



Paul-Eugène Trudel

The Servant of God
Father Frederick of Ghyvelde
And Bethlehem

Éditions le Bon Père Frédéric

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Bethlehem

Translated by Lorraine Daudelin

Éditions du Bon Père Frédéric

Trois-Rivières, Canada

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

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I am second-generation Franco/American, grandchild of French-Canadian immigrants, I was educated by the Sisters of the Assumption of Nicolet, both in a bilingual parish elementary school, and their private girls' boarding school where the French language and Canadian history played an important role in my education. Further, the Blessed Sacrament Fathers (founded by St. Peter-Julian Eymard) were the chaplains of the boarding school, so there was a strong Eucharistic spirituality. I was introduced to music by my mother, and studied piano with Anna Wise, and organ with Clair Weir.

Advanced education led to a career in **library science** and I worked as a "Research Librarian" catering to chemists and engineers at Monsanto Company. French was now applied to translating Belgian Patents in the fields organic and polymer chemistry and engineering. I was a member of the **Special Libraries' Association and the American Chemical Society.**

I pursued **genealogy** and traced my maternal line through Canada back to France. For relaxation and recreation, I studied **art** with Paul Scopp, Ron Bessette, John Phelps, Mari Funai, Robert Masla etc. and **photography** with Lester Campbell as an adjunct to my interest in art. I am a member of the Springfield Museum Association.

When I retired from that phase of my life, I went back to school... to the Conventual Franciscan St. Hyacinth College and Seminary (Granby, Mass) and pursued studies in **Lay Ministry and Biblical Studies.** I am certified in both. During that time I also pursued a more spiritual avenue of art by studying **Iconography** (the theory, history, spirituality and the actual writing of the icons) in the 12th Century Russian Byzantine Tradition with Orthodox Iconographer Vladislav Andreyev of New York.

TRAVEL: My wanderings have taken me to Quebec (including the Gaspé Peninsula), New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Ontario, Wales, England, Belgium, France (3 trips), Italy, Greece, Turkey and the Holy Land. If you want to count closer to 'home'; U.S. – all of New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Missouri, Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, etc. All of my travels must have a spiritual, historical, or cultural goal. I do not go about just for the sake of "having been there".) **L.D.**

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DECLARATION

In complete obedience to the decrees of Pope Urban VIII and the requirements of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, we declare we will not give this work anything other than a human faith to the facts which we are reporting, and will not use certain expressions such as saint, good, miracle, healing, marvel or other similar expressions except in the broadest sense of the words, not wishing to advance or anticipate in any way the judgment of Holy Mother the Church, of whom we are and wish to remain her humble sons.

LEXICON

BETHLEHEM... DEFINITIONS (Translator's notes).

In order to cover the length and breadth of Bl. Father Frederic's ministry as well as his multifaceted genius totally dedicated to the Love of God and the salvation of souls, it is virtually impossible to divide the book into ordinary chapters. As a result, this is a three-part volume with multiple sub-headings which would have been further complicated by the sheer number of footnotes gathered together in yet another section of the book.

The references themselves for the most part are not readily available to the average reader, since they come from the Franciscan archives in Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and Canada.

The author was a meticulous copyist and scrupulous to a fault about referencing each and every quote attributed to the subject, i.e. Father Frederic, as well as Franciscan correspondence related to him and his ministry. In the original text, the author went to great length to make known Bl. Father Frederic's ability to multitask. Integrating the footnotes into the text can give the reader an appreciation for Father Frederic's his zeal in a world devoid of typewriters, copy machines, word processors, and rapid transit

If at times it seems pedantic to read, the translator suggests the reader think: "jig-saw puzzle" of a painting. The underlying sketch was drawn up by pen and pencil in nondescript little pocket notebooks, and formal letters, influenced by the highly cultured etiquette of eighteenth century diplomacy. The 'lines' caused by the piecing together of all the bits are a testimony to the patience and dedication of Father Paul-Eugene Trudel.

BACCHICHE – In the Orient, they are very open about expecting what amounts to a tip or a bribe. It is called "bacchiche" and they ask for it up front. There are words which appear in the original text which are not FRENCH, but come from the Ottoman Empire and were either adopted by the French, or simply used very liberally by Bx. Father Frederic.

FIRMAN – A legal document that seems to function as a deed or permit (or combination of both) surfacing repeatedly throughout this text with regards 'ownership' or control over the Basilica of

the Nativity and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. The term has its origin in the Ottoman Empire based in Constantinople, and the word has no French or English equivalent. The reader may want to pay particular attention to the circumstances under which the term appears in the text. (1) Firmans were required, (2) they were used as political/civil weapons, (3) they are at the mercy of the Eastern concept of 'ownership', and (4) their interpretation seems entirely at the mercy of the current ruler or government administrator. Since the Holy Land was controlled by the Ottoman Empire based in Constantinople at the time Father Frederic lived in the Holy Land, they are an inevitable part of the story.

Throughout the history of the churches of the Holy Sepulcher and the Nativity, ownership moved back and forth between the Latin Church and the Orthodox Church at the whim of the Sultans who simply issued a "FIRMAN" upon demand thus passing 'ownership' of the sites back and forth between the two rites with no regard for the consequences. Yet "ownership" never became a complete ownership. The bottom line is that the Ottomans never ceded complete ownership of the Basilica... a peculiar 'I give it to you, but it is still mine' mentality.

DROGMAN – from the Arab "tourdjouman" – meaning "translator" or "interpreter". They were expected to be knowledgeable in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish as well as the European languages. The term is used throughout the text since it denotes a specific type of translator. Each group (civil and religious) had its own 'drogman'. In times of disputes, negotiations, etc. Father Frederic refers to "our drogman" or "their drogman" when one appears with a civil official, the Orthodox faction etc. In serious matters, "drogmen" for all sides appear at once. While 'drogman' is not recognized in the French dictionaries, based on the above definition, it was translated as "interpreter".

'PORTE' or 'SUBLIME PORTE' While this is a legitimate term adopted from the French, to denote the 'entrance or gate' to an Ottoman fort/palace, the latter was also the home of the tribunal where issues were settled. The word TRIBUNAL was used each time "SUBLIME PORT" appeared in order to bring it closer to 21st century understanding..

COWAS – N.B. – definition still being researched. From the context in which they appear they are military or quasi-military personnel who appear to lead or accompany major processions when dignitaries visit the Holy Sites, tapping their official equivalent to sticks on the pavement as if to open the way or announce the coming of the group. COWAS could have been 'soldiers', 'guards', 'attendants', 'marshalls' but from what was found in the research, they appear with large groups, so the word "soldiers" or 'CAWAS' were used as such.

JANISSAIRES – Turkish military – at once soldiers, police, guards, door servants...

LATIN / ORTHODOX COEXISTENCE MUTUAL AGREEMENT

This is what Father Frederic called 'regulations' in the French text. This text contains only ONE THIRD of the total picture carefully spelled out make clear the delicate delineation of space and time in the church of Bethlehem which is essential to the harmonious coexistence between the Latin, Greek and Armenian rites which occupy and utilize the facility for liturgical purposes on a daily basis.

It reads like a ‘rule’ for the Franciscans’ role to be reviewed as assignments come and go, or disputes and misunderstandings need to be settled. Newcomers must understand from the outset not only how to keep in step with the total plan, but to guide any other Latin rite visitors who appear on the scene.

ANOTHER THIRD probably written in Greek, is held by the Greek Orthodox who participate in the same plan with in a distinctly different liturgy, etc.

FINAL THIRD in writing for reference by the Armenians who also not only participate equally, but admit the COPTS and the SYRIANS who appear with their own liturgies, language, music etc. at appointed times, rounding out the orchestration. Hence the expression “MUTUAL AGREEMENT”...

The clue we have to any such negotiations are when Father Frederic mentions “always meeting privately with the Greek bishop...”

Given the tenuous STATUS-QUO at the time, the vagaries of the Oriental mentality compared to Western thought, the differences in conviction, language, art and culture. What appears to be brief, systematic detailed ‘instructions’ are the result of hours and days of negotiations, discussions, with a phenomenal sense for minutia and timing on the part of Bl. Father Frederic. That this would set the stage for years to come is a testament to his diplomatic skills, patience and charity.

NOTE

IMAGES, TABLEAUX – When speaking of LATIN religious art, that legitimately translates to images, paintings, murals, frescoes, mosaics, etc. Where I recognized the terminology as applying to the Greeks and Armenians, I used the term “icon” for the following reason.

When dealing with ORTHODOX religious art, it comes down to frescoes, mosaics and ICONS. The Orthodox do not accept anything that is Renaissance or later as religious art. (It also explains their attacks on Latin art in the Basilica of the Nativity!)

For what it is worth, while we consider the Orthodox as the Schismatics or heretics, in the Orthodox camp, it is the other way around. I took several workshops on ICONOGRAPHY under the direction of Russian Orthodox Iconographers, and studied the history of same. While they tolerated “Latins” and “Byzantines” in their courses, we were clearly not ‘one of them’ and the Andreyev family was accused by their own of ‘throwing pearls to the swine’ for allowing non-Orthodox in their classes! There are a number of books on the ‘history of icons’ that explains this very clearly. In addition to the ICONOSTASIS and church icons, there are home-size icons and icons mounted on poles for processional purposes.

INTRODUCTION

Two brochures have already made known two important WRITINGS of the Servant of God, Good Father Frederic Janssoone, of Ghyselde, Franciscan, whose life is currently in Trois-Rivieres, being studied in anticipation of his Beatification. His JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE; France, Italy and Palestine, and a narration of his FIRST JOURNEY TO CANADA. Afterwards we regretted not having simultaneously published a number of other documents related to these two episodes in his life, especially the latter. We hope to redeem ourselves in a second edition which will soon be required.

Today we present, not only a single writing of the Servant of God, but an entire series related to his life in Bethlehem. The reason for this choice is not important. Since our stay in the Holy Land (1926-1932) we know more about Father Frederic's work in Palestine and especially in Bethlehem. Therefore having transcribed a number of works related to the life and activity of our missionary, it was easy to reorganize our notes with those of the Vic-Postulator.

We divided the present volume into three parts.

We expand upon Father Frederic's activity and apostolate in Bethlehem and on the subject of Bethlehem from a group of practically all unedited documents. We combined them without pretention. Their simple eloquence is sufficient to make known the works and the spirit of the Servant of God. Further, the unknown, yet no less admirable particulars can't be found in a single volume on our hero's life and the Palestinian apostolate. To make them known, it was necessary to separate them from the rest of the documentation.

Then we are re-editing the WRITINGS that Father Frederic published about Bethlehem. Finally, we are making public the MANUSCRIPTS related to Bethlehem. The originals are conserved in the Holy Land or at the Vice-Postulate.

These three parts complement each other. They could have succeeded each other in an inverse sequence. Finally, to avoid repetition, and for the sake of brevity, we left certain facts and personalities in semi-obscurity in some chapters, but clarify them in another chapter or another part.

Our goal is to make known a segment of the life of the Servant of God and provide for future biographers the fruits of our long research and transcriptions to facilitate their work. We apologize for not being expert, nor technicians in certain areas, but we console ourselves with the certainty that the majority of our readers will be happy to learn the things that we include, and happier still to discover Good Father Frederic, and practically hear him speak about Bethlehem, its grandeurs and its mysteries, as they read to learn and be edified. On the other hand, the entirety of this volume forms a rare documentation of the dear city of the Infant Jesus. Thanks to Father Frederic, we find it all – ancient, evangelical and modern history; topographical and liturgical descriptions; legends and poems; critiques of authors and inconceivable particularities of religious, diplomatic and civil life. From these diverse details, we are confident our present publication could be useful to parents, educators, contemplatives, and for preachers and lecturers, and all who should, by virtue of their

Christian faith, know the land of the Divine Redeemer, and even the representatives of the Church and the State on whom rest the management of the actual difficult situations concerning the Holy Land.

May the magnitude of our hope compensate for our technical deficiencies. May the present volume bring to all who read it, a greater love of the Little King of Bethlehem, and a greater admiration for him, who during his entire life, was the lover, historian, the bard, the apostle of the Infant Jesus, Good Father Frederic of Ghyvelde.

Father Paul-Eugene Trudel, o.f.m.
archivist and Vice-postulator

Trois-Rivieres, January 1, 1947.

PART ONE

Father Frederic and Bethlehem

This part is briefly about Bethlehem and particularly about the works of Good Father Frederic in Bethlehem. It is irrefutable proof of his ardent devotion to the Infant Jesus, our divine Redeemer. This is a little known part of the Servant of God's life. We set our research on the authentic documents accumulated by Rev. Father Mathieu-Marie Daunais, the first Vice-Postulator of the Three Rivers' Cause of Beatification of our hero, Father Frederic of Ghyvelde. Having been to Palestine, we transcribed a large number of these documents, and as archivist of the Cause, we classified them at the Vice-Postulator's office.

If we describe the emotions of our subject, the documents themselves show him to be a man of solid piety, a tireless apostle, an exemplary religious, a saint. We see him as a man always focused on God, and souls, also as an informed, conscientious diplomat, and an artisan of peace, justice and charity. Pilgrim, missionary and commissioner of the Holy Land, Father Frederic visits the country of Jesus with both a great piety as a meticulous observer of minutia, collecting at every step the historic souvenirs that will nourish his moving contemplation and will enhance his evangelical preaching. He devoted himself to spreading among souls, a knowledge that should be dear to all Christians; the love and gratitude to the divine Savior, the assistance and generosity toward the secular and official Guardians of the Holy Sites. Always aware of the mysterious events which took place in this corner of privileged earth, he wanted to make it live in others. He was certain of this spiritual atmosphere's sanctifying influence. Unable to lead the souls which divine Providence brought to him to Bethlehem, he tried to bring the charming City of David and Jesus to their intelligence and their hearts.

Here we will see his multiple talents at work for Bethlehem and his apostolate for the Infant Jesus. For him, the labor, intellectual or manual, diplomatic or juridical, historic or journalistic, have the singular, frequently repeated goal... to glorify God and sanctify souls. His exceptional solicitude is necessarily complimented by prayer. This is an essential part of his life, yet only a pale reflection of his apostolic and seraphic achievements.

FATHER FREDERIC VISITS BETHLEHEM

The young Franciscan, Father Frederic Jansoone, born in Ghyvelde on November 19, 1838 was ordained a priest in Bourges on August 17, 1870. Co-founder and guardian of the convent at Bordeaux and former collaborator of the Commission for the Holy Land in Paris, he arrived in Tel-Aviv, Palestine on June 12, 1876.

After a dozen days spent visiting Jerusalem, he made his first pilgrimage to Bethlehem from June 25 to June 28. In his travel journal, he left us pages full of the most miniscule, precise topographical details of this first trip. (See the third part of this volume.) Usually so extraordinarily silent about himself, in these writings he can't help but note his sentiments: *"Upon approaching the village (of Bethlehem), an inexplicable feeling of gentle joy. I wanted to*

sing the GLORIA." Later he would often repeat that this supernatural joy always floods his soul in Bethlehem and he always has to sing this hymn of the Angels.

Certainly Father Frederic must have promised himself to return often to the Cradle of Jesus. But he was assigned to the College of Aleppo, in the northern Syria. Any subsequent visit would have been in the distant future. Immediately recognizing the extraordinary virtues of this newly arrived missionary, his superiors entrusted to him the preaching of religious retreats to the French communities of Egypt as a vacation assignment. It must have pleased him immensely to delay his departure for Syria. In passing, he could revisit the blessed Sites of Palestine.

But at the end of 10 consecutive retreats, the preacher nearly died. He returned to Jerusalem to do his service of four months (Dec. 9, 1876 to April 4, 1877) at the basilica of the Holy Sepulcher. When that ended, rather than sending him to Aleppo in Syria, he was sent back to Cairo, capital of Egypt as chaplain of the college of the Brothers of Christian Schools in Khonronfish. He would stay there 14 months.

However, Bethlehem would not be forgotten. Every day during the month of Mary, in the two years of 1877 and 1878, especially during the retreats for first holy communion which he preached to the little boys of the college and the little girls at the convent of the Good Shepherd, he explained all the sites of Bethlehem, interspersing the lives of Jesus and Mary, to present the most ingenious and appropriate examples to his distracted audience. There is only a small manuscript of these homilies left. There is evidence of his joy in speaking of Jesus and reaching young minds with the most minuscule details, that we want to be in the midst of these children listening to such charming stories.

On April 3, 1878, Father Frederic was elected the Custodial Vicar of Mount Zion, that is the first assistant to the Superior of the Custody of the Holy Land. This includes 400 religious responsible for the maintenance of all the Sanctuaries and ministry of the parishes of Palestine, Egypt, Syria, with missions in Turkey and the Island of Cyprus. It was especially at this time and during the next ten years, that Servant of God would have a major role in Bethlehem. He would be the builder of a church, the beggar of alms, the defender of the rights of the Latin Church against the Schismatics, preacher of retreats, historian and guide of pilgrims. Let's study the documents.

Father Frederic, builder of a church in Bethlehem

The entire construction of the parish church of Bethlehem, dedicated to Saint Catherine, is the first visible evidence of his superiors' confidence in him. His diplomatic skills, his incredibly wise actions permitted Father Frederic to bring much to the country of the Infant Jesus.

Despite all the rights of the Latins, after 1637 the Greek Schismatics overtook part of the Basilica of the Nativity, and the Franciscans made a small chapel in their convent for their private worship. After the bloody revolt of 1757 when the Greeks chased them from the basilica, they needed to expand it to use it for parish worship of their flock.

"It touched the church of St. Helena and we went down to the grotto a million and a thousand

times sacred where the Savior of the world was born to the Virgin Mary.” (Annals of O.L. of Zion 1880, p.70). Alas, ruin was eminent. “The poor and dirty parish, too narrow not only for great, solemn occasions, but for ordinary use by the population” (Ibid), required a complete restoration.

In a very precious manuscript preserved in Bethlehem, which we copied in its entirety by hand from the 12 to the 24th of January, 1930, (See the text in the third part of this book.) Father Frederic recommends a reconstruction project. Only in the Holy Land would such a project encounter such diplomatic difficulties. Let's see:

Expansion of the church of Bethlehem

Origin of the project: On a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1869, his majesty, the Emperor of Austria (Franz-Joseph 1st), offered 60,000 francs for the expansion of the church of Bethlehem, and 60,000 francs for that of the Holy Savior in Jerusalem. Cardinal Antonelli sent a note dated July 15, 1871 to the Vatican (See page 31 book of the Austrian Council to the Secretariat) where he said among other things... “Non incontra (the Holy Father) difficoltà che il Signor Comte Caboga, Gerente de l’Imperiale et Reale Consolato in Gerusalemme ne abbia l’alta direzione: (The Holy Father sees no difficulty with the lord Count Caboga, manager of the imperial and royal Council in Jerusalem overseeing the project...) The consul sent a copy to the Custodial Father, who added his humble observations on the use of the word “alta direzione”. A voce (with a live voice) the consul explains (in September 1871) that he would not want interference in the running of the interior administration of the Custody. (See Father Frederic’s journal.) It would be sufficient to observe that the sum offered by the august Sovereign was used judiciously. That’s how it was left.

In 1874 the expansion plan for the church and the restoration of the gate of St. Jerome was approved by the Ambassador of Constantinople, and the construction was approved by Imperial Firman (Turkey) on Rebielewel 4, 1291 (April 19, 1874). The French ambassador at that time was opposed...” The French government feared that a foreign government would meddle in the affairs of its protectorate over the Holy Sites.

