa’eq Haddad (Director for Jordan and Palestine)**

### **A word from the Revd Fa’eq Haddad in Jordan**

“The first six months for my new ministry with the Awareness Foundation will include every-thing from re-settling family to making sure the foundation is legally registered in Jordan and then in Palestine. I shall also be raising funds to expand the work of the Foundation.

My goal is to share the vision of the Awareness Foundation with the churches, schools and institutions of the diocese and beyond. The range of schools is all-encompassing with every-thing from the Ahliyyah School for Girls, the Bishop’s School, the Orthodox School and the American School. These schools educate children and are fundamental to the future of each student and their participation in the wider community.

I believe it will also be important to look at a far-reaching number of established institutions, to share our vision and see how we can support each other, especially if our courses can be of value to them in a teaching and experiential way. This would include Prince Hasan and the Royal Institute for the Study of Religion, Caritas (Roman Catholic) Charity and the Educational Centre at Schneller School.”

***Keep us in your prayers!***

[www.j-diocese.org](http://www.j-diocese.org)



The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, a diocese of the worldwide Anglican Communion, extends over five countries, including Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Israel, within the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East. There are 27 parishes that minister to the needs of their communities, centered on the Cathedral Church of St. George the Martyr in Jerusalem. The church supports 33 institutions, which include hospitals, clinics, kindergartens and schools, vocational training programs, as well as institutions for the deaf, the disabled and the elderly, reaching out to interfaith neighbors in mutual respect and cooperation.