

SPIRITUALITY IN ACTION

What's going on throughout the Areas of the American Association of the Order of Malta

Feb. 2017

INSPIRATION FROM THE AREAS AND THE ORDER OF MALTA WORLDWIDE:

An excerpt from the Mission of the Holy See: On the Ground in Aleppo - On a recent trip home to his native country Lebanon for Christmas, Msgr. Simon Kassar, First Secretary of the Holy See Mission to the UN, was able to visit Christian communities in Aleppo, Syria and assess the wreckage of many churches destroyed in the six-year conflict.



The Mar Assia Al-Hakim Syriac Catholic Church, built in Aleppo in 1500 AD was destroyed in the conflict on September 16, 2012.

Q: How are the people handling the situation of the bombardment?

The Christians suffer so much, but they live in hope and faith. They are attached to their country and their presence in Syria as Christians. But they have lost a lot. Can you imagine the way they lived before? The economic situation for the Christians before the conflict was not bad. They had good education, strong communities and businesses, but now they have lost everything. Families have seen their houses destroyed. They have no work and children cannot go to school. Before, whole village would meet at the church every Sunday and celebrate Mass, but now the

churches have been destroyed. As you know, the war has created instability, but learning how to live in this instability is a big challenge. Many people left at the beginning of the war. The ones who stayed do not know if they can continue life there or not.

Q: What specific needs do the Christians in Syria have?

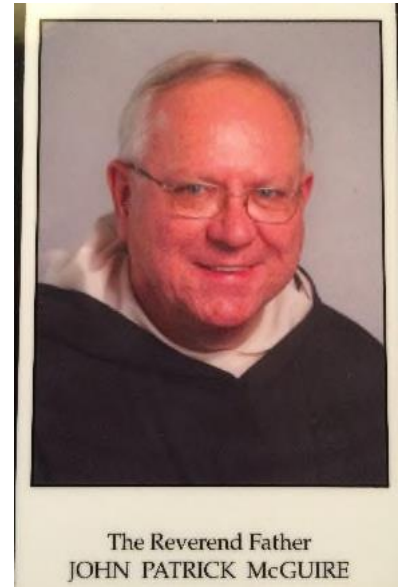
The big concern is how truly to help Christian in the Middle East. If it continues like this, in several years there will be no Christians in the Middle East. This is a big concern for me, especially since they are among the first communities of Christians. You see the image of the Gospel in them. They live the same faith as the first Christians. They preserve the same tradition. The churches need to be reconstructed to preserve this unique tradition in the Middle East. They need a safe place to practice their faith. Right now, the local Church needs support to build the churches and tend to the material needs of the Christians. The pastors and religious communities there have remained with their people and are to helping take care of them. It is like the image in the Gospel of the Good Shepherd with his flock. And I see it with all the local Church communities: Maronite, Melkite, Armenian and Orthodox. Aleppo is really a center of ecumenism.



An altar at the Maronite Church of Our Lady stands amid rubble and debris from the bombardment in the city of Hamideyi, Aleppo.

New York Area:

December 2016 proved to be both a very happy month and a sad month. Happy as we celebrated the coming of Christmas with the usual Children's Christmas Sing-Along and the annual Malta Christmas party for the residents of the Terence Cardinal Cooke HealthCare Center. The month ended on a very sad note as we lost one of our most loved chaplains, Fr. John P. McGuire, OP, on Christmas night. The NYC Area of the Order will miss our beloved chaplain in so many ways. Fr. John's life was celebrated at a Mass of Christian Burial on January 3rd at St. Vincent Ferrer. So many of those whose lives Fr. John touched were there to bid him a final farewell.



A Mass and reception were held at St. Vincent Ferrer Church to benefit Pregnancy Help Inc., a pro-life organization in which many members of the Order are involved. The honorees at this event were Jean-Hugues Monier, KM, and his wife Veronique, DM. Both have been extremely supportive of PHI.



ORDER OF MALTA

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