On November 8 and 9, Father Frederic, the new Custodial Vicar is in Bethlehem. He examines the sites, and has already studied the documents. He is concerned about the details of this matter. He confers at length with the Most Reverend Custodial Father. With his authorization , Father Frederic enters the scene.

With his frank and determined amiability, he takes on the interrupted negotiations. He carefully takes it up with the French Consul. The latter concedes to the virtuous appeal of his interlocutor. Father Frederic describes the terms in the manuscript:

Negotiations resumed. In the spring of 1879 at the insistence of the Most Reverend Custodial Father, the French Consul, M.. Patrimonio, sent this report to the Ministry in Paris, saying that the work of expansion would consist of a simple interior project, and under these conditions, the Rights of the Latins on the Basilica of St. Helena would be specifically preserved. There would be no inconvenience to France to permit this work, with the express condition that the Austrian Consul would formally declare that he would not interfere with the management of the project.

After several months, the Consul received an affirmative reply, but since the clause regarding the Austrian Consul was delicate, we would proceed slowly and prudently.

We suppose that Father Frederic was the agent who communicated with the Austrian Ambassador's representative.

Finally there was an amiable understanding. In a letter to Count Caboga, Most Reverend Custodial Father confidently made clear the difficulties that a direct interference would have in the future. The reply of December 29, 1879 (See letters in the case of the Austrian Consulate) nonetheless does not leave room for the least doubt and courteously agrees to the terms. In his letter of December 31st, 1879 to Most Reverend Father Custodian, the French Consul also accepted it without reservation. , (See the letters in the French Consulate File) All that remained was for the provisional plan drawn up by Count Amedee de Piellat, at the request of Father Vicar, in the absence of architect Mr. Guillemot already selected by the Most Reverend Custodial Father be accepted by the Venerable Discretionary.

Who had guided the architect in the design of this plan? No doubt it was Father Frederic. From the 6 to the 14 of October, he was in Bethlehem, and he returned again on October 21st as his signature proves in the Mass book of the convent in Bethlehem. Further, he specifically confirms it later...

The diplomatic violins are tuned! Father Frederic continues in his manuscript: *Immediately Custodial Father happily communicates to his Discretionary, the great news of this long and difficult negotiation. All the members of the Venerable Discretionary join in the Custodial Father's joy with the exception of one member, R.P. M.L. (Marie-Leon Patrem, elected the September 11, 1879) who expressed his displeasure, stemming from his fear, which he claims is well founded, that the new construction will constitute a veritable relinquishing of our rights on the Basilica. We still passed it. M. Guillemot was the designated architect, and the Custodial Vicar was charged with the overseeing of the project. Father Vicar of the Bethlehem convent was named substitute in his absence, and Brother John, director of the work.*

The same day, December 31, 1879 Most Rev. P. Gaudence of Matelica, Custodian wrote his delight to the Most Reverend Father General, Bernardin of Portogruaro: *I hope that no other difficulties will surface. Next season we will begin the expansion of the church in Bethlehem. When that is finished, I think we will pursue permission for that of the Holy Savior. Also Msgr. Patriarch (Vincent Bracco) hopes so, for he declared publicly saying that we currently think of the church of Bethlehem, then we will no doubt permit that of Holy Savior. God willing that it is the truth and my successor has the consolation of seeing the church of the Holy Savior, which has long been desired...*

Once solemnities and receptions of the New Year 1880 were over, the Venerable Discretionary of the Holy Land decided to start at once. Due to the delicate matter of location, Most Rev. Custodial Father gave orders to Rev. Father Antonio da Gioia, guardian of the Franciscan convent of Bethlehem in a letter of January 24th which is worth quoting:
Translation of the Italian:

With this official letter, I bring you the consoling, and long awaited news of the expansion already approved for our church of Saint Catherine. Having completed the preliminaries (which succeeded, thanks be to God) to eliminate the difficulties which until now prevented the expansion, now it is time to do what is necessary to bring it to completion as soon as possible. Finally, so that everything is done in an orderly manner, the Venerable Discretionary believed it necessary to name an individual who would represent him in the execution of the project, armed with all the necessary faculties for the direction and surveillance of the work in every sense of the word; and that is in the person of the Rev. Father Custodial Vicar. He will be assisted by the Tertiary, Father John of Palermo as chief executor and chief expert. But since the selected Rev. Father Custodial Vicar can only assist personally from time to time, the Venerable Discretionary deemed it necessary to name and declare your Rev. Father Vicar Raphael of Mont-Cassin, as immediate director and overseer of the work and as such, is charged with overseeing the expenses for which funds are advanced. He will have to meticulously account for them.

Therefore, Your Paternity understands that no one other than those who are charged are to be involved, if they not called upon to help according to the need or required by the demands of the project. Therefore each should lend his help according to the need.

At the same time, I want you to know that all the work that will be done is only what the local conditions permit. I wish for everyone to be convinced of that, and that they are content with that. By way of reacting to the circumstances, they are to sacrifice all other personal opinions even if of themselves, they could appear more suitable.

I wish for each and everyone to know the content of this letter so that all understand the reason for our position in this affair which is extremely delicate. It requires all the necessary precautions, because unfavorable circumstances could bring it to ruin.

I give you this, and bless you and all your subjects, and reaffirm Your Paternity, your affectionate servant in the Lord,

F. Gaudence, Custodian of the Holy Land.

Despite this formal, official and public order to sacrifice all personal ideas, when there were difficulties, the reproaches rained upon Father Frederic. Without stopping, they would cause him heartaches, to the point where it would seem necessary for him to add a justification to the manuscript just cited. Let us read this note where the author's supernatural intention, his prudence, his spirit of obedience and his apostolic sensitivity are evident. Note the humility in the use of the third person.

Father Custodial Vicar, accused of having acted imprudently in urging the Consul of France to reopen negotiations regarding the expansion of the church of Bethlehem, declared and continues to declare that in so doing, he acted solely for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. He does not believe he acted too hastily, and he had several meetings with His Excellency the Patriarch, who always told him: "Father I wish, I want you, in all conscience I reclaim for the respectability

of the cult, for the needs of the parish, etc. etc do the church of Bethlehem. Later, His Excellency said: "As for Holy Savior, we will see later."

And later, His Excellency said "After Bethlehem, Holy Savior will be next"; and a third time under a new urging on the part of the Vicar: "Holy Savior will be next, for my part, there will be no difficulties. The Holy Land can deal with it directly with the Propagation..." Since the need was not as great for the Convent of the Holy Savior, as in the public and the Latin parish, Father Custodial Vicar believed he was doing a meritorious job before God, by acting as he did with the full authorization of his first Superior, the Most Reverend Father Custodian.

Guided by such motives, what activity would the Servant of God unleash? In 1880 alone, he would make more than forty trips from Jerusalem to Bethlehem on foot, and returning every other day. For example during the month of April, where he celebrated Mass in Bethlehem on the 2,5,9, from the 12th to the 17th, and the 19th to the 30th of April, then May 4 and 5, 10th to the 15th, from the 18th to the 25th and the 31st of May. He did nothing without personally consulting the Most Reverend Custodial Father, as he attended to the most minute details and anticipated the every possible difficulty.

He not only oversaw and directed the work, but he himself worked, often during entire nights, keeping abreast of everything, absolutely everything. When it came to the foundations, he went down underground where he had to crawl on his stomach. Here is evidence taken from the manuscript of Bethlehem: *I myself saw a mutilated box in the masonry... Brother Alphonse, the sacristan and I went into the area and examined the area at our leisure in January 1880. We carefully removed an inscription. Being unaccustomed to the characters on the inscriptions, we had it translated and found that it was simply an epitaph. We measured the height of the passageway. The Venerable Discretionary remains informed of everything and we did not omit anything to the disappointment of these poor religious. The mason, Brother John, helped us to wall it in with cement... This separation required several nights of work. We also worked in the daytime... Actually it is full of damp soil... I crawled in.. Brother John and I, helped by two good workers, started the demolition under an open sky... Subsequently, I addressed two words to the Most Reverend and to the French Consul... I returned to Jerusalem and that same evening I explained everything to Mr. Consul... The new plan, which we are actually carrying out, was done the same week. At the next meeting, Father Vicar communicated a short report on the new plan to the Discretionary which approved unanimously with the exception of one voice... I wanted to visit myself. They made it difficult. It is not prudent, etc. However, nothing was easier (!) I went down by the seat of my pants on a simple piece of board attached to a rope which two workers lowered slowly with a hoist . During the month of July, with the approval of the Most Reverend Custodial Father, Father Custodial Vicar made a private visit to Anthimos, the Greek Bishop of Bethlehem... Father Vicar, in anticipation of any misunderstandings, always met privately with the Greek patriarch of Jerusalem.*

The difficulties were caused by an underground full of caverns, grottoes, cisterns, old walls etc., and the famous Status Quo , requiring that nothing be changed. Because of this, the first plan had to be abandoned and a new plan made without delay. The antagonistic surveillance by the schismatic Greeks also created problems. Judging from page 7 of the manuscript: *Around 8 or 9 o'clock, 3 or 4 children around 12 to 15 years old, went up on the terrace of the*

Basilica and saw us working... These children probably alerted others, and shortly all the terrace was filled with people; Greek monks, seculars, pilgrims, etc. Around 10 o'clock our interpreter came to tell me "Father, we are worried. There are 60 people with the Mudir who already sent a soldier to stop the work. I sent him away. The Mudir then asked to enter amiably with the Greeks to see what you are doing, I refused him. Now they have telegraphed Jerusalem and accuse you of digging under the Basilica... Father Frederic wrote to the Custodian and left for Jerusalem, to explain what happened. He was certain His Excellence the Governor General (the Pasha) and the Consul would go to Bethlehem to examine the site. The Pasha told me formally, that essentially, the accusation of the Greeks said: "The Latins are digging under the Basilica." I replied and made known to all that we were not doing any secret work because we were doing it in full daylight, and the Greeks watched us at their leisure from the terrace above and could see us perfectly well working at their feet, that the ditch was not made, but undone... In the interim, the most ridiculously absurd rumor spread through Bethlehem that we had discovered the real grotto. (One individual went so far as to enthusiastically kiss the arm of Nivin (the mason) and Brother John, saying "Beato voi che avete visto quell SS Luogho (Blessed you who have seen this Holy Site!). We found the real treasure brought by the Magi... the treasures the Greeks and the Armenians had hidden at the time of the persecution! We claimed our rightful part, a quarter of it...

Here come the Pasha and the Consul. After a conversation with us, the former went down to the Greeks to hear their complaints. Visibly confused, Anthimos, Bishop of Bethlehem, blamed it all on his monks. He was absent on the 14th of February. They complained that this new construction came too close to the Basilica, but not a word about the new grotto, the motive for the real accusation. That astounded the Pasha and he was displeased. Together, the Pasha and the Consul then came to our terrace. (The Consul had had lunch with us). It only took a few minutes to know what transpired. The Pasha shrugged his shoulders and there was no further question of hidden excavations or snooping under the Basilica.

The Pasha asked us about our plan. In the interim the Greeks exhibited the Firman of 1852 (which was never recognized by France) and which puts the two gardens at the arch of the Basilica, that of the Greeks and ours, under the Status Quo. The Councilor asked: "Fathers, do you want to press charges? We know the negotiations with the High Court are lengthy." We expressed the desire to continue without delay, deciding that we would not touch the St. Jerome garden without prejudging in any way the question of the Status Quo of the gardens, that is without declaring ourselves either for or against. Therefore, the Councilor called the Pasha's interpreter Mr. Krihir and in his presence and that of The Most Reverend Custodian, Rev. Father Leon Patrem, French discreet, and I, and told him in proper terms: "Know and tell his Excellency that the Fathers will build on their land and neither I, nor His Excellence, nor the Greeks, nor anyone will have the right to oppose it. I understand that no one will incite in any way whatsoever the harassment of any type possible." The question was settled, it was time to draw up a new plan without delay...

Notice to what extent the Status Quo is respected, even for the sites that are certainly not specific. Also note the constant embarrassment that is caused, the Greeks being more powerful before the Sultan in Constantinople than the protector Nation herself.

Father Custodial Vicar had not seen the last of these incidences, as we read in the ANNALS OF OUR LADY OF SION, March 1880, p.70: *Clearly, the Greeks are seeking to counteract the progress of the work under one pretext or another. But they had better behave, Rev. Father Frederic knew how to meet them head to head, and despite the improbability of the matter in the times in which we live, truth will prevail.* But at the cost of what studies, what nagging, what methods, what sacrifice! Let us also say, at the price of what ardent supplications to God whom he wants to glorify...

Father Frederic, in his famous manuscript, described in detailed lists all the work that was done from February 14 through July 31, 1880. He gave the detailed cubic measurement of the demolition at the construction site; 3,000 cubic meters of excavated material for the foundations, and the removal of earth and stone: *Long, difficult and expensive work, the lack of space resulting in the demolition piece by piece, using wicker baskets to transport stones on men's backs, as well as the earth and debris across the terrace.* He further details the cubic measurement of the masonry foundations and the old and new materials used, for a total of 750 cubic meters of wall.

Finally, the cornerstone of the new church *was placed by the Most Reverend Father Custodian, surrounded only by the religious of the community, without singing, the prayers having been recited aloud the morning of May 11, 1880 around 8 a.m.*

With legitimate pride, director of the project gave a very detailed cost summary. After the auditors' extensive examination, the estimate of 30,000 to 40,000 francs, *in reality was only 15,361 francs, which included losses due to the exchange rate with Turkish money and a theft of 2,000 dollars which took place in Father Vicar's room in Bethlehem. That was a deplorable act of ingratitude.*

Simultaneously, Father Frederic oversaw the administration of the Custody in the absence of the Most Reverend Father Custodian and multiplied his trips to Bethlehem. Then to give him a new challenge, he celebrated Mass in Bethlehem on the 3, 6, 7 and 15 of July, the 1, 11, 20, 23, 26 to 28th of August, the 29th of September, the 9, 12, 14, 19, 20, 27 and 30 of October, and the 4th to 6th 17 and 23 of November.

According to his correspondence, he was busy with the outside purchase and fabrication of the necessary materials. Some of the letters or their replies were found. I point out the interesting contents.

On March 31, 1880, to *Director of the Foundry and Forges of Pont Eveque in Vienna*, he wrote: *In response to your honorable letter of February 25th, Most Reverend Father Custodian, who is the Superior General of the Custody for Franciscan Mission in the Holy Land, asked me to tell you, he regrets that due to unexpected circumstances, we cannot follow the first plan proposed for our construction project in Bethlehem. In the new plan, the use of an iron framework is no longer possible.*

Nonetheless, we remain grateful, Mr. Director, of the information you gave us and which could be useful for future construction...

On November 10, 1880, Most Reverend Father Custodian himself wrote to Rev. Father Victor, Commissioner of the Holy Land in Paris, but the latter was written at Father Frederic's request.

...Tell us (1) the price per square meter of the quantity of glass requested by Father Vicar in his letter of September 23rd for our church in Bethlehem; (2) The price of lead by the sheet for the roof – the thickness and the weight; (3) of red copper by the sheet for the roof – the thickness and the weight; (4) the cost per square meter of the galvanized metal tiles for the roof, the thickness and the weight. We would be grateful to receive by mail the prospectus and the current prices from these suppliers...

On the 23rd of the same month, an answer from Father Victor-Bernardin to Most Reverend Father Custodian saying: *I will take care of Father Custodial Vicar's requests regarding the statues...*

On December 2nd, 1880 in a reply to the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda explaining the various expenses which might appear excessive, Most Reverend Father Custodian gives as examples the work in Bethlehem... *As for the apparently exorbitant transportation expenses, I must call to Your Eminence's attention that transportation charges, especially from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem are very high, to the point of almost doubling the purchase price. For example, we had to import paving for the new church in Bethlehem. In Livorno, they sold the marble tiles for 8 francs per square meter. Arriving in Jerusalem, they cost 14 francs.*

It is only after multiple inquiries that decisions are made regarding each purchase. Most Reverend Father Custodian's letter to Rev. Father Victor-Bernardin in Paris dated March 30, 1881 is further evidence: *When in his letter of January 27th, Rev. Father Vicar spoke to you about the windows for Bethlehem, he had no other intention than to ask you a simple question about adopting this type of ornamentation. Expert in these matters, our architect just declared formally that the style of church, does not accept stained glass, and that simple panes are better suited for this church. Soon, I hope to let you know the number that we will have definitely chosen in the Gesta catalog, if divine Providence permits us to resume the work which was suspended due to an absolute lack of resources.*

The reader should note that these three latest letters are from Most Rev. Father Custodian of the Holy Land and not from Rev. Father Frederic. Nonetheless, except for the second one which we translated from Italian, the others are written in French, which leads us to believe they were written by Father Frederic himself, with the signature of Most Rev. Father Guide de Cortone, who arrived as Custodian on August 1, 1880.

Fortunately the Custodial Vicar attends to everything for the church in Bethlehem. We have two proofs. Since Father Frederic has already left Jerusalem to beg in France, the Most Rev. Father Custodian wrote to Rev. Father Commissioner in Paris on April 5, 1881... *As for the windows for the church in Bethlehem, please speak to Most Rev. Father Frederic while he is in Paris. He will give you the answer himself.* And, on the following July 13th, Most Rev. Father Custodian writes of his embarrassment to Rev. Father Frederic in Paris: *Write to me at once to*

let me know if you have made a decision and if you have ordered the paving of the new church in Bethlehem. All including Guillemot are convinced that the floor should be of Carrara marble.

Captain Guillemot is worried about the wood which he was instructed to order from M. Duisberg Brech, in Tel-Aviv and until now nothing has arrived. Yesterday I wrote to Tel-Aviv and received a reply from M. Frederic Brech saying he spoke to you, but you did not formally order the wood! Courtesy of someone who was not in charge, since Guillemot was supposed to attend to it! Evidence that everything rested on Father Frederic's shoulders. Most Reverend Father adds: Because of all the orders that were placed, must be placed, or are incomplete, we are in total confusion. To spare us the embarrassment it seems best that Your Paternity return as soon as possible to Jerusalem.

We can easily perceive that because long distance correspondence is slow, all the ordering could not be completed. Further, Father Frederic's voyage was decided so quickly, and he left immediately at the decision of his Superiors. Where would he go? What were his orders? What was the motive? These interesting questions are answered in the following documents.

FATHER FREDERIC, BEGGAR FOR BETHLEHEM

We know that in 1869, Emperor Franz-Joseph of Austria had promised 60,000 gold francs for the expansion of the church in Bethlehem. However, this promise would be executed with great difficulty. On October 7, 1880 Most Rev. Father Guido de Cortone wrote to Most Rev. Father Andrea Lupori in Rome: *We are very embarrassed with regards the church in Bethlehem. If the Emperor does not send us the money, we must stop construction. I fear that the delay in sending the money is caused by the negligence or rather the malevolence of the Austrian Consul in Jerusalem, Count Caboga. Several days ago, Father Custodial Vicar (proof that it is always he who attended to the diplomatic issues) asked him for the result of our appeal. He replied that he had been called by the Austrian Ambassador in Constantinople requesting status of the new church of Bethlehem and if the actual construction could resolve some question with the Schismatic Greeks because the Austrian Government wanted to be completely distanced from it. Finally, he added that the Franciscans in the Holy Land had millions and that they didn't need the Emperor's money. From the Consul's reply I fear there is some intrigue, and I know he is capable of it.*

The following December 2nd, the Custodian expresses similar worries to his Eminence the Prefect of the Propagation: *I fear that the construction of the church in Bethlehem, recommended by the Holy Congregation of the Propagation and by Msgr. Patriarch is sufficiently advanced so it does not deplete the reserves of the Holy Land, given that until now we have received no reply from Vienna regarding the promise of 60,000 francs made by the Emperor in 1869.*

On December 8th Rev. Father wrote to Most Rev. Father Raphael d'Aurillac, Provincial of France: *We are in a sad situation with regards finances. For the last two years, we didn't receive anything from America, and what is actually happening in France and Belgium causes us to fear a severe reduction in donations which we usually received from these two countries. Our*

resources are vastly reduced, and we already have great difficulty in meeting our most basic expenses.

By the same token, certain dioceses no longer sent the results of their collections for the Holy Sites to the Custody of the Holy Land, according to the formal wishes of the Holy Fathers. We found one such proof among many others, because it is related to Father Frederic. Most Rev. Father Gaudenzio de Matelica, Custodian who on February 25, 1880 wrote to Father Victor-Bernardin in Paris: *For the sum of 1600 francs from the Diocese of Agen, Rev. Father Custodial Vicar will write to you and communicate to you the reply from Msgr. the Patriarch in this regard* **(See also:** Letter from Cardinal Simeoni, Prefect of the Holy Congregation of the Propagation to Most Rev. Father Custodian, July 30, 1881. He recalls that the Sacred Congregation of the Sacred Office reaffirms the existence of ecclesiastical sanctions against those who keep the collections destined for the Holy Sites, or divert them to other uses.

Item: Letter from Most Rev. Father Custodian to Cardinal Simeoni, September 17, 1881 where after acknowledging the good results of Father Procurator's trip to Spain, he communicates that the different Bishops of France, including the Prelates of Avignon, Besancon, Moulins, Tarbes and Rouen who responded to Rev. Father Commissioner in Paris that instead of sending the donations from their dioceses to the Custodian of the Holy Land, they sent them to the White Fathers at the Seminary of St. Anne in Jerusalem.

Item: Letter from the same Prefect of the Holy Propagation to Most Rev. Father Custodian January 4, 1882 to "let him know he asked the Apostolic Nuncio in Paris to recommend to the Bishops of France they encourage the Work of the Holy Land and to be sure that all the returns from the collections be forwarded entirely to Father Commissioner of the Holy Land in Paris."

Further, a banker in Jerusalem named Frutiger, didn't want to return to the Custody a sum of 10,000 francs deposited in the bank by his Eminence Cardinal Barnabo, on September 21, 1872 for the construction of the new church in Bethlehem. Instead of depositing the amount, and paying interest, Frutiger wanted to sell the Custody a house that it didn't want. (See the letters of Most. Rev. Father Custodian to Most Rev. Father Anacleto of Sanfelice, o.f.m. provincial minister in Rome, dated August 20, 1878 and his Eminence Prefect of the Propagation December 2, 1880.)

Unfortunately, March 1, 1881 the Custodian wrote to Beirut Syria, to his General in Rome: *Rev. Father Custodial Vicar (Father Frederic) writes that the account of the Holy Land is absolutely empty. If this is so, where can we borrow the money?* The letter from Father Frederic to his Superior is the result of the February 21, 1991 meeting of the Discretionary Council of the Holy Land.. Here is a summary: *Rev. Father Frederic presiding at the reunion of the Discretionary in the absence of Rev. Father Custodian recommended suspending the work on the church in Bethlehem due to insufficient stone to continue the construction. From his side, Rev. Father Procurator advised the Discretionary that there was no more money available in the account.*

The proposal is accepted and Father Vicar is charged with alerting Rev. Father Guardian in Bethlehem and recommending that he purchase the necessary materials and alert Rev. Father Commissioner in Paris that Rev. Father Procurator will send him a letter of deposit for 20,000 francs and if he is not in a position to dispose of this sum, to let him know.

What to do in such financial straits? If it was just a matter of those two points! But the Church's interests in the Orient, the glorification of God, the sanctification of souls. Weren't these strict and mortified religious in charge and responsible? Could they stop before all resources were exhausted? In His unfathomable and admirable plan, God wanted to bring Father Frederic to Canada. First, God inspired the Superior of the Holy Custody. Let us continue going through the documents...

March 21, 1881 Venerable Discretionary of the Holy Land had a meeting. . The secretary of the assembly's report reads: *Given the total lack of donations in the Holy Land account, and since the resources from Commissariats are insufficient for the Custody's daily and ordinary expenses, Most Rev. Father Custodian recommends Rev. Father Custodial Vicar goes to France to take up a special collection, and Most Rev. Father Procurator goes to Spain to obtain the funds designated for the Work of the Holy Land. This proposal was unanimously accepted and Most Rev. Father Custodian wrote to Most. Rev. Father General to obtain the necessary permissions.*

Let us listen to the filial request of the Successor of Saint Francis: *Jerusalem, March 22, 1881. Most Reverend Father (Bernardin of Portogruaro).*

Just returning to Jerusalem, I find the finances of the Custody in an alarming state. Without future revenues, numerous urgent needs in the different parts of the mission, a debt of several thousand francs already spent for current needs, we have only one thousand five hundred francs in the account today.

Hoping that His Majesty the Emperor of Austria would expedite at least 60,000 francs for the advanced construction in Bethlehem, the administration of the Holy Land advanced around 50,000 francs to continue the work. However, to my great surprise and keen disappointment, I just received the official news through the intermediary of the Imperial Council of Austria/Hungary in Jerusalem, that His Majesty would give only 20,000 per year. It would take six years to receive the entire amount promised for both the churches of Bethlehem and Jerusalem.

With this news, Your Most Reverend Paternity can see the impasse in which the Custody finds itself. All the projects we started will feel the impact. Embarrassed, I submit the following idea for your Most Reverend Paternity's approval:

That Father Custodial Vicar could leave for France to collect donations for the Holy Land and through preaching, he would present to the people, the needs of the Holy Custody in general, and in particular the needs of the Shrines, and the need to help the poor, the parishes, the schools, etc. etc.

The Consul of France in Jerusalem promised to write to his Government to strongly endorse our request.

Father Procurator for the Holy Land can leave for Spain to obtain from Madrid some extraordinary help for the Pious Cause of Holy Land Mission.. His stay there could serve to combat several prejudices spread by the Spanish Consul Vasquez against the Holy Custody's Religious. At the same time, Father Vicar and Father Procurator could go to Rome for specific instructions.

I brought this project to the Venerable Discretionary, and not only was it approved, but it was recognized as a unique means of getting out of the present financial crisis. I pray that Your Most Reverent Paternity gives me your opinion on this project, even telegraph me, to hasten the departure of the above mentioned religious.

Further, we could also send Father Isaiah de Scanno to the United States, with the same goal. I have not personally met this Priest, and I can't say if he would succeed. But I believe Your Paternity knows him, and that is why I leave it to your judgment.

I can't speak to you of other things. The boat leaves Tel-Aviv a day sooner than I anticipated, and I have to rush this to the courier.

I ask your humble seraphic Benediction, and with the most profound respect, I come to the signature.

To Your Most Reverend Paternity, most humble and obedient son and servant.

Fr. Guide, Custodian of the Holy Land

The 13 April, the Custody thanks the General for his approval and on the 14th, the General confirms his message and gives his reasons for not sending Father Isaiah to the United States. The 27th of April, Ash Wednesday the two Religious set out. They slept in Tel-Aviv and boarded the boat the next day. May 2 and 3 they celebrated Mass at St. Catherine in Alexandria. On the 7th they arrived in Naples, and were in Rome on the 11th. They both carried letters from the Most Reverend Father Custodian, addressed to the Minister General of the Franciscans and to the Prefect of the Propagation. Because the latter had special praise for Father Frederic, it is worth quoting:

Eminent Prince (S.J. Cardinal Simeoni),
I make it my duty to make known to Your Reverend Eminence that Reverend Fathers Custodial Vicar and Procurator for the Holy Land left for Rome this morning with the knowledge and permission of the Reverend Father Minister General of the Order.

This departure is the result of the extreme necessity in which the administration of the Holy Custody finds itself. The needs constantly increase while the means and the donations visibly diminish from day to day. In face of the present which afflicts me, and a future which menaces us, I found a better way to at least meet the expenses imposed on us, that is to send Father Custodial

Vicar, Religious with a solid piety to France, and Father Procurator General of the Holy Land to Spain. The former could appeal to the public charity for the Holy Sites and this Mission.

The second can do what is possible to obtain for the Pious Work of the Holy Land in Madrid according to the conditions prescribed by the Holy Congregation for the Propagation.

I know very well that, in face of the many needs of the catholic works throughout the world, it is not an opportune time to beg. It is also true, and history guarantees it, that the greater the needs, the greater and unlimited is Christian charity.

I hope and dare appeal to Your Eminence to grant to these Fathers your protection, both in Rome and elsewhere, so they can succeed with this task, and I give Your Eminence my most sincere anticipated thanks.

Kissing with profound respect, the hem of Your sacred Purple, and I ask your Holy Benediction, and reaffirmation from Your Most Reverend Eminence. Your most humble, obedient and most respectful servant and subject.

*Father Guido de Cortone,
Custodian of the Holy Land*

Speaking of Father Frederic to Most Reverend Father General, the Custodian called him a *conscientious man from whom you can learn how things are going in the Holy Land, and to whom I would be happy if you would answer questions regarding the good of peace.*

We have no details of the Servant of God's voyage through France. We only know that in Paris he gave a conference in the chapel of the Poor Clares, he preached at Isle Saint Louis, at St. Nicholas of the Fields, at Our Lady of Loreto (we have a portion of his text), to the Sisters of Holy Cross, and in Chartres.

Judging from a letter of Most Rev. Father Custodian to the Prefect for the Holy Propagation dated June 20, 1881, the results were dismal. *I sincerely thank Your Eminence for the kindness of your letters of recommendation which accompanied in France and Spain the Reverend Fathers Vicar and Procurator of the Holy Land, sent to collect alms for our mission which is in dire need. The former writes that, due to the circumstances in his country, he can hope for little or nothing and perhaps he can soon return to Jerusalem without favorable results.* However, he didn't waste his time since he didn't even take time to visit his family, according to the letter from his grand-niece Mrs. Lawrence Cloderee of Ghyvelde, in 1922.

The Cardinal Prefect of the Propagation explained the reason. July 30, 1881 he replied to Rev. Father Custodian: After thanking God that Rev. Father Procurator of the Holy Land had obtained 25,000 from the Government, 20,000 from the King and 500 from the Child Isabelle of Spain, he added: *The journey of Father Vicar wasn't as successful in France. It's a disgrace that a spirit hostile to Ecclesiastical Institutions prevails. It is useless to hope for any good at this time... You see it is not suitable for our Sacred Congregation to do more at this time.*

Fortunately, Canada would surpass France in this instance. However, we can't describe how

Father Frederic met Father Leon Provencher, pastor of Cap-Rouge near Quebec, in Paris, or how the latter engaged the beggar to come immediately to Canada. This will be the object of another study. It is clear that the construction of the church in Bethlehem caused the voyage of Father Frederic to France where he spent June and July, and then arrived in Canada on August 24, 1881 at 11 o'clock in the morning. His voyage for the works of the Holy Land would be immediately successful as well as in the future. He would only passed through, with great renown for holiness and miracles. He would leave April 30 1882, to return to Palestine on June 23rd and to Jerusalem on July 11th in great pain..

Let's return to Bethlehem with him, where he hastened to thank the Infant Jesus. Actually, on July 26th, he wrote to Father Provencher. *I had the consolation to come on foot to Bethlehem last Sunday (July 24) where I celebrated Holy Mass at the Manger altar of the Three Kings, especially for all your intentions, for your entire family and for all who are dear to you.*

He returned to celebrate a solemn Mass of Saint Louis, King of France on August 25th. Soon, on November 23rd, he announced to Rev. Father Cazeau, Jesuit of Montreal: *Joyfully, our church of Bethlehem is finished!* He was happy to see this great work completed. He had put his heart and strength into it, and it caused him a lot of grief.

However he was not finished begging in its behalf. May 17, 1885, he expressed great pleasure to Father Guardian of Bethlehem, that the great French Pilgrimage of Penance donated to Bethlehem *two large statues of Saint Joseph and Saint Catherine for the main altar and a window representing the mystery of the Three Kings.*

February 25, 1886, he announced to him: *Most Reverend Father Marie de Brest (Commissioner of the Holy Land in Paris) wrote that the two paintings for the church in Bethlehem are completed and are very beautiful. He asks if you have received the candelabra for the altar of the Three Kings and if you are happy with them. Please kindly answer me on this subject so that I can write to him next Wednesday.* Don't the donations as well as his solicitude require it?

He adds: *I think Rev. Father Custodian would be satisfied with the work on the St. Jerome Oratory and that you talked about the campanile. Here we are in favor of this project.*

And again: *On the occasion of the visit of His Excellence the Pacha, I spoke to him openly about your idea relative to the central square. He answered me: "I thought about it and I desire it, however since it is a question of religion, we must go slowly."*

By way of a post-script: *At the first opportunity you will receive a visit from Mr. Bonfils, photographer from Beirut, friend of the Holy Land. Rev. Father Jerome will bring him to Bethlehem to photograph the paintings and the statue of St. Jerome. I want to thank you in advance of the warm welcome you will give this fine gentleman.* Father Frederic had no doubt requested his services to have some photographs to illustrate the articles that he sent to France and to the United States.

These publications, along with preaching, would infuse in the readers' hearts the love of Jesus and His dear country of Palestine. It would solicit the benefactors' generosity so the

Franciscans can continue their work of salvation in the Holy Land and the care of the Sanctuaries against the impiety of the Schismatics.

FATHER FREDERIC, DEFENDER OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHURCH IN BETHLEHEM

Remember the magnitude of the diplomatic incident caused by the Schismatic Greeks at the first excavations for the construction of the church of Bethlehem. This incident caused the Franciscan Superiors, the French Consul, and the Pacha of Jerusalem to come to the site. This was not the only occasion. The "Annals of Our Lady of Sion" December 1880 issue, p. 17. sums it up in the following sentence where the great virtues of Father Frederic, in charge of this work are summarized: *This is a time of great activity for the Franciscan Custody. We rejoice that the Christian souls and the true friends of the Fathers in Holy Land, Bethlehem and Jerusalem, will see their new parochial churches built. Insurmountable obstacles were hurled at these projects. Finally, through strength, patience and magnanimity, the obstacles disappeared and the two edifices, so urgently needed, would be completed.*

Returned from Canada on August 1, 1882 Father Frederic wrote to Father Provencher, pastor of Cap-Rouge: *I will never cease to repeat to you that tribulation is the daily bread of the children of Saint Francis and we must accept them as a new benediction from God.* Illness was one of the Servant of God's great tribulations. February 21, 1884 he speaks to Father Provencher in passing: *I am writing to you from my bed where I have been for almost four weeks, due to a serious indisposition. Since my major illness in Canada, I only have languishing health which I think I will drag to the grave. May the Holy Will of God be done!* However by September 24th, 1884 he pleaded with Rev. Father General to deny the resignation of the Custody. He happily announces: *My health is very well recovered, thank God, and I am ready, always with God's help, to respond again to new work and new challenges for the glory of God and the good of souls.*

But this spurt is often contradicted, since he confides to Father Provencher on November 8, 1885: *Many important works are actually being prepared. The rigors alone of the Ottoman administration slows the progress. We hope that this is a temporary state of things, and soon the catholic works will continue to grow as they have done in recent years, for the greater glory of God and the good of souls.*

However, the horizon is menacing: *For a long time we are surrounded here by the noises of war. We see the Turks arm themselves with strength and perseverance. Simultaneously the great powers seem to hold the small states in abeyance and they do not abdicate warlike pretensions. How will it all end? God alone knows.* (To Fr. Provencher, March 17, 1886) That doesn't stop the enthusiasm, He continues: *For us, we work ceaselessly for the extension of all the catholic works.*

Among the works in Bethlehem, there is the furnishing of the Pharmacy, the expansion of the Latin cemetery, the care of a certain stable which will provoke new incidents with the Schismatic Greeks. We don't have all the details of these matters, but we have a letter from Father Frederic to Rev. Father Custodian, dated December 30, 1886 from Bethlehem. Without

it, it won't be clear to the readers not familiar with the sites and their usage and it fails to show the intentions of the antagonists and the prudent firmness of the overseer of the work. We give as documentation a typical example:

Yesterday morning around 9 o'clock, Beschara, the Pacha's interpreter and the Modir of Bethlehem accompanied by his secretary and the Turkish interpreter for the Greek convent of Bethlehem, were measuring outside the stables in question.

The Greek interpreter wanted to take comparable measurements inside these same stables (property of the Holy Land). Our interpreter, Pascuale, of Jerusalem formally opposed it. The opposing party did not insist. This job completed, the Modir set to the auxiliary work which we started precisely yesterday morning for the furnishing of the new Pharmacy and the consultation room for the sick of the Latin Nation. He went through the interior of the first room through the new door, already broken through the north façade of the Casa Nova and which is at the ramp leading to the entrance of our convent.

There, in a most ridiculous voice implying great authority, the Modir called the Greek interpreter and invited to enter after him, saying: "Come and examine what the Latins are doing and see if you don't have any objections to make to me for this work started without authorization." Our interpreter opposed the entering of the Greek interpreter into the area where the masons were working, despite the insolent insistence of the Mudir who certainly understood that the work was taking place entirely in the interior of our convent, and we didn't need anyone's permission. Also invited by the Mudir, Beschara approached, but he didn't make any comments. The Greek interpreter kept a rigorous distance and he didn't come into the Convent enclosure.

The rest of the day passed very quietly. We placed a night guard to watch over Bed Essoltan (the stables in question), and this morning, between 5 and 6 o'clock (notice the early hour) at the time I quickly send you a new report, Reverend Father, we are assured that nothing new transpired to disturb the area of the door and the Status Quo remains.

After having finished yesterday's work at the Common Cemetery at Bed-Essoltan, I got some clarifications about the lines that I didn't understand relative to the incident of 1857. Rev. Father Furner (author of account), in reporting the fact, sought to prove the incontestable right of passage to the Common Cemetery in this way: "Because the Latins have a door which leads to said Cemetery, called Bed-Essoltan, a place which is their property since antiquity as proven by the documents which are located at the Procurement of the Holy Land in Jerusalem, and because a door to the Bed-Essolta site which is their property, is located at the above mentioned door of Convent.."

I will study the precise location of this first door, with all the prudence required by such research, and if Your Paternity would, on your side, have a search done by Document Procurer to prove that Bed-Essoltan is the property of the Holy Land.

Once these documents are found, we will remain firm in the unchangeable limits of our Rights. If they want to pursue the matter, this will force the Greeks to act as if they were pushed to do it as with the question of the Cisterns of David: It will be up to them and not to us to prove their rights.

I remain, Reverend Father, your most humble and most submitted in Our Lord,

FR. Frederic, V.C.

If we want an idea what was necessary to settle the question of cleaning the stable and the shed of Bed-Essoltan. Now we will understand a little what it is to “Keep the Holy Sites”. Here is summary, from the JOURNAL OF FATHER CUSTODIAN:

January 2, 1887 – Hassan Bey returned with the Greek architect to Bethlehem. Father Custodian sent interpreter Pasquale at 9 o'clock a.m. At 3 ¼ hours, Father Custodian went with Father Custodial Vicar to the French Consul who, returning from the Pacha, told them the Greeks pleaded with him to permit them to clean the local stable, otherwise they were afraid that there would be some disorder for the Epiphany. Father Custodial Vicar left for Bethlehem at 5:15 o'clock to clarify the matter regarding if the Greeks had used the stable previously, and for how many years.

January 3rd at 7:45 o'clock Father Vicar has returned from Bethlehem. Things are calm with regards the local question of Bed-Essoltan... (at night). There is nothing new regarding Bethlehem. They say the Pacha should have answered the Consul. We know the reply tomorrow.

January 4 – At 8:30 o'clock the Consul comes to tell the Custodian that the previous evening from 8 o'clock to 11:30 o'clock he had corresponded with the Pacha, who persisted he didn't want to recognize the Status Quo over the stable at Bethlehem and feared trouble if he did not permit them to clean it. The Ambassador insisted on the Status Quo. The Pacha begged the Consul to ask the opinion of the Latin Patriarch. The Consul and the Custodian went to the Patriarch. The Patriarch said it was reasonable to maintain the Status Quo and to not relinquish to violence.

We don't know how it ended. But in the same JOURNAL OF FATHER CUSTODIAN there is another Episode. This time it is the Schismatic Armenians who are on the scene, as well as Father Frederic. It is January 28, 1887. From the Moukre: *Father Custodial Vicar wrote from Bethlehem That yesterday the 27th, the Armenians removed the picture of St. George and in its place, put up a bigger and nicer one of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The Greeks protested against the Armenians. Father Custodial Vicar doesn't think issue touches the Status Quo and it doesn't affect the Latins. I think he is wrong.*

A noon Bisciara Effendi came with a letter from the French Consul with a letter for Father Guardian in Bethlehem, in which he asks him to get involved in the disagreement between the Greeks and the Armenians as representative of the Latin party, with regards the picture. Bisciara was sent to Bethlehem by the Pacha, to put together a commission: One Greek, one Armenian and the Guardian to settle the matter. Father Custodian read the letter from the Consul to the Guardian and wrote to the latter, sending a little note to Father Custodial Vicar disapproving the latter's judgment that this was of no importance to the Latins.

In all the difficult questions, Father Custodial Vicar waited until orders were carried out to the letter. He did not fear intervening personally, as he did in the following letter dated November 12, 1887. I don't know exactly what construction was involved in the cemetery of Bethlehem.

*Reverend Father (Guardian in Bethlehem),
We received good news from Constantinople, as Rev. Father Michael, the Discreet will personally tell you.*

Rev. Father Procurator just told me, Dear Father, that you were relatively annoyed with the construction at the Cemetery. Rev. Father Custodial President said more formally that as soon as brother Benedict had finished his dividing wall and Salamee had finished the vault, without putting the Columns on the terrace, but a simple ironwork the work would stop at the Cemetery.

After discussion with Rev. Father Procurator, I will come myself to Bethlehem on Monday afternoon (perhaps by noontime, but that is not certain), and would you please accompany me to the Cemetery and we will resolve together this matter on location.

I would be happy if Rev. Father Michael (Discreet) remained in Bethlehem until my arrival: please ask him to grant me this pleasure.

There's another example of the firmness, proof of prudence, and the Procurator's intelligence. He will come; but at the same time he assures the presence of another Council member. With the opinion of this one and the Guardian, the decision will be solid: "Omne trinum perfectum!"

The Pilgrims of Bethlehem frequently amuse themselves regarding the famous question of the Armenians' mats. Father Frederic was also involved. In 1814 the Schismatic Armenians forcefully took a corner of the left transept of the Basilica of the Nativity which the Greeks had taken away from the Latins. This no longer preserves the right of passage in the Basilica and this right is not exercised in the same left transept. So, the Armenians, to establish their rights spread some mats on the pavement. But, being ambitious, they continuously lengthened these mats and carpets, in such a way as to enlarge their right of property. They even had the intention of preventing the passage of the Latins.

At least that is what is indicated in the following note in the JOURNAL OF THE CUSTODIAN: May 22, 1887 : *The Armenians of Bethlehem lengthened their mats to block passage.* No protest followed. The Ambassador counseled cutting the mats every time the Armenians became ambitious. The following September 4th: *Father Custodial Vicar is called by the Consul on the question of the mats. The Pacha recognizes our right...October 20th at 4 o'clock the Brothers Lievin, Crescence and Vite are sent to cut the mats.* But we see with what persistence the Armenians renew their efforts, hoping to succeed from one day to the next. Also constant surveillance is necessary. We will see other examples in the Mutual Agreement , drawn up by Father Frederic In all honesty, it is a testament of the prudence, dedication and the pacifism of our Servant of God.

Father Frederic's soul was humiliated by the multitude of little fights between the Rites that make up the Holy Sites in Bethlehem. He was more conscious of conserving the secular rights of the Catholic Church in its Holy Shrines, and by his studies of the official and private documents and the miniscule observations, he became the best informed Religious of the

Custody. He wanted to bring his share for peace, the glory of God and the decorum of the religious ceremonies. Since he had just completed the CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER – LATIN / ORTHODOX COEXISTANCE MUTUAL AGREEMENT, to establish the rights and duties of the different persuasions who share the Holy Basilica in Jerusalem (Greek, Armenian, Copt and Syrian), he saw this as an opportunity to establish a similar catalog for the Basilica of Bethlehem. He titled his manuscript: SANCTUARY OF BETHLEHEM – LATIN/ORTHODOX COEXISTANCE MUTUAL AGREEMENT – 1887.

This precious Document contains 65 pages of text and to this day, serves as the norm to resolve all subsequent difficulties and for all the ceremonies of the cult. Father Frederic personally wrote two copies, which we will publish in the third part of this volume, and corrected a third one. For this task, he is to be commended because prior to him, no one dreamed of a similar codification, or would have dared take on such a task due to the inextricable difficulties. They followed an oral tradition. He took on this huge and important work, by dedicating his days to observation, and his nights to documentation. No detail was left out. The reader can verify this assertion by studying the regulations himself. In a few specific passages, we only point out the impieties of the Schismatics and summarize this patient work.

There is question of the opening of the door called Joinville: *The Latins have the right to leave this door open at will day and night. For the sake of harmony, he indicates the ordinary times of opening and closing...*

In the thickness of the wall where the Joinville door opens, the Latins alone have the right to sweep, and if from time to time the Armenians attempt to do it, our Sacristan must object...

From the first semi-circular landing at the bottom of the 5 top steps (at the entrance of the Grotto), sweeping belongs exclusively to the Latins. If the Armenians attempt from time to time to take this right from the Latins: our sacristan must never make this concession...

The Armenians have no right whatsoever to sweep here (in the Holy Grotto) and it is to the point that if by accident one of their lamps falls, it is up to the Greeks and the Latins (whoever sees it first) to clean the place, but not to the Armenians...

It is because sweeping, like washing, establishes ownership in Palestine. We clean what belongs to us but not what belongs to the neighbor.

Three pages of the Regulation are dedicated to the tapestries which embellish the Grotto of the Nativity. Each piece has its identification and is subject to some recommendation. Example: *The Greeks and the Armenians will make every effort to control the right of inspection by obliging us to tell them every time we touch this tapestry, either to change it, or to mend it, etc. The Latin Sacristan must absolutely not cede to the Greeks or the Armenians in this matter.*

Two pages are dedicated to the paintings that adorn the Holy Grotto: description, location, owner, dusting right, etc. Two other pages concern the 53 lamps which adorn the Sanctuary, and one page is related to the rights concerning the candelabra and a closet.

A second part of the Regulation concerns the SANCTUARY SERVICE. I. Ordinary days, Sundays and ordinary Holy Days. The author notes the rights for *the celebration of Masses outside the ordinary schedule*, a description of the *Greek and Armenian Matins* with the specifics involved. There is a lengthy discussion of the multiple censuring by the Schismatics and all the precautions that the Latins must take. And Father Frederic notes all that applies to the masses of each. It really takes an expert to treat all the minutia of the schedule, the ornamentation, the knowledge, the delicacy and the surveillance. No one but one accustomed to it could imagine himself such a specialist!

One chapter is consecrated to the Latins' daily Procession to the different shrines: order, vestments, Amount of censuring, posture, rights, etc. etc. *At the moment of our Procession, the Sanctuary must be entirely free. This Latins' right is undeniable. Formerly the Greeks tried to make us wait by keeping their pilgrims... Our Sacristan must rigorously make them all leave and never condescend in this matter...*

Finally, there's another chapter regarding the opening of the Basilica and the rights to the key by each persuasion.

The third part of the Regulation is dedicated to SPECIAL CEREMONIES during the year, in the Sanctuary. The Latin Epiphany, which coincides with the Schismatic Christmas; solemn entrances, first Vespers, Matins, the Masses of each Rite, the Processions. It is 36 consecutive hours of ceremonies to carry out and watch for the usage of censuring, the candles, the rug, the passages. At every moment, the author notes: *Our Sacristan must be vigilant: the Greeks try to.... the Armenians attempt to....*

Also note: The palms of the Greeks and the Armenians; their Easter; their Sunday in Albis, the celebration of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, of St. George... The Latins' Christmas, with everything it entails, and the feast of St. John the Evangelist.

There is another chapter for specific ceremonies, such as the first Reception of the Patriarch, of Religious Superiors, of Consuls, processions of Penance, Jubilees, and funerals.

Finally, there are two Supplements: One concerning the sweeping in front of the Basilica Saint Helena; the other of 6 pages, notes the specifics of the Latin Epiphany in 1988. The preceding year, Father Frederic was there remarking *de visu* as he said, noted the additions and minimal modifications executed under these circumstances.

For centuries to come, as much as the last 60 years, Father Frederic was owed a profound tribute of gratitude and admiration for this famous Regulation of Bethlehem, an extraordinary work of patience and precision. No matter what kind of vague attempts at controlling by the Schismatics, the Regulation, and it alone, is the authentic document of their rights and usage, as are the rights and usages of the representatives of the Holy Catholic Church in the Land of Jesus.

This chapter would be long enough to terminate it here. However, we must include another important fact. In one respect it is hardly edifying. On the other it greatly influenced Father Frederic's decision to come to Canada. It is worth telling this story in its entirety. Apparently, it is rather painful, but history has the right to be told, and it has to do with Bethlehem. Further, it shows us equally that the Franciscans in the Holy Land don't suffer only from the Schismatics and the laity.

Our documents, authentic copies, tell us in April 1881 at the time the voyage of Father Frederic to France is decided, there is a letter dated April 5 from Rev. Father Custodian of the Holy Land to Rev. Father General of the Franciscans. He is responding to a communication, of which we don't have the text, but the answer tells it all:

I had already read the article in the Milan Journal "THE CATHOLIC MISSIONS", No. 6 and 7 of the 10th year regarding the orphanage of Dom Belloni in Bethlehem. The single observation that I can make is that it is a good dose of exaggerations adeptly covered by various truths. Christian charity does not permit us to always tell everything, and it is best to leave these arguments to history which never forgives anyone! Further, there are a few who ignore that the orphanage and the school of agriculture of Dom Belloni are a boutique. While people are often though not always content with appearances, and sooner or later the truth sees the light of day. For example, Dom Belloni does major collections in Canada (He could open a Commissariate) under assorted titles, among others under the title of the new catholic church of Bethlehem. He distributed flyers printed with all of his usual exaggerations. Last week it happened (exactly, Sunday, April 4) – that a Canadian priest (See Father Provencher: "From Quebec to Jerusalem" p. 370) , one of our pilgrims, after having visited the Holy Manger and saw our new construction, went to Dom Belloni, who offered him one of his brochures. The Canadian, eye witness to the lies it contained, expressed his great astonishment and Mr. Chanoine took the brochure , excused himself saying that it speaks of the chapel at the Orphanage! And on it goes.

On April 25, Rev. Father General replied to the Custodian, focusing on the parenthesis of the letter rather than on the rest of it. *I would be really very happy if we could establish the institution of a Holy Land Commissariate in Canada, but since there are none of our Religious there, I do not know who to name, and even at this time, I don't have the means of supervising him.*

Given that Your Paternity has the occasion to speak to some worthy Canadian priest who comes on Pilgrimage to Jerusalem, you could get information and explore the territory, and like Canon Belloni sends his beggars to Canada, see if you could succeed in doing as much by sending one or two of your Religious to make an extraordinary beg. They have as much right as those whom Msgr. Belloni brags about, and without a web of lies spread by the agents of said Canon. In Canada the population is good, the clergy almost in its entirety belong to our Third Order, the Bishops are respected , and it seems that an extraordinary beg in that region could bring back a satisfactory harvest of donations which would be very useful to financial distress of the Holy Custody. The practical knowledge of the sites and the persons, acquired during the beg, would shed some light to see who would be suitable to be named the stable commissioner of the Holy Sites in Canada. Taking one step at a time, we would advance with certainty.

But this letter didn't arrive in Jerusalem until after the departure of Father Frederic. On May 19th, The Custodian expressed his regret: *If I had known before Easter the sentiments of Your Rev. Paternity on the subject of a future institution of a Commissariate in Canada, I could have profited from the coming to Jerusalem of a worthy Canadian priest close to our Order in general and full of enthusiasm for the Holy Land in particular. I hope Brother Lievin kept his address so that I can prepare the way little by little.*

When this letter reached Rome, Father Frederic had passed there on May 12 almost without stopping given the absence of the Minister General, and he was already in France. But here during the period from the 16 to the 31st of May, the Canadian priest who had visited Bethlehem was also in the Eternal City.

On the 25th, he celebrated Mass and had lunch with the Franciscans in Aracoeli. The next day, Most Rev. Father Andrea Lupori, General Delegate wrote to Rev. Father Custodian:

I was visited in Aracoeli by the brave Canadian priest that Your Paternity had the famous brochure announcing to the world the construction of the FIRST catholic church in Bethlehem! I spoke to him at length at the Propagation where they disapproved of the swindler's ruses to use such means only with the goal of collecting money by deceiving the people.

Who is this brave and worthy Canadian priest "friend of the Franciscan Order and enthusiastic about the Holy Land"? ... None other than Father Leon Provencher, pastor of Cap-Rouge (See: Fr. Provencher, "From Quebec to Jerusalem" pp. 572-662, especially pp. 644-647.) We can understand how this holy man, witness of such a deception, was all enflamed to have the Custodial Vicar who was already begging in France, come to Canada, and how the trip was authorized enabling Father Frederic to do so. Almost without thinking about it, the Franciscan Minister General's plan was providentially realized, Imagine following Dom Belloni's begs under false pretences. It is true that God can draw good from evil and turn these things to the advantage of individuals and peoples!

To know Father Frederic's opinion in this matter, it is in an issue dated 1882 entitled REVISED HISTORICAL NOTICE ON THE WORK IN THE HOLY LAND at Cap-Rouge and printed in Quebec, upon the return to the Holy Land of our Missionary-beggar. No doubt, he heard the echo of the exaggerations, the accusations and the falsehoods of the agents of Dom Belloni. Let us admire the great delicacy, the charity, the marvelous moderation, the frank objectivity with which he responded to the dishonest insinuations spread against the Holy Custody. He enumerates (pp. 47 to 57) the 44 sanctuaries, the 38 parishes, the 46 convents and residences, the 39 schools, orphanages, etc., etc., whose care is the responsibility of the Holy Land mission. Except for the large Egyptian parishes, all are generally poor and without revenues.

(Bethlehem is itemized on (p.49) with the following lines: "IN BETHLEHEM – CONVENT OF ST. CATHERINE where our young Religious, leaving the Noviciate , complete their humanities. The, personnel is responsible for the following work: 1. Watch (day and night) and maintenance of the Sanctuaries of the Nativity (the holy Manger and the Altar of the Three Kings), of Saint Joseph, the Holy Innocents and Saint Jerome (with the tombs of St Eusebius, St.

Paula and St. Eustochia); 2. Chapel of the Milk Grotto; 3. The Latin Parish of 3 to 4,000 catholics; 4. The free primary boys school; 5. Free visit of the sick and 6. the Pilgrim hostel.)

The attentive reader can reflect on this. We could say for example, since these places are so poor, why not create some industry, and especially, why not cultivate the land? (Direct allusion to the agricultural Orphanage of which we spoke).

Well intentioned but too hasty in their judgment, people from elsewhere reproached us regarding maintaining all the indifferent Oriental people with the donations from the faithful in the West. This is a regrettable naivete.

This reproach is so serious that it merits little thought. That's why the benevolent reader will pardon us for briefly clarifying this point. Create a new industry. Is that such an easy task, is it possible even under exceptional circumstances where our poor Latin population is located in the Orient?

What little industry is found in this desolate country naturally belongs to the Muslims, the Masters of these counties. Then they find themselves in the hands of the Schismatics who have incomparably more resources than we do. If our Latin Catholics wanted to reclaim the favors of the Turks and the Greeks, they would have to readily cater to all their needs, despite the prejudice of Faith. But, since with the grace of God, our Latins want to conserve the faith of their fathers, they remain in their economic mediocrity. Until now, our restricted resources did not permit us to create new industries for them.

As for the cultivation of the land, one has to understand the circumstances. If we address the Latins of Jerusalem who are the poorest, we must remember that the Holy City sits in the middle of a chain of rocky, sterile mountains, and these mountains are not suitable to fertilizing here and there the few valleys they enclose. The rain that falls from the sky only in winter leaves this desolate nature under the burning sun which devours it the other eight or nine months of the year. It would be necessary to have the population abandon the city and transport them to the plains. It could be done bit by bit. We have the keen desire and a firm hope, but we can't carry it off. It would be a difficult task that required time, work that in principle we reserve for Canadian colonists. If God wishes to bless such an enterprise, and which was absolutely impractical in the past for lack of security and because of a raft of other obstacles which are too numerous to list here. After that, it is a regrettable naivete on the part of the reader if he judges that we really deserve the reproach of maintaining these poor Latins of Jerusalem.

Can we speak of Bethlehem? Again the reproach falls completely in error, and it would require more greater clarification, since the activity of our people of Bethlehem has become proverbial. It is a small, singularly industrious population living with an extreme economy and sobriety. We help them as best we can and encourage them with all our strength. We have the consolation of seeing them much less needy than those of Jerusalem, the city of sadness and poverty.

These few thoughts on Bethlehem and Jerusalem apply with reservation to all the other parishes in the Holy Land. We believe they are sufficient to convince all impartial readers of the great severity of any reproach articulated above against us.

Faithful readers, here's another reproach in our humble opinion, even more serious than the preceeding one. We were accused (God permits it for our greater good!) of being bad administrators, and consequently of badly utilizing the offerings of the faithful! To those who made it with only ignorance and dizziness, we have the displeasure of replying to this reproach as follows. This should not be addressed to us, but rather directly to the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation, for it is that Congregation which directs, us, that revises all our accounts and controls down to the last cent, and in this way authorizes and generally controls the enterprises that we must carry out and the expenses that they incur. (Our reader gave examples above of this control – Note of the copyist.) If we really deserve this reproach, is it because the Roman Court tolerated such an abuse for six centuries that it has directed us? However this prejudice exists, and we will say here to our proper frustration, that we shared it ourselves prior to our being in charge, as vicar of the Custody of the Holy Land. Fortunately, since it was possible to callously bring the public to a less unfavorable judgment by calling himself as examiner and as judge in all the main enterprises, it is because we were among other things, charged by the Counsel of the Holy Land, to direct the work of the new parish church in Bethlehem, adjacent the August Sanctuary. We recall after several months of searching and demolition, soon the foundations were already coming out of the earth, and reaching a height in some places a depth of twenty-five to thirty feet. We called a most qualified person in this type of work and we prayed in the name of all, to say without exception, what was the estimated total spent for the above mentioned work, (including the large quantity of good stones already cut for the pilasters. We were quoted at least eight thousand dollars, and told that would not be too expensive! So, our expenses didn't even come to three thousand! Also no one wanted to believe it, but the numbers were there, we were witness to it. (Further, see the manuscript on the enlargement of the Church of Bethlehem).

We went into these details to alert our benefactors in Canada against certain talk which despite everything, circulates among the people and it would be too painful for them to hear if they really believed them.

As for the very author of these falsehoods spread against the Custody of the Holy Land, Father Frederic speaks of them directly on page 44 of the same brochure: One of our most consoling memories of the Holy Land, was having met everywhere souls that practice the great law of fraternal charity; where the worthy founder of the catholic orphanage of Bethlehem (Dom Belloni, priest of the Latin rite, Canon of the most Holy Sepulcre), in intimate conversations with him as with other devoted priests who help with the direction of this worthy cause... The truth of these matters discretely reestablishes he people keep their right to respect and veneration.

And on this note, we return to Bethlehem to find Good Father Frederic in another activity: Preaching.

FATHER FREDERIC, PREACHER IN BETHLEHEM

According to the mass book, the first time that we find Father Frederic in Bethlehem after his arrival in 1876, is in January 1879, when he had been Custodial Vicar since April 1878. He had probably come during his service at Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, in December 1876 to April

1877, and since his return to the Holy City on June 12, 1878. Perhaps he had only made short visits, or perhaps we didn't notice his signature in the mass books.

But in January 1879, he certainly spent ten days, because he preached a retreat to the Carmelite Nuns. He himself noted in his notebook: *BETHLEHEM; 1st retreat for the Carmelites from January 23 to February 2 (on that day, the erection of the two Ways of the Cross and a short instruction)*. He also notes some subjects which he used, entering: *Same subjects as at Our Lady of Zion (appropriate for contemplative souls; story and virtues of St. Theresa, St. Madeleine of Pazzi and St. Angela)*. This single sentence is subject for lengthy discussions if we plan to treat these subjects at length outside the homilies of the Servant of God. Nonetheless, notice his care in adapting his homilies to his audience, and the thoughtfulness of finding examples in the history of the Carmelite Order. Notice also the use of his time for the exercises: *Three instructions each day. Mass at 8:15, homily at 9:15 (lasting an hour or 1 ½ hours). At 2:30, same thing. benediction at 4:30 and instruction from ¾ hour to 1 hour. Sleep at the convent; dinner only at the Carmel (light meal). He didn't eat breakfast, no doubt content as usual with a cup of coffee or a glass of water.*

We are led to believe that it was during this retreat that he also studied the situation regarding the parish church, about which he would take up the difficult negotiations in the spring with the religious and civil authorities. We don't find his signature in the mass book again until June 16th.

He returned at the beginning of October the same year, 1879. He notes on page 8 of his notebook: *5 to 14 October: Retreat for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Bethlehem and of Beitjalla. He gave them 4 instructions each day: Morning at 8 and 10 o'clock; the evening at 3 and 5 o'clock followed by Benediction.*

Again he indicates the subjects, almost the same as for the Carmelites and at Our Lady of Zion. *Opening and preparation from 4 to 5 in the evening. The morning: Advantages of religious life; Perfection; Presence of God; prayer. At 3 o'clock: Vows; poverty, chastity, obedience; humility (reading of exorcisms) charity and Holy Communion.*

The evening: salvation, sin, death (id est: desire for death), hell, several conferences on reckless judgement (wore out the subject).

Closing at 6 o'clock in the morning, ending at 7:30. Taking the habit and profession before the P.C. (Custodial Father or the Parish Priest).

Between these two retreats in Bethlehem and at Bethjalla where at the beginning, on October 15 in the evening he made a trip to Jerusalem to give the Carmelite Sisters the spirituality of St. Theresa, and on the 20, he repeats this homily to the Carmelites of Bethlehem, for he explicitly recorded: *October 20th going from Beitjalla to the Carmel of Bethlehem, the evening, spirituality of St. Theresa to the Community alone; same homily as the 15th to the Carmel of the Pater.*

The routes knew him. Here is another example of an extraordinary day which he summarizes as follows:

Sunday, November 2nd : left Jerusalem in the morning for Bethlehem. Arrived at 10 o'clock at the Sisters of Saint Joseph; homily of an hour on Heaven: 1) The joy of the Saints makes us desire it; 2) imitate them; since it is little compared to the rewards; 3) invoke them... The afternoon at 1:30, the church is open, the Sister of Beitjalla are present; homily on the souls in Purgatory. At 2:30 o'clock the children of Don Belloni arrive for benediction; end and immediate departure.

Arrived at the Sisters of Jerusalem at 4:45 o'clock, went straight to the chapel. Monthly retreat: 1st homily of Bethlehem, 1 hour. Since his mass he had traveled 16 miles of road on foot, and given three homilies of one hour each. Will he rest a little? Que nenni! He finishes thusly: Immediately at Holy Savior, private Recitation with the choir of the office of the day, and the office of the dead with the Community. He himself found the day so extraordinary, that he added to give thanks to God: Not very tired. Isn't it marvelous... The apostle is truly tireless!

The following year when he was in the midst of the St. Catherine's church construction, he would renew an almost similar exploit: I always quote from his notebook: *December 5, 1880, 2nd Sunday of Advent, at the Sisters of St. Joseph of Bethlehem, 10 o'clock three took the habit and there were 4 professions of the Third Order; sermon on the suffering; resignation does not suffice, one must arrive at thanksgiving.*

Same day, in Jerusalem to the Sisters, monthly retreat; same subject.

In 1881-1882 as we said, is his journey to Canada, from which he will return ill. Upon his return in 1882, we find him 6 times in Bethlehem: the 11, 19, 30 of October; the 7 and 8 of November, and the 1st of December. In 1883, 5 times; February 21, March 30, July 10 and 11, September 11 and December 28. He spends nearly the entire year in bed in 1884, and only celebrates in Bethlehem on the 29 and 30 of July. In 1885, he resumes his journeys; February 17, May 17, July 10 and 12, September 15 to the 23, and October 21.

Since he returned to Bethlehem almost regularly every month, it seems absolutely certain that he presided over the monthly retreats of the two religious communities, which includes a homily and confessions. Otherwise, how do we understand the following sentences: *Jerusalem, Sisters of St. Joseph, 1st Sunday of January 1885, talk on prayer. Every mystery has its lessons. Today, we have the Infant Jesus in the Manger. Make him known to our little girls and also to our sick adults. Here is another example: Canada, father Poitinaire, his little girl of six and a half years old, to whom the Infant Jesus appeared in 1882, parish of Cap-de-la-Madeleine, when I was ill while with Father Desilets.*

Told the same story, February 1 at the Sisters of St. Joseph in Bethlehem, and on the 2 at the Carmel of the Pater.

Then he didn't sign any Masses in Bethlehem on the 1st or the 2nd of February. He must have made the trip during the day.

But who is this Poitrinaire of Cap-de-la-Madeleine and who is this little girl to whom the Infant Jesus appeared? I searched in vain for some reference, some details in our voluminous documentation. I didn't find anything... except in Father Frederic's narration of the voyage to Canada. Having spoken of the grave illness which brought him to the edge of the grave and the good care he received from Father Desilets, he adds: *In the meantime, the good souls prayed and the good little child, cured by Our Lady of Calvary entered in his little oratory, and there, on his knees at his little prie-Dieu, before a small image of the Madonna, she said this short and candid prayer: "Our Lady of Sorrows, heal the Father..." I was out of danger.* But this last case, however is inaccurate, and seems to be different from the first... Perhaps the future will tell us?... Let us hope!

This was not the only time that Father Frederic spoke of Canada in Palestine. We have very frequent evidence in his notes. To limit ourselves to Bethlehem, and to the homilies he gave, here is how he expressed himself again in 1885:

Retreat with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Bethlehem, from the 15 to the 23rd of September. Same subjects as Jerusalem. And: To the orphans, a homily each day, stories of my mission in Canada. He had such a need to speak about it that he's bound to do so at this fifth conference. I must have slipped a few words to the Religious themselves, in the course of homilies, of which he mentions the subjects again:

Summary: Advantages of the religious life. Salvation, sin, death, hell (religious in hell). Duties toward children; zeal, spirit of faith, sin, teach them to pray, to confess, to assist at Mass. Prayer: 3 conditions: recollection, humility, perseverance. Do not judge; examples of St. James of Marche, St. Bernardin of Siena, St. Peter of Verona, St. Rose of Viterbi. Fraternal charity; rules of the Holy Spirit to practice it.

Homily on perseverance: prayer, sacraments, Holy Mass, Stations of the Cross, Visit to the Blessed Sacrament, devotion to Mary.

The conference at 10:30 o'clock for half an hour. Homily at 5:30 o'clock, for ¾ of an hour.

This religious retreat is the last one that he notes. He certainly preached two others. From the 8 to the 23 of October, 1886 he signs Masses again in Bethlehem, and particularly expressive, those of the 8th to the 15th are marked together on this date and are linked by a bracket that has a note in the margin: *In Beitjalla*. Hence, eight days in that location, and eight days in Bethlehem. That can only be for the annual retreats of the Sisters of St. Joseph. And we only spoke of Bethlehem.

He gives us the subjects he developed in these retreats. What impression did they produce? In reply to this important question, we have the witness of one of the attendees, in the following letter of the Superior of the Carmel of Bethlehem addressed to Rev. Father Mathieu-Marie Daunais, o.f.m. vice-postulator on April 29, 1938:

*My Reverend Father,
We received your letter of last March 5th.*

On the subject of good Father Frederic, of whom you spoke, we didn't find anything in our Archives. However, still having one of the Founding Mothers in our Community, we questioned her regarding the retreat of 1879 which the good Father preached at our Carmel.

The dear Mother, who is still very mentally lucid despite her 85 years, cannot write. I had her dictate to me the impressions that she had of said retreat, notably of the good Father Preacher. Here is what she said to me personally:

I attended the retreat he preached. His accent penetrated to the depths of my soul. We could see that he was a saint. I did not speak with him because I was just a young religious. At his tone, we felt a soul full of the love of God. Humility and kindness resounding from his words gave us a profound impression of holiness.

We regret, Reverend Father, not being able to give you any other information on the subject which concerns you. We would be too happy, if already we could have contributed anything else, however minimal it might be, for the glory of God, for the glorification of his faithful Servant. Please accept...

Sister Marie-Therese of the Holy Spirit, c.a. Prioress

To corroborate this affirmation, we extract the following from the daily chronicle of the Sister of Our Lady of Zion in Jerusalem on September 1st, 1878: *First day of the retreat; it is preached by Rev. Father Frederic, vicar of the Holy Land, religious of the highest merit.* This superlative, will be joined in the same document, by a quantity of others. We limit ourselves to the first.

Preaching in Bethlehem, Father Frederic was again the great preacher of Bethlehem, as we will see a bit further. But before leaving this chapter, which forces us to leave the cradle of Jesus, let us look at the religious solemnities presided by the Custodial Vicar of the Holy Land, our Servant of God in Bethlehem.

FATHER FREDERIC PRESIDER OF THE RELIGIOUS SOLEMNITIES IN BETHLEHEM

Religious life in Palestine revolves around very ancient customs, the most recent of which are determined by the Bull of Benedict XIV: "In Supremo" of January 7, 1746. According to these customs, Father Custodial Vicar must preside in Bethlehem, at the celebration of the Feast of the Holy Innocents, He alone can open the Cave of the little Martyrs, for which he keeps the key in Jerusalem. Actually, Good Father Frederic went yearly to Bethlehem for the 27th of December, for the chanting of the first Vespers and the solemn procession, sang the Mass of the next day in the Grotto of the Holy Innocents, opened the tomb, presided over the Community dinner, which was taken in silence, even on these great feast days. He himself spoke of this celebration, in one of the accounts that we describe later.

Our Brother Noel Gosselin published in the Franciscan Annals of Quebec (January 1944, p13-15) a page which expresses very well the sentiments of Father Frederic, and the ceremonies of this feast. It will rest you from my monotone recital:

"... Going back twenty centuries still leaves us horrified at the account of the bloody scenes witnessed by the gracious city of David. Inasmuch as the imagination seeks to reconstruct the brutal massacre of the newborns, mercilessly slaughtered in the midst of the screams, the cries and tears of their mothers articulating their indescribable grief, we still can't fathom such a savage and inhuman killing. All homes were watered with tears and splattered with blood; all mothers lamented the massacre of these tender victims, these pure lambs whose cries of agony echoed all the way to Rama...

"But tell me: Have you ever heard, any night, on any day of the year, the fine voices of our little Arab singers of Bethlehem, sing in the Crypt of the Holy Innocents the fifth century liturgical hymn composed in their honor: "*Salvete, Flores martyrum*" – Hail! Flowers of Martyrs?...

"Around 4:30 o'clock in the evening, we go down to the crypt of the Holy Innocents... you stop ...surprised, stupefied, charmed. Dazzled by the golden light that illuminates a fresco in delicate shades of pastel, you see the Infant Jesus presenting at arm's length the laurel crowns to the little children who claim them, some standing, others sitting on a bed of roses. It is altogether gracious, softly colored and alive.

"In front of the altar that contains the antique ossuary, empty today where the dear Little Victims were thrown after their slaughter. Today, listen to their Arab brothers of Bethlehem singing, with their mellow voices the ancient lilting hymn that floods the heart of I don't know what gentle emotion, and leaves the soul as if embalmed with the fragrance of cut roses:
"Listen instead:

*"Salvete! Flores martyrum
Quos luci ipso in limine
Christi insecutor sustulit
Ceum turbo nascentes rosas."*

"Hail, O flowers of Martyrs,
At the very beginning of life
The persecutor of Christ brought
Like a storm, living roses!"

*"Vos prima Christi Victima
Grex immolatorum tener
Aram sub ipsam simplices
Palma et coronis luditis."*

"You are the first Victims of Christ
Tender flock of sacrificed lambs.
Under the altar, innocently, you play
With your palms and crowns."

"Jesu Tibi sit Gloria, etc."

“The touching emotions aroused by the lilting chant of the youngsters cannot be described, but they are profoundly, intensely felt. Happy those who could experience them once in order to conserve the memory for the rest of their life!

“With the rising incense which fades under the somber ceilings of the labyrinth, the procession of stars continues to walk while singing, while the echo progressively fades at each angle of the narrow corridors, over there, while the reminiscence remains very softly, very softly, like an lingering perfume of the *nascentes rosas* of the charming sacred poet.

“The Religious are recollected for a few minutes before the iron grille – opened exclusively on December 28th – under which the bodies of the little Martyrs of long ago were thrown to be collected later by pious hands to bring them to public veneration. A sane critic estimated the number around a hundred and forty – what appears normal for this corner of Judea.

“And we envy the poor Franciscans of the Holy Land, who after having given up everything, found everything by coming to live and die near the crib of the Infant Jesus. After having prayed and chanted like this evening at the very site of His Divine Birth, they stop again for their vesper prayer on the tomb of these innocent victims butchered by hatred, to pray and chant for their Benefactors spread throughout the world, and for the friends of their friends, so that by their intercession they ask that all be reunited in eternal life.

(Souvenirs of the poet Prudence, who composed the hymns of the feast.)

“ Upon his return from the Orient in the XIIth century, the warrior Saint Julien, martyred during the reign of the tyrant Ezzelinus of Rome, brought the bones of the Holy Innocents which he placed in a precious reliquary and which are still venerated in the basilica of Saint Justine in Padua. Relics of the same Little Victims are also conserved in the church of Saint Peter Martyr, near Venice, places notably in the diocese where Saint Charles Borromeo was prelate and where he offered them for the veneration of his pious faithful. The church of the Holy Sepulcher (Jerusalem) and that of Bethlehem both have some. That seemed fitting as the country of the innocent Martyrs.

“During the Office of the feast, the liturgy makes us read extracts of a sermon of Saint Augustine, preached to his people on the occasion of the dear and gentle feast of December 28th. The great Doctor compares the Little Innocent Martyrs to tender and delightful flowers that start to show their rose buds to fully take in the first springtime kisses but that the murderous chill and the white frost, followed by tenacious frosts, came to burn to scatter the petals soiled by mud to the four winds of heaven.

“Wrapped in the devastating tornadoes that upset the world, sheltered in the crypt of the Holy Innocents in Bethlehem, we cannot stop repeating: Blessed lovely village of Judea, be blessed for having been rejoiced by the first smiles of the expected Little Redeemer. Blessed are you for having offered to the same Redeemer-Child the first flowers and the first fruits purple with blood, sheltered and ripened under the watch of the Newborn God, in the rays of the divine tenderness of His Immaculate Mother.

“They are beautiful lilies that, better than nature,
 Mix with their whiteness the immaculate image,
 Which draws to their bosom the criminal life,
 During a winter a storm and a shower
 Can do damage to their delicate stem
 Going to blossom in the eternal spring.”
 (Malherbe, 1587)
 “A Brother of the Holy Land, J.E.T.”

Ending on this description, we readily return to another paragraph regarding the liturgical ceremonies over which our good Father Frederic, Custodial Vicar of the Holy Land presided.

“Oh, how this question made him suffer! His charity, his humility were tested with the claims, the criticisms, the diplomatic accusations of neglecting the rights that he had to represent. Who is not aware of the pretensions of the Nations and their governments. The susceptibilities and the oriental difficulties could almost scandalize similar liturgical meanness. But we are in Palestine, and we must not be surprised. However, it is necessary to definitely establish a solution to avoid the repetition of similar annoyances. We will resume here the exchange of long letters between Father Frederic, the Custodian of the Holy Land, and the other Officers of the Custody, and Most. Rev. Father General, the Congregation of the Propagation, the consuls of France and Spain in Palestine.

We will see how the virtues of Father Frederic were definitely the solution to the problem. It is simply a matter of substitutes presiding at the ceremonies. Usage, sanctioned by the Pontifical Bulls determines who should officiate at the Shrines for the various feasts during the year. Father Frederic gives a detailed list to Rev. Father General in his letter of June 25, 1884. The Rev. Father Custodian presides pontifically, at the solemnities where he wishes. The usage attributes ten other solemnities to the Rev. Father Vicar who celebrates with a ceremony and special vestments; the Most Rev. Father Procurator presides at five other feasts. The questions of order such as: 1) when Rev. Father Custodian is unable to preside, who substituted for him? The Vicar, the Procurator, or the Italian Discreet, since the Custody is from this country? 2) Suppose the Vicar is the substitute in these circumstances, should he officiate simply as Vicar or as replacing the Custodian with an assistant priest, sub-deacons and acolytes?

3) When the Vicar is unable to preside over those ceremonies or those which come back to him, who should replace him? The Procurator, the local Superior, the French Discreet or the most senior member of the Discretionary?

4) When it is the Procurator who is unable, who substitutes for him? Until now nothing was spelled out. Sometimes it is done one way, sometimes another. In the Custodial Council there was a Frenchman and a Spaniard who persisted in claiming national rights and brought to their respective Consuls these familial questions which immediately became diplomatic issues. One group accused Father Custodial Vicar of not being strict enough, and the other of being too strict!

With all possible deference toward his colleagues, Father Frederic decided to pose the question directly to the Major Superior of the council. New accusations by the other Nations : he wants to monopolize everything! What suffering!

He wrote: Actually in the absence of Father Custodian which will be long enough, I have a terrible purgatory, obligated as I am to be Superior of Holy Savior and of the Most Holy Sepulchre, and I ardently wish that at the end of my seventh if we absolutely want me to terminate, to remain in the gentle way of obedience, as an inferior, desiring to be the least of all, I will do so that I may better prepare myself for death which advances with great speed and after which I long, with the help of God, for the last 20 years!

Nonetheless, since he exposes matters objectively...

The question of religious functions... I consulted my venerable predecessor of pious memory, Father Joseph Calvi, who gave me an enviable response, that he had never officiated as Custodian, that is with , assistant priest, subdeacon, four acolytes etc. but always as a simple vicar and he found in all conscience, it did not suit him to do otherwise.

Those who maintain the privileges of Father Vicar maintain that the custom exists for the Vicar to officiate as the Custodian because Father Martin, Vicar did it once at Holy Sepulcher, and that Father Marcel, pro-Vicar had invited the Guardian of the Convent, an elder of eighty years for the feast of St. John the Baptist, to be his assistant priest at Mass, which was an occasion for criticism.

Then he gives the example that formerly, he had been obligated to officiate almost like the Custodian: One time for a function (the Invention of the Holy Cross), I did the solemn entrance, like the Custodian, because of the Schismatics, we suppressed the kissing of the hand at the throne; but they made me walk behind the celebrant and the singers, with a Religious to carry the cushions and hold the candles, with prie-Dieu in the middle of the choir.

In another report, the same precision: We ask ourselves if, in the absence of the Custodian, the Vicar has the right to replace him, even if the latter (the Vicar) only does so as a simple Vicar? The lack of decision on this question could cause a big public scandal. He gives an example: If the Guardian claims to officiate himself. I have already been threatened once of such incident. Fortunately, I anticipated it. Your Paternity clearly sees we need a decision for the good of the Holy Land and for peace of heart.

And he agreed entirely with one proposition from Rev. Father Procurator, which appears very logical and I don't see that we can oppose anything serious... But it will raise a violent tempest... (Letter of June 25, 1884).

The following 6th of August, he personally presents a solution to Rev. Father General that was accepted by the Discretionary: 1) It is suitable that Father Vicar officiating in place of Father Custodian, does so with a ceremonial distinct from his ordinary functions, but always with a solemnity inferior to that of Father Custodian. 2) If the Vicar is unable, the Procurator replacing

him and officiating in place, with the same ceremonial. 3) That Your Paternity determines which distinction must be given in the present case...

As for the functions which Father Vicar does as simple Vicar... the Discretionary has not wanted to decide if Father Vicar is unable, that Father Procurator should automatically carry out his functions, or if it should be the French Father (following the custom, presently contested). This decision is equally left to Your Most Reverent Paternity...

And he concludes without complaining: From that, Your Paternity will easily conclude how my position here is delicate and difficult. I am horrified at the least discussion, particularly since they have to do with my presence and I am exposed to that at almost every feast when I have to intervene, etc., etc.

We have cited here only the letters of Father Frederic. Those of Rev. Father Custodian echo him and treat the question from a judgment point of view (August 9, 1881). They indicate as cause of these annoyances, the Rev. Fathers French and Spanish Discreets, which Father Frederic's charity never even mentioned. Thus when the Roman decisions arrived, there was great rejoicing. I sincerely thank Your Reverend Paternity for the dual response you gave. Personally I am very happy with the decision relative to the Ceremonial of the Vicar in the absence of Father Custodian.

Alas – to show the importance that such minute questions take on in the Orient – that the French Discreet raises a diplomatic question and that the French Consul addresses to the Holy Congregation of the Propagation a letter of protest accusing the Custody of not respecting the secular rights of the protector Nation...that Father Frederic is too soft... That made him ill... Finally, the Discretionary of the Holy Land had to enlighten the Holy Congregation on this entire matter, indicating who were the troublemakers. At the next election, they were eliminated from the Discretionary, and Rev. Fathers Frederic and the Procurator were successfully reelected, to the great satisfaction of all.

Also when Most Rev. Father Eusebius Femandzin, General Visitor of the Custody received the French Consul, Mr. Ledoux on June 2nd 1886, who requested that Rev. Father Frederic be removed from being Custodial Vicar because he was a holy man, too obedient to his superiors and he didn't sufficiently defend the rights of France, he received this quasi cavalier response: We will follow the law. Father Vicar is an excellent Religious who is an honor to France and of great use to the Holy Land. (Report of the Visitor, General Curia).

Thus fell into oblivion a specific appeal Father Frederic addressed to Rev. Father General on November 11 1884: I humbly beg your Reverend Paternity, when leaving the charge of Custodial Vicar, you grant me the favor of choosing as my residence, a convent in Palestine: Most Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, or Saint John in Nazareth. I feel an extreme need to recollect myself after a very active life that I have lived for the seven years that I am in charge.

At the same time, I would devote myself to the study of the English and German languages, very useful here and which could be even more useful in the future, if Holy Obedience sent me again to North America for the needs of the Holy Land.

Thus Bethlehem remains in the heart of the Servant of God, the choice location for solitude which his heart needs and to prepare for an even more intense apostolate for the benefit of the Land of Christ.

FATHER FREDERIC AND THE PILGRIMS TO BETHLEHEM

Here we will make a little room for this apostolate of the Servant of God. He exercised it especially in Jerusalem. He would do so in Bethlehem when he accompanied groups received in the Holy City. It suffices to place a few important documents here.

We can start this chapter with a letter which shows to what extent his dedication to Bethlehem made him forget himself and put aside the most legitimate feelings of fraternal affection. Actually, it has to do with a pilgrimage planned by his half-brother, Mr. Jean-Baptiste Dumont. See how Father Frederic replies to his son, his own nephew, Mr. Georges Dumont, lawyer from Dunkirk. We will quote the entire letter, one of the rare pieces of correspondence kept by the Servant of God with his family. The supernatural which flows affectionately paints a picture of the soul of dear Father Frederic.

This letter is dated from Jerusalem, January 27, 1881, while the dear uncle lived mostly in Bethlehem for the construction of the church.

Very dear Nephew,

In the last mail, I was very happy to receive your letter of the 8th with the picture of my niece and grand-niece (whose names you will let me ignore).

I am equally delighted that my brother Dumont wishes to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. However, if God grants him this favor, I implore you, that he not come without letting me know in advance. I will advise him myself the way to do it to his satisfaction. Actually, I will not be available to him. Rev. Father Custodian is absent, and I remain chained here as the Superior of more than 100 religious, with all the administration, the official reports, diplomacies etc, etc. The overseeing and the top priority of our new church in Bethlehem, essentially delicate work which with a simple misunderstanding, can put four or five great powers in a flutter, it's as serious as that.

You see then, dear Nephew, that it would be difficult for me to accompany my brother to the diverse shrines if he comes this year. Nonetheless, in the off season, toward October or November, I believe that I would be more available. And who knows if also with our dear missionary from Bangalore (his own brother) might not also come. Our dear brother Peter wishes so much to come visit the Holy Sites; it is up to my Brother Dumont to take it up with him.

I keenly regret, Dear Georges, not having heard in your letter any news of the family, with whom I have not corresponded in over a year. On the occasion of the pilgrimage of the friend of your brother, Mr. Alfred M. Despott of Furnes, I sent for all of you a small box of objects from Jerusalem which was transmitted to you personally from our General Commissariat in Paris. I expected at least an acknowledgment. To date I have not heard from anyone. I believed that

perhaps the box was lost. Rev. Father Commissioner assured me it was sent to a very good address for a secure means... Let us see...

Alfred, what is he doing? Your dear sister Emily, what is she doing? Is she still at St. Omer? Has her husband had a promotion? The Dewarte and Warlop families (his half-sisters) are they still prospering? Has the number of grand-nephews and grand-nephews increased? All things, my dear Child, interest me.

It is you who has been indulgent toward me if I rarely write. I have much to write and do here. But, for your part, is it too much to ask for an occasional letter from time to time? At least, I would be content with a letter a year from each of you, and I in turn, would send a collective letter like this one.

I beg you, dear Nephew, to remember me fondly to all the members of the family, and tell them that I don't forget anyone in my poor little prayers at the Holy Sites, with a special prayer each night and at the memento for the living at Holy Mass for the living and for all our dear departed who have gone before us to beautiful Paradise where they await us.

I am greatly consoled to hear dear Nephew, that you have all remained faithful to the principles of true piety that your worthy parents instilled in you from your youth. Never forget, dear Nephew, this word from the Holy Spirit: "Pietas ad Omnia utilis est", a word that encompasses absolutely all, by putting it well into practice, you will be happy here below and will have in another life a joy which will never end. Fiat... fiat...

Embrace for me my little niece, I send her with all the fullness possible, a Holy Priestly Blessing and a Seraphic Benediction, to her, her gentle and good mother, and her dear father, and to all... to all.

*Your very affectionate Uncle, Fr. Frederic
Custodial Vicar of the Holy Land*

We will never be able to say that terrestrial affections caused Father Frederic to neglect his duties.

Will the two half-brothers, Jean-Baptiste Dumont and Pierre Janssoone get together for a voyage from Dunkirk and Bangalore converging toward Jerusalem? We don't know. In any event, the former never made the planned pilgrimage. In the fall, Father Frederic was in Canada. Later, the dear older brother, already in his seventies (having been born June 30, 1817), didn't dare risk anything so tiring. He would die on the 1st of May, 1889 without having seen again the dear Benjamin of the family.

The latter came to Palestine, but in 1884 he found Father Frederic very ill in the infirmary. Of this fraternal meeting, we have two precious documents which the reader would be happy to hear about, for they prove the mutual admiration of these two brothers.

Replying to Rev. Father Picot, who let him know of his brother Pierre Janssone's death, Father Frederic recalled the pilgrimage of the latter. *In Jerusalem he found me in the infirmary,*

practically dying. However, I was able to get up to cross the corridor, and receive him in the Third Order of Penance. The people who came to see me, pilgrims and others, told me unanimously "Your brother is a saint! He spends all his time praying at the shrines, without concerning himself the least with visiting the surroundings by pure natural curiosity." Before his departure, I had obtained for him through favors, 2,000 rosaries of olive wood of the Garden of Gethsemane. Upon his return to Bangalore, he wrote to me that his return resembled a veritable triumph. The Governor had sent his official coach to meet him, drawn by two white horses. He added that when he entered his rectory, he didn't have a single rosary left, so many of his dear parishioners rushed to have a souvenir from the Holy Land. (The necrology of Father Pierre Janssoone appeared in the Review of Foreign Missions of Paris, 1913, pp 441-2).

In turn, the witness of the Missionary from India is equally moving. We find it in one of the letters of his half-sister and godmother, Victoire Dumont, wife of Pierre-Emmanuel Deware:

Could we... carry the fruits, the abundant fruits of salvation. What do we have better to do in this world than that? That is our unique business, nothing else matters. I am more and more convinced of this truth, since I went to the holy Sites, where I saw not only the Calvary, the tomb of Our Lord, the place of his Conception, of his Birth, etc., but my very dear brother Frederic, who is a true saint, a great and amiable saint, a saint whose life we read with admiration, a saint to make miracles.

Seeing him struck me so, that the memory of his traits are continually present in my memory. (The original of this letter was given to the Postulation, unfortunately it is not dated.)

Two years later, on the route to Bethlehem on Christmas eve, Father Frederic discovered his cousin in the person of Rev. Father August Achte, White Father of Africa, then professor at the Greek Catholic seminary at St. Anne in Jerusalem. Here is what we actually read in the life of this religious, by Father G. Leblond:

With Christmas day approaching, our missionary wanted to commemorate the great mystery by celebrating the Holy Mass at the altar of the Manger in the grotto of the Nativity of Our Lord. He took the route to Bethlehem. The Vicar General of the Custody of the Holy Land, Rev. Father Frederic found he was Flemish. In talking about the country, the two compatriots were quite astounded and charmed to discover a relative through Mrs. Achte and the Vandaele family. Under the white garb and under the frock of St. Francis beat hearts full of an equal love of Jesus Christ. The two cousins gave themselves an affectionate accolade and made the most solemn promises to pray for each other for their sanctification.

Despite the support of this unexpected family, Father Achte didn't come to fulfill his devotion without difficulty. He had to wait until five o'clock in the evening to go up to the altar.

The benevolence of Rev. Father Frederic obtained for him a number of precious souvenirs which he sent to his parents and to all his friends in Warkhem; rocks from the principal Holy Sites with the authentic seal of the Custody, rosaries from Gethsemani olive trees, indulgenced crucifixes, etc. All the objects having touched the Holy Sepulcher, Calvary and the altar of the Nativity of Our Lord. (Excerpt without further reference, communicated to Rev. Father Mathew M.

Daunais o.f.m. the 16th of May, 1922 by Father A. Achte, pastor of Hoymille, Northern France).

These particular pilgrimages don't tell us the burdens which Father Frederic imposed upon himself as guide of pilgrims. At the express request of Rev. Father Commissioner of the Holy Land of New York (letter of Rev. Father Custodian, June 8 1886). Rev. Father Frederic wrote from Jerusalem on August 17, 1887 an account on the French Pilgrimage of Penance. We cannot quote in its entirety this article published in "The Pilgrim of Palestine – New York, October 1887". However we cannot refuse the reader the paragraphs that concern the pilgrimage to Bethlehem. Already for six days (May 17-22) Father Frederic accompanied the pious travelers. Let us listen to the account of the day May 22-23. If he speaks of himself, it is only to give more life to his account, since he was absolutely not known in the United States.

Sunday afternoon, our pilgrims, hearts full of joy, left (from St. John in the Mountains) for Bethlehem. I welcomed them in our new and monumental parish church, after accompanying them in their solemn procession and their really triumphant entrance in the city of David. After a brief talk and Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament, each was assigned a room, and they had supper. It was a true fraternal agape, as they gathered in a large tent that has been raised near our convent in a garden belonging to the Association of the Holy Land. After a brief supper our tireless pilgrims came with me to church for a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and I spoke to them for almost an hour of the wonderful Shrine of Bethlehem. Then those of a weaker health retired by obedience to rest which was absolutely necessary to them. The others, the majority of the pilgrims, followed me to the site of the Nativity and the Crib, where we offered prayers for all the needs of the Church, especially for the salvation of France, the particular object of this great pilgrimage. I explained to them the wonders of this site where Heaven truly came down to earth. Time went by so quickly that nobody seemed to notice.

We left the holy Grotto of the Nativity to go to the cell of St. Joseph, near the Tomb of the Innocents, while still talking about the wonders that take place in these places, when the priests interrupted me saying: "Father, it is nearly midnight! It is time for us to prepare for the Holy Mass!"

The masses started at midnight. Eleven masses in succession at the altar of the Three Kings, at the very site where the Divine Child was placed in his little Crib during Christmas night, until it is time for the non-united Greeks have the right, according to the mutual agreement, to occupy the sanctuary. At the first mass, we sang the hymns of joy. There were many communions which I had the consolation of distributing myself not to detain the priest who celebrated at the altar. The communions continued throughout the following masses. The last mass ended around four thirty in the morning. We had sung and prayed the entire time. I believe that I can certainly say that some of the admirable pilgrims never left the sanctuary during this entire night, which was truly a night in paradise.

No, Revered Father, a nation where there are still heroic souls like those I saw with my own eyes cannot perish. The rest of the morning was spent visiting the Grotto of the Shepherds. Upon our return, solemn mass, distribution of the holy relics of Bethlehem, visit of the great basilica of St. Helena with explanations by Father Lievin, etc., etc. Then dinner and a little rest.

At one thirty, there was a new gathering at the parish church, and at two o'clock visit the Holy Manger. At the holy Rock, they raised the tapestries that cover it, they removed the lamps that burn night and day, and they removed the large painting at the back which represents the mystery, and the Holy Crib appears as it did. The pilgrims approach it one by one, praying aloud, with an inexplicable devotion and they kissed the rock, silent witness of the Birth of the Lord of the world and which still keeps the celestial perfumes of the presence of the Divine Child, who touched it with His little feet and His little hands while he had been laying on a little bit of hay and straw with the care of his divine Mother. What souvenirs! What consolation!

The pilgrims touched the rock with all the religious objects they had purchased in Bethlehem from our intelligent and industrious Latins, who always await the great pilgrims with a joyful impatience. The Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament ends this great day in Bethlehem, and our pilgrims once again take to route to Jerusalem, with hearts full of the most celestial consolations...

There we have Father Frederic's day. He spoke, prayed and made others pray, sang and made others sing for almost 24 continuous hours! His soul exults with joy as much as the happy pilgrims he guides.

Let's finish this chapter with two other small things which show the exquisite solicitude of Father Custodial Vicar toward the pilgrims to Bethlehem.

May 31, 1885 he took the time to write to Father Guardian of Bethlehem to let him know: Mr. Council of France and his brother, Mr. Council of Caiffa, an excellent person that Your Paternity knows very well, will come tomorrow morning to Bethlehem, to spend the day, and perhaps the following night. They will be accompanied by several people, such as Mrs. Council and Mr. Sabadini, etc. In any case, I recommend them to your charity and your kindness, and I reaffirm your affection in the Lord.

Finally, with what delicacy he treats and even defends the workers employed by the Custody to serve the pilgrims. Thus, May 19, 1885 he wrote to the same Guardian of Bethlehem: *Deo gratias, the servant John did not shirk his duty. That's why he returns at peace to his office. Nonetheless, I took advantage of the circumstance to remind him to always serve with humility and faithfulness the pilgrims who receive hospitality from us.*

I beg your Reverend Paternity, in the event someone asks why he came to find me, tell Them that, occupied especially with the caravan, I had some verbal instructions to give him to accomplish his service, instructions that I couldn't give him on Sunday, etc. No one should think that the poor young man failed in his duty.

I inform you that I called John here, to give him instructions regarding his way of serving the pilgrims, etc. All goes well. I recommend myself to your prayers, so that the Divine Infant gives me the grace and the strength to maintain the great burdens of the moment.

Charity, piety, devotion without counting, that is how our Custodial Vicar of the Holy Land always appeared.

FATHER FREDERIC, APOSTLE OF BETHLEHEM AND THE INFANT JESUS

Regardless of the surprises and the disappointments their faith encounters, all Christians who visit the Holy Places of Palestine feel an immense need to share with their joy with others. Father Frederic, a sensitive soul, a seraphic heart and a fully apostolic zeal, had this great desire. *It would be desirable that Pilgrims would arrive in larger groups from Europe and from America to rejoice with us the coming of the Savior, to hail the divine Child in his little cradle and to adore him with us as the Savior of the World!* (See: Pilgrim of Palestine, New York Jan. 7, 1886, p21).

But since these pilgrims which he is so happy to receive and for whom he deploys so much solicitude are not and will not always be but privileged types, even if they arrive in a group of 1200 or 2,000 in the famous Pilgrimages of Penance, Father Frederic did not fear to borrow the great voice of the press to speak to the catholic world about Bethlehem so dear to his heart. We were not able to gather all his publications on the subject. For if he sent his articles to the French and American Franciscan reviews, we know that the journals of these countries, the Italian, Spanish and English reviews and elsewhere considered themselves happy to communicate them to their readers and translated the moving pages written by Father Frederic.

For our part, we believe we continue the work of Father Frederic by publishing again in this volume, his writings that we found on the subject of Bethlehem, there's no need to give a more or less complete list nor give a brief analysis. With each article, we will mention the source, that is the books where we have extracted them. To collaborate with these diverse publications, Father Frederic did not have access to a typewriter as we do, so he had to re-write these long articles three or four times by hand. While this work was laborious, it gave him new joy, since he was making known and loved the country which saw the birth of the divine Redeemer of souls. Nonetheless it is new evidence of what he wrote to his nephew, Georges Dumont (January 27, 1881). *I have so much to write and do here.*

At first glance this is a strange observation. The first articles by Father Frederic about Bethlehem appeared in an American publication. In 1881 (August 10 to the 22nd) Father Beggar passed through New York for the Holy Land. Rev. Father Charles Vissani of Nazzareno, a Franciscan commissioner for the Holy Land received him. Returning there, they saw each other in May 1882. They spoke at length of the interests of the Holy Custody, as we will have occasion to prove elsewhere (Letters exchanged between Rev. Father Custodian and Rev. Father Commissioner from New York in 1881-2). There was probably question of starting an American publication. It started in January 1884 and was called "THE PILGRIM OF PALESTINE". Father Frederic had promised his cooperation, but he returned to Jerusalem ill, and in the year 1884, he was close to death a number of times.

Nonetheless, February 11, 1884 no sooner had the first issue of THE PILGRAM appeared, that Father Vissani delicately asked Rev. Father Custodian, Guido de Cortone: *If you could*

favor me with the description of the ceremonies in the various shrines, I would be most grateful. I know that you must find yourself very busy, but you could give the task to someone else, for example, Rev. Father Vicar who I believe would do it willingly...

July 22nd he came back with the request: *I pray Your Reverend Paternity to give the task to someone for example Father Vicar, or others, to write said correspondence. If it is written in Italian, French or German, we have someone here to translate into English.*

The project was no doubt suggested to Father Frederic, Custodial Vicar. Despite the state of his health and numerous other obvious tasks, he accepted this one and went to work. January 14, 1885 the Custodian wrote to New York: *I hope you received the letter of Father Vicar Frederic. Now he prepares another article to send you next week.*

On May 14, 1885: *I leave for the Holy Visit; but I leave Father Frederic in charge, who sends his regards and sends you some articles for your publication.* The articles arrived in the United States, because on July 24th, the Commissioner wrote to the Custodian: *Tell Father Vicar that I send my wishes. I received his letters with the manuscripts... In the next issue we will publish the correspondence on the Holy Week Ceremonies.*

Finally, the articles on Bethlehem are announced the 25th of August, 1885, *Father Vicar who sends his regards, will soon send you something about Bethlehem...* On October 21, Rev. Father adds: *I received the first two issues of the journal and you have my most distinguished compliments. I hope that Father Vicar will not fail to send you the material for the articles which he promised me.*

Was there a postal delay? The American Commissioner complains February 5, 1886: *I only received the letter of September 30th from Father Vicar where he talks about the ceremonies in Bethlehem and the area around the Dead Sea. The first was published in the January 1886 issue, and the next one will be published soon.* But the mail arrives and the Commissioner expresses his gratitude on June 8, 1886: *Thank Father Vicar very much for his articles which arrived recently.* Insatiable, six months later he asks again (February 8, 1887) *I hope that Father Vicar received the PILGRIM of January, that contain his two articles about Bethlehem. In the April issue will appear the one about the costumes of the Bethlehem people. Father Custodian, see that I have some correspondence. It does a great deal of good to promote the work of the Holy Land.*

Excuse us these lists of excerpts of letters. We felt it necessary to make them known because we find little regarding the collection of THE PILGRIM OF PALESTINE, even in Washington, actual seat of the Commissariat of the Holy Land. By the same token, the list of articles which Father Frederic communicated to the Postulation, seems incomplete. Two articles in 1886, while he certainly sent some in 1885, four in 1887, and eleven in 1888.

By comparing the articles mentioned on the list with those which were published in the REVUE FRANCISCANE DE BORDEAUX, we find that those were only part of these. As for the latter, they were republished in LES ANNALES DU T.S. ROSAIRE of Cap-de-Madeleine, from November 1894 to December 1897 (one article per month)

and in part in the REVUE DU TIERS-ORDRE ET DE LA TERRE SAINTE of Montreal (1891 - 1893).

These three periodicals spread to France, the United States and Canada, the principal facts that a Christian should know about the City of Jesus' Manger and at the same time, love of the Divine Infant.

In addition to the journal articles, Father Frederic also published books. He speaks of Bethlehem especially in his LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, whose first edition appeared in 1894 and there is known a total of 42,000 copies; in the MONTH OF THE HOLY ROSARY, 1895 with 3,000 copies; in SAINT JOSEPH, HIS LIFE AND HIS CULT, 1902 – two editions; in THE LIFE OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY 1904 – around 8,000 copies, the ALBUM OF THE HOLY LAND, 1905 – edition of 5,000 copies, and THE ANGELIC LAND, 1905, two editions, consisting of 7,000 copies.

Finally in 1900 he publishes a 32 page booklet to the Infant Jesus, patron of Christian youth. Entitled THE INFANT JESUS OF PRAGUE for which he reproduces the statue, gives the origin of this devotion, and the favors obtained through it. But the first part is used to speak of the Infant Jesus and his predilection for children. In the dedication that he makes to Christian parents, he expresses in a few words the entire sense of his particular apostolate to the Child Jesus... *Where is the source, the origin, the point of departure of all good education? Is it not at the foot of the Cradle of the Man-God? Doesn't Our Lord Jesus Christ teach us, from His entrance into this world, the importance of the salvation of our souls? and doesn't He indicate for us the certain way to arrive to our blessed end?*

It seems to us that in writing and distributing thousands and thousands of copies in our Canadian parishes, that Good Father Frederic couldn't help but to recall the beautiful days of his youth, under the eye of his mother, and at school the 'incomparable spiritual talks, which he preferred to any tale or any story.' He ends his prelude by assuring parents: *You will be happy if you obtain that your young children have a tender affection for the Infant Jesus... In their growing piety, they will want to resemble their divine Model... That's how young Saints are made... in the hearts that the Holy Spirit was pleased to pour an abundance of gifts!*

Father Frederic did not insert pictures in these books, but that doesn't matter; When a book is closed, the picture is forgotten. To keep the thought of the Divine Model present in the spirit, he has recourse to statuary.

He had brought with him several lovely reproductions in wood of the Baby Jesus of Bethlehem. He received some and asked for more. On August 10, 1888 he replied to Rev. Father Procurator General: *We have the Infant Jesus which was destined for Paris, at your request we are keeping them.* The following March 20 he asked Rev. Father Custodian of the Holy Land: *An Infant Jesus of Bethlehem, that is for the new Commissariat which will be completed July 31st. I offered the other three to selected Benefactors.* March 8, 1890 he comments to the same *in the last shipment we found the Infant Jesus...* October 24, 1894 to Rev. Father Perron, o.m.i., pastor of Holy Savior in Quebec, he wrote:

As for the Infant Jesus, despite all our desires, we will have to wait until after Christmas. The quickest means is at least three months away. But we will have our precious little Treasure. Then in April, 1895: The Infant Jesus must be at sea at this time, and as soon as he arrives, you will be informed.

The first of these “special Benefactors” to receive a statue of the Infant Jesus of Bethlehem was His Eminence Msgr. Lafleche, who had given the land for the new Franciscan foundation. We have evidence of it in the following letter of Father Frederic to the Rev. Father Custodian in Jerusalem: *Presently, I come to ask Your Paternity to tell Brother Benedict to make a detailed drawing for me the Crib of Bethlehem.. I wrote him an ad hoc letter on March 28th and I have not heard from him.*

It is to the Msgr. of Trois Rivières that I wish to present the Crib in the Cathedral, such as it is. I offered His Eminence a Holy Bambino di Bethlemme; that is venerated by the people and I believe that the Divine Infant heals the sick little children. It would be a great service to me if Brother Benedict would send me his work by mail without delay.

It was at the very heart of the charitable diocese that the project for which Father Frederic would work his entire life: the reproduction of the most venerated sanctuaries of the Holy Land.

For his part, the ardent missionary royally installed one of his gracious statues in the dear church of Our Lady of the Rosary at Cap-de-la-Madeleine, where he usually stayed. Around 1888 or 1889 according to the witnesses, it was a great feast for the children he did the solemn benediction. Soon he organized the prayer of the very little ones and others before the attractive representation. Immediately the daily pilgrimage of the school children was established, at the end of the noon recess, and in certain circumstances, two or three times a day. Father Frederic attracted them. Often the entire recreation was spent around the Good Father from the Holy Land who spoke so well to the children. Then, when the time came, the Good Father accompanied them to church for their special prayers to Little Jesus. From his pen, we find some of the intentions he recommended to them:

He wrote on May 6, 1892 to Most Rev. Father Raphael d’Aurillac in Rome – and every month of Mary, for our dear children of the Cap. They are ravishing. They group together like little birds from the sky, around the little Jesus of Bethlehem which we have here, in a nice crib. Once I saw all the little children of one entire parish. I preached during thirty minutes. I made each of them venerate the relic of the Infant Jesus. Not one was frightened, not one spoke, not one cried. Complete silence. It is a wonder. Benedicus Dominus qui facit mirabilia solus.

In the Annals of the Most Holy Rosary (February 1893, p.38-9) he publicly expresses this admiration. *Each year especially during the good season, numerous pilgrims come to invoke Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary... knowing that there is a divine Infant of Bethlehem, a blessed little statue of the Infant Jesus, in the same place as the HOLY CRIB IN BETHLEHEM enriched with very numerous Indulgences. They know also that all the little children*

of the parish who frequent the large school in the area of the church, come very day after their noon recreation, recite the rosary before the altar of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary then they say a special prayer to the divine Infant of the Crib. These dear little earthly angels pray to the little JESUS, the joy of the Angels in Heaven, for all the intentions of the subscribers of the ANNALS, but particularly for their little friends, little sick children and especially for the mothers whose children die without baptism.

These dear children obtain wonders. Father Frederic must have been very happy to tell them, among other things, one that is related in the Annals of September, 1893 (p. 179); Becancourt – *To Rev. Father Duguay, custodian; Some time ago I requested the prayers of the little children of the Cap who pray up to two and three times a day before the beautiful statue of Mary and before her divine Child, the little statue blessed in Bethlehem and enriched with such great indulgences. I recommended my little boy who had fevers and who was not getting better. It occurred to me to honor the Blessed Virgin by publishing the healing of my child, if I obtained it through the prayers of the little children in her beautiful Shrine. I made the promise and almost immediately my little boy improved. Today he is fine. A thousand thanks...*

Let us also quote this witness. Writing to the Rev. Mother Josepha, superior of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Mary in Quebec, May 2, 1893, on the subject of a proposed publication, a Family Journal he gives a broad outline: *1) Legends of the Blessed Virgin; 2) Divine marvels in the little children (We will win all the mothers this way, and fathers will not remain indifferent) . He continued, They bring me all the sick little children... and we must heal them. It is the Child Jesus of Bethlehem who heals them...*

The children's ceremonies like those at the Cap obviously could not be organized on a daily basis in all the parishes. At least, during retreats and Tridiums, Father Frederic never failed to have one or two specific exercises for the school children, even for the younger ones. So the talks invariably were about the Little Jesus and the exemplary piety of the children of Cap-de-la-Madeleine.

Unable to endow each church with a statue of the Child of Bethlehem, in his piety toward the Infant, Father Frederic had the happy, and holy idea to propagate the statue of the Infant Jesus of Prague. It has the advantage of representing the little King standing. Certain parishes still have it. In certain ones, thousands of families also wanted them, if not the statue, at least an image, which Father Frederic frequently had to sign. I saw several of them. Soon, in Christian homes, during morning and evening prayer which was done in common, families added a nice supplication to the Infant Jesus of Prague, learned by heart from a booklet from Father Frederic. Sometimes also, it was recited in schools, especially when it was question of obtaining general favors for parochial groups: rain, good weather, epidemics, floods, fires, etc.

It is therefore more than evident that Good Father Frederic kept very much alive in his soul the dear memory of Bethlehem and by every means possible, he promoted the beneficial devotion to the Child Jesus. We have not talked about his oral preaching on this particular subject. It is because we have not found any written documents proving his

homilies. For lack of them – if you will permit me I will recall a memories of my early youth. It was a solemn triduum at St. Augustine of Portneuf which accompanied the benediction of the Infant of Jesus of Prague statue – benediction followed by a great procession of said statue throughout the entire village. Rev. Father Frederic presided over the Triduum and the procession. The statue still adorns the lower choir of the parish church.

However, Father Frederic's apostolate for inspiring confidence in the Child Jesus didn't stop there. Returning to Canada in 1888, he brought a large number of relics from the Holy Land; pieces from which came the great mysteries of the Redemption. These pieces or powders were wrapped in double paper, which carried the seal of the Holy Land Custody on the front, and on the back the name of the place: Site of the Annunciation, Nazareth; Site of Calvary, Jerusalem, etc. There were some "Site of the Holy Crib, Bethlehem". These relics were much easier to obtain because above and on the side of the Crib, the rock is still uncovered, being veiled only by a tapestry. When the tapestry was installed at the altar of the adoration of the Angels in 1874, the Guardians of the Shrine collected with care the most minute particles of rock.

Arriving at Cap-de-la-Madeleine in 1888, Father Frederic brought to the Marian Shrine the gift of several considerable relics; sites and mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary for a special reliquary; and other sites related to Our Lord, especially his Passion (see: LE JOURNAL DE TROIS-RIVIERES, 20 Sept. 1888, Revue du T.O., Nov. 1888 p. 308; Annales du Tres Saint Rosaire, Sept. 1894 p. 176).

He distributed to the Pilgrims of the Cap, and especially in Christian families by the thousands, the other packets from the "Site of the Holy Crib".

So God started to perform wonders and healings with the application of these relics of the Holy Crib. Father Frederic rejoiced in his heart. Souls ceased to attribute the gift of miracles to him; he could defend himself on the virtue of the relics from the Holy Land, given that the faithful continued to believe in like favors leaving the answer from Heaven to the prayers of the "holy missionary" and a reward for his devotion and his zeal toward the Divine Child Jesus.

We allow ourselves to complete this chapter by recounting one of these favors in the first years of the ANNALS OF THE MOST HOLY ROSARY entirely written by Father Frederic, but become extremely rare in the country. We will read it as it is related, a witness to the popular effectiveness of Father Frederic's apostolate in behalf of Bethlehem.

In Issue #2 of the Annals of the Most Holy Rosary (Feb. 1892, p.39-40). we read the following certainly told by Father Frederic: *Mrs. B. living in one of the neighboring parishes to Trois Rivieres (St. Etienne des Gres). She is a privileged soul, as one Our Lord visits by trials because He loves her. Mrs B. was for many long years on calvary due to continual illness, sufferings and trials. The most painful for her was to see that all her little children died, and died without the benefit of baptism. She had used all sorts of remedies and alone, in His mercy could heal her of all her infirmities...*

Her husband had the pleasure of obtaining for her, through a pilgrim from the Holy Land (who is none other than Father Frederic) a little bit from the Site of the HOLY CRIB, from this blessed site where the Divine Child of Mary stayed for 40 days with his divine Mother, touching this venerable Rock with His little feet and His divine little hands! A great virtue must be attached to these rocks. Her faith made her wait. She wore her holy relic carefully on her... Happy mother, Mrs. B. was fully spared. Her little child was born full of life, beautiful like a little angel of the earth and rejoiced forever of the wonderful grace of being a little child of God and friend of Little Jesus by the salvific waters of holy Baptism.

The couple in their joyful thanksgiving, came to receive holy communion at the shrine of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, and offer their newborn to the divine Child of Mary, before the gracious statue of Baby Jesus, blessed and enriched by the most precious Indulgences in the very place of the holy Crib of Bethlehem!

Knowledge of the virtues of the Relic of the Holy Crib is launched. The favors will respond to the confidence of the faithful and the prayers of their intercessor, Father Frederic; The ANNALS of February 1893 (p.38) recall a similar case and adds the following:

Mrs. L. T. P. from Montreal went through the same trial, the most painful for a truly Christian spouse. Reading in the Annals of the Most Holy Rosary about this favor obtained by confidence in the precious Relics, she had the same faith, and she set out to find one for herself. The divine Child of Bethlehem granted her this consolation. Addressing the publisher of the Annals, she asked him to recommend her to the prayers of the Rosary, and especially to the prayers of the children of the Parish at the Cap.

Here is what the spouse of Mrs. L.T. P... wrote to the Publisher of the Annals. "...Truly, I don't know what expression would best serve to thank you and your charitable parishioners, for the unique gift we just received from the DIVINE CHILD of the CRIB and Our Lady of the Rosary... You were interested in our cause which was almost desperate and God heard us in the birth of our child who was born the 26th of this month, full of life and who was Baptized the same day... God be praised as well as his holy Mother! L.T.P."

April, p.74: Saint Gregoire – Thanks to the little JESUS OF THE CRIB and his holy Mother! a little child of three years who couldn't walk, now walks wonderfully – A person who suffered from great shoulder pain applied a relic from the Site of the HOLY CRIB and the pain disappeared instantly!

In May (pp. 97-8) is a letter published in the Annals from a pastor: St. Pierre-les-Becquets, January 21, 1893. Dear Father (Father Duguay). I must share with you a healing obtained during our last pilgrimage. J.L. of this parish, suffered from dyspepsia for the last three or four years, and had tried many cures to no avail. The night we returned from our pilgrimage, he had supper and went to rest early. Shortly after, as usual, he started having great discomfort. He placed the Relic of the SITE OF THE HOLY CRIB on his chest, and it was over. Since then the confidence in the precious souvenirs of the Sites where the great mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary were accomplished. Your most devoted brother, Chs-U. Garceau, Pastor

In June, (p.115) – *St. Eugene-de-Grantham* – Last year, I came down with a congestion which stubbornly stayed with me for around three months. The doctor gave me no relief. I could find no rest, day or night. So, armed with a Relic from the SITE OF THE HOLY CRIB, I started a novena to Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary and on the ninth day, my cough disappeared completely and that while refraining from any medication during the nine days. I can sleep, and was only a little weakness which disappeared the next day... V.N.L.

(p. 118) *St. Paul-de-Chester* – For a long time I suffered from a very painful oppression. The pain always increased. One night, the oppression was so violent that they feared for my life. During this extreme condition, I suddenly remembered my Relic from the SITE OF THE HOLY CRIB. I took it and placed it on my chest. Immediately the choking stopped and since then I feel no pain whatsoever. A thousand thanks for this favor... A subscriber.

In July, three healings (pp. 135-7) – *Mrs. G.* had numerous grave illnesses. Condemned by the doctors who feared suffocation, mostly due to a loss of blood which weakened her considerably, on the eve of Holy Thursday, the gravely ill woman places on her head a Relic from the SITE OF THE HOLY CRIB, with the invincible confidence in the protection of Our Lady... The next day, to the great surprise and I must say stupefaction of the assistant, Mrs. G. came alone to the communion rail and took communion. She then participated in all the ceremonies of Holy Thursday. On the holy day of Easter and the following Sunday, she was seen attending the Offices with the rest of the faithful. At the very moment she applied the HOLY RELIC the cause of her hemorrhaging, declared incurable by three doctors, completely disappeared. Quasimodo Sunday, April 9. A witness.

Louiseville – Mr. X's little boy, a child of two and a half years, was overtaken by difficulty breathing caused by an interior inflammation. His parents expected death at any minute. They applied the Relic of the SITE OF THE HOLY CRIB, and the pain diminished on the spot. Several days later the child was completely healed. A subscriber.

Shawinigan – March 30 1893 – Mrs. Omer Caron suffered from a leg wound since June 1892 and despite the medication given by doctors or people said to be knowledgeable, the wound kept getting larger. Discouraged by the ineffectiveness of the medications, Mrs. Caron asked for a healing at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary. Family novenas were made, and they applied to the edge of the wound, the Relic from the SITE OF THE HOLY CRIB. From that moment, the wound stopped growing, and from one day to the next, healing took place, so well that now there is no trace of this malignant wound that made Mrs. Caron suffer for over eight months... (Settlement of the promise, etc.)... Father Chs. Bellemare.

Published in the September 1893 issue (p.179) – *St. Jean-Deschaillons* – A dangerously ill young girl asked for prayers at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary. She herself applied with a profound respect and a great confidence, a Relic from the SITE OF THE HOLY CRIB...and the favor was obtained. A thousand thanks. ... a Child of Mary. The following year, nearly every month at least one extraordinary grace is reported. Let us quote the first, then enumerate the others.

January (1894, pp. 15-16): *Maria Morrisette*, ten yhears old, from *St. Sylvere* was afflicted with

epilepsy, and she fell very frequently. Last year, the poor child went with her mother with the Pilgrimage from St. Gertrude to the Cap. Her mother brought her to the priest (Father Frederic) who sent her to pray before the CHILD OF BETHLEHEM. The little girl prayed with admirable fervor. Getting up, she felt herself delivered of the terrible affliction. Since the visit to the Cap, today a year later, little Maria has not fallen a single time. Her mother cried with joy and gratitude when telling me about this marvel... F.F. (Father Frederic, no doubt).

On the following page, 17: *St. Gregoire (of Nicolet) – Healing of a stuttering child by the application of a Relic from the SITE OF THE HOLY CRIB.*

p.40: Pointe-du-Lac. A child had a serious sore throat; he was cured instantly by the application of a Relic from the SITE OF THE HOLY CRIB.

March, p.60: St. Augustin: Three healings by the Relic of the HOLY CRIB.

April, p. 80: Shawinigan, - healing of a goiter by the application of the Relic from the SITE OF THE HOLY CRIB.

May, p.95: St. Peter des Becquets: The mother of a family give thanks because her child was able to be baptized, thanks to the relic.

Item: Amanda Pepin had received the last rites having three grave illnesses. Application of the relic. Healed...

June, p. 115: Mrs. Anselme Cossette of St. Narcisse: I suffered for several years from a great congestion; I couldn't work or even remain lying down. I was cured by the application of the Relic from the Site of the Holy Crib. For a year now, I have felt nothing.

At Champlain, Hilaire J. cured of influenza by the relic...

p. 118: At St. Casimir, a person healed of facial pain that resisted all medication... upon the application of the relic...

August p. 157: Mrs. J.B.D. announced the healing of her little girl afflicted for over a year by a weakness and becoming infallibly infirm, according to the advice of the doctor.

Finally, October p. 199: A subscriber from St. Casimir cured by the relic of the Crib of congestion and asthma from which she suffered for 4 years. M.R. of St. Genevieve, from pain of an inverted chest.

By the year 1895, the favors obtained were so numerous that the directors of the Annals classified them by series and had them printed in small print, content to list only the locations and the illness cured. However, we bring up again nine references to the application of the relic from the Site of the Holy Crib. Also, the news spread to the United States where Father Frederic went to do a series of homilies. For the searchers, I note only a word of these references: pp.20 a father and his son from Ste. Sophie-de-Levrard; 60:

a child from Missoula; 80: a child from Victoriaville; 97: O. Ferron from Yamachiche, illness of the eyes; St-Georges, terrible illness; St. Jean-d'Iberville, illness of the throat; 140: Cap-de-la-Madeleine, a mother in danger; 158: E.X.E. beland of Maskinonge, the child is walking; 197: G.L. from Fall-River, from a stomach illness, 220: the daughter of J-D.M. of St. Luc, immediately cured of scarlet fever. We did not explore subsequent years...

There are more proofs than are needed of the influence in Canada of the relics of the Crib brought from Bethlehem by good Father Frederic.

Now we conclude the long historical expose of the Servant of God, Father Frederic Janssoone of Ghyselde, extraordinary activity either in Bethlehem or in favor of Bethlehem.

Personally animated by a great love of the Child Jesus, nothing was too much when it came to this Cradle and the souls who had the joy of living it; construction of the church and the special collection which brought about unexpected circumstances: defending the rights of the Church against the incessant impieties from the schismatic persuasions; preaching to religious communities who educated the youth of Bethlehem; presiding over liturgical ceremonies and the solicitude shown the pilgrims to Bethlehem; the particularly voluminous correspondence in the American and French publications; and in Canada a publicist the likes of which had never been seen before him, tireless preacher, promoter of the devotion to the Child Jesus, and narrator of everything new that went on in Bethlehem; such as the documents show us the ardor of Father Frederic toward the Redeemer Born in His earthly Cradle.

By design, we were brought to this city where the Servant of God only passed. We hope some other time to be able to narrate the more prodigious activity in Egypt, in Galilee, and especially in Jerusalem. The documents are full of these subjects.

Taking leave of our benevolent readers, leave them to delight at their leisure in the writings of Good Father Frederic about Bethlehem we leave them to hasten through their prayers and sacrifices the long desired day when Our Holy Mother the Roman Church will permit us to honor in a public cult this great Servant of Jesus, of His divine Mother and of their beloved country: the HOLY LAND!

*Father Paul-Eugene Trudel, o.f.m.
archivist of the Vice postulation.*

PART TWO

Simple Alert

We believed that a new edition of the published writings of Good Father Frederic should take place in this volume. We spoke of this in the first part. Many of them have become almost impossible to find

We organize them here in an approximate order by the noted sources. There are probably others that we have not been able to identify or locate. This collection provides approximately everything that we can say about Bethlehem and shows us the vast historic and artistic scholarship of the Servant of God.

Since the same article appears in several volumes or journals with some variations, we have indicated them in parentheses.

We believe we scrupulously transcribed the texts that are republished here. The passages or the italicized words are those of Father Frederic himself. When we felt it necessary to add certain explanations, we flagged them as “copyist’s notes”.

Let the reader follow the explanations of the Servant of God! What Christian would be excused from not knowing the royal city which has the honor of containing the Crib of the Man-God? These pages will help him. This was Good Father Frederic’s desire in publishing them. It is ours also in grouping them in this edition.

I – BETHLEHEM IN HISTORY

We speak of you, Bethlehem, land of Judah. You are not the least among the principle cities of Judah; for it is from you that came the Chief who would rule Israel, who would lead his sheep in sublimity in the Name of the Lord his God, and who should be glorified all the way to the ends of the earth.

The documents that we are going to transcribe are above all important from the points of view of archaeology and history.

Finally, to organize the narration, we include Bethlehem, then one of the world’s best known Basilicas, in the world. We will then describe the Basilica of the Nativity, and finally, we will penetrate its precious Sanctuary.

HISTORY OF THE CITY

The time of the foundation of Bethlehem in Judah (Ephrata, the fruitful) we find existed 1,740 years before Jesus-Christ is lost in the night of time.

Among the historic personages of that time, let us first cite Abesan who had thirty sons and as

many daughters, and judged the people of Israel for seven years.

Bethlehem gave day to the Levite who, passing from the tribe of Ephraim, received the hospitality of Machiah and who, on the eve of becoming the priest of his host's idols, was brought almost by force to Lais by six hundred men from the tribe of Dan.

From Bethlehem came this unfortunate woman who was subjected to the most atrocious outrages and whose body was cut into twelve parts by her husband the Levite, and sent to the twelve tribes of Israel.

Elimelech and Naomi, whose son Mahlon married Ruth, a Moabite, were born in Bethlehem. Also Boaz whose glory is having been the great-great grandfather of David.

THE BOOK OF RUTH: ITS INSTRUCTIONS

The object of the little book that carries the name of Ruth is to make known the genealogy of David, the founder of the royal race and that of Jesus-Christ...

The story of the Moabite, Ruth let the sacred writer describe the origin of Israeli monarchy. Living in the time of the Judges; this Book is considered an appendix or a supplement to Book of Judges. Further, it is impossible to set a precise date for the events mentioned in Ruth. We don't know who wrote this story...

The Book of Judges is mostly about the people's infidelity, followed by miraculous deliverances. If we judged all the Israelites by these naturally somber images, we might be critical of them. Yet, in those troubled times, there were souls faithful to the God of their fathers, and families where the cult of Jehovah was conserved in all its purity. The Book of Ruth joyfully supplements the gaps in the Book of Judges. It makes us penetrate into a family of Bethlehem and we draw a scene from domestic life.

It is a ravishing story of incomparable freshness, a charming grace, a moderate touch, an exquisite work of art. The most capable poet could not have imagined characters in better harmony or better chosen. Boaz, whose thought is present in all the details of his life, diligent and attentive to in the cultivation of his lands, good to his servants, condescending toward them, loved by all, liberal toward strangers, respecting the right of others and observing the law even in his love for Ruth, his kinswoman. This Moabite was a touching and sympathetic figure so devoted and generous to her mother-in-law in memory of her spouse, of a simple modesty, a great patience in the support of poverty, and such a candid gentleness toward Naomi! This stranger, adopted by the people of Jehovah, because of her virtues, destined to become one of the ancestors of the Messiah, was not only for us a beautiful character, she was the gauge of our vocation to the faith, for us gentiles who like her, were called from error to truth. Naomi is the mother of the family type, the strong woman that the author of "Proverbs" would later sing about. She is the religious woman, faithful to carrying out her duties with tact, wisdom and prudence, always counting on God, in adversity as in prosperity.

In contrast there is Orpha who is not bad, but does not have as generous a heart to follow her

mother-in-law to the end, leaving her after kissing her and thus renouncing the true religion without doubting herself, to return home to her people and “to her gods” and become pagan. (Manuel Bibl. tom II)

BETHLEHEM, THE COUNTRY OF KING DAVID

By God's order, the prophet Samuel made David, the young shepherd king of Israel in Bethlehem. We know it is this young shepherd, sent to Bethlehem by his father Isaiah, to bring provisions, an ephah of roasted grains and ten loaves to three of his brothers, found them with Saul and all the children of Israel, fighting in the Terebinth valley against the Philistines. (This valley, according to a respectable tradition, is located near Jerusalem. The pilgrims cross it about four miles from the Holy City, and we show them the place where David, with a little polished stone picked up at the bottom of the torrent and shot from his sling brought down the impure giant Goliath.)

Brought before Saul, he told him with confidence: “May no one's heart pound because of this man (Goliath, who had dared defy the army of the living God), I your servant, will go to fight against the Philistine”. Saul answered him: “You cannot resist this Philistine, nor fight against him, because you are a child, and that one is a man of war since his youth.” And David replied: “Your servant pastured my father's flock and if a lion or a bear came, and it took a sheep from the middle of the flock, I pursued them, attacked them, and pulled the prey from their mouth, and when they rose up against me, I grabbed them by the throat, strangled them and killed them. For I, your servant, have killed a lion and a bear. It will be likewise for this uncircumcised Philistine. Now I will go and remove the yoke of the people, for who is this Philistine who dared damn the army of the living God?: And David added: “The Lord who delivered me from the claws of the lion and the claws of the bear, He himself will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” So Saul said to David: “Go, and may the Lord be with you”... We know the rest of the story... how David brought down the giant with a rock from his sling, and killed him with his own sword, he cut off his head and removed the threat to Israel... It is this same young shepherd that the Holy Spirit praised directly in this manner: “As the fat was removed from the flesh, so is David from the children of Israel. He played with the lions as with the lambs, and with the bears he acted in the same manner as the little lambs of his youth.

“Isn't it he who killed the giant, who removed the yoke of the nation? By raising his hand, by the rock of his sling, he brought down Goliath's pride. For he invoked the almighty Lord, and the Lord gave him a man strong in war and raised the power to overturn his nation. Also, He gave him the honor of vanquishing ten thousand, and He praised him in the middle of the Lord's blessings by offering him a crown of glory. He broke the enemy in all directions, he usurped the Philistines, enemies to this day, he broke their pride forever. In all his endeavors, he gave glory to the Holy and Most High. He wrote songs before the altar, and he accompanied their songs with gentle modulations. He gave pomp to the celebration of Feasts, he adorned the sacred temples to the end of his life, and finally he praised the Holy Name of the Lord and raising each morning the holiness of God. The Lord purified him of his sins and assured him by an alliance a kingdom and a throne of glory in Israel.”

Thus speaks the Holy Spirit about David, the illustrious ancestor of the Virgin Mary, the most

gentle Queen of the Most Holy Rosary.

Also from Bethlehem were the two brothers Joab and Asael and it is in the same place that the servants of David buried him pierced by the lance of Abner, son of Ner, prince of the army of Saul.

Around 975, Bethlehem was expanded and fortified by Rohoboam, son of Solomon, but after the Babylonian captivity, 123 of its inhabitants alone returned to occupy it, 536 years before Jesus-Christ.

THE ANCESTORS OF JESUS

Matthan, and his son Jacob, father of Joseph who would become the spouse of the holy Virgin Mary were born in Bethlehem. According to tradition, Bethlehem was the birthplace of St. Anne, the mother of the Immaculate Virgin. But what makes Bethlehem illustrious forever, is the unique honor among all of having given day to the God-Savior around the year 4,000 after creation.

In 530 of the Christian era, the fortifications of this illustrious city were restored by the emperor Justinian. At the time of the Crusades, it became the episcopal seat; and when the king summoned the feudal bans of his crown, the Bishop, in his capacity as count of Bethlehem, provided him with a company of two hundred soldiers.

In 1440, Bethlehem was again surrounded by a wall. Two forts defended it; one on the west in the upper part, near the route to Jerusalem, and the other to the east, near the Basilica.

In 1834 Pasha Ibrahim had the Muslim quarter demolished because the inhabitants took up arms against him.

In 1881, the Fathers of the Holy Land replaced the old parish church which had become inadequate for the needs of the population, with a beautiful roman style church.

ACTUAL STATE OF THE CITY

Bethlehem sits approximately two thousand eight hundred feet above the Mediterranean, on a mountain of chalklike rock, surrounded by fertile valleys planted with trees and vines. Extending to the east and the west, the formerly fortified city has become an open city.

Bethlehem has around 6,100 inhabitants, of which 3,540 are catholic, 1760 are not united Greeks, 700 separated Armenians, about twenty Protestants and a hundred Muslims. (This statistic is for the year 1885).

THE BLESSED VIRGIN AND SAINT JOSEPH GO TO BETHLEHEM (Vie de Saint Joseph, by Father Frederic of Ghyvelde, o.f.m. Quebec, 1902, pp. 102-112) and (Annales du Tres Saint Rosaire, 1896, pp. 49 and following, a shorter, less unctuous narration.)

It was determined by the unalterable will of the Most High that the only Son of the Father

would be born in the city of Bethlehem, and by virtue of this divine decree, the ancient Prophets announced the event long before it happened, because the determination of the absolute will of the Lord is always infallible. Heaven and earth will pass before it ceases to take place because no one can resist it. The Lord prepared the execution of this unalterable decree by means of an edict the emperor Augustus-Caesar published in the empire, and by which (according to St. Luke) he ordered a census of all the inhabitants of the earth. This empire stretched over the greater part of the world known to the Romans. That's why they were called the masters of the universe, not paying much attention to the rest of the world. This census consisted of making known the emperor's subjects so that while paying a certain tribute as to a natural master with regards temporal things, to make themselves known, each had to go to his city of birth to be inscribed in the common registry.

This edict came to Nazareth and to the attention of Saint Joseph. He went home upset (because he was away when he heard about it) and gave the news to his divine Spouse. But the very prudent Virgin replied: "The emperor's edict mustn't worry you, since it is the Master and the King of heaven and the universe who controls the events of our life. His Providence will assist us and guide us through all occasions. Let us confidently abandon ourselves to this conduct. our hopes will not fail."

The Blessed Virgin was appraised of all the Mysteries of her divine Son. She knew how the prophecies would be realized, and that the only Son of the Father and hers must be born in Bethlehem, poor and a stranger. But she didn't say anything to Saint Joseph because upon the order of the Lord, she didn't want to divulge her secret. Anything she had not been commanded to say, she kept with an admirable discretion, despite her desire to console her very faithful spouse Joseph, and abandoning herself without reserve to the divine Providence, she didn't want to appear imprudent in his eyes, contrary to the counsel of the Sage. Then they discussed what they should do, and while saint Joseph could have made the journey alone, he expressed the desire to his divine Spouse that she accompany him, and prayed at the same time to consult the will of God in this matter.

The most humble Spouse submitted to what Saint Joseph suggested, and while she didn't ignore the divine will, she wanted to take advantage of this occasion to show her obedience and submission. She presented the suggestion and the wishes of her very faithful spouse to the Lord, and the divine Majesty replied: "My Beloved and my Dove, conform to what my servant Joseph suggests and wishes. Accompany him on this trip. I will be with you. I will help you and protect you with a paternal love in the burdens and tribulations that you will endure for Me, and however great they will be, the strength of my arm will have glorious results. Your steps will be beautiful and agreeable in my eyes. Do not fear, my Beloved, and go, as it is my will!" Then, in the presence of the august mother, He gave the guardian Angels a new commandment to serve her on this journey with particular care for the solemn and mysterious events that awaited her.

Our great Queen was renewed and elevated by a celestial knowledge, enlightened with a knowledge of these new mysteries relative to the evils that would have shadow her. Herod's persecution after the birth of the infant-God, and to several other tribulations which would happen to her. Ready for everything, she kept her invincible heart in the peace of the Lord and gave him a thousand thanks for all that He did for her.

The Sovereign of Heaven made this response known to Saint Joseph and told him that the Most High wanted her to obey him and accompany him on his journey to Bethlehem, and that filled him with joy.

The day of their departure, the holy spouse hurried to Nazareth to find a mount to carry the Queen of the universe. It was very difficult to find one, because so many people were going to different cities to register their names and conform to the emperor's edict. But after much effort, preparation and struggle he finally found a small donkey among all the unreasonable animals, we could say, because it would not only carry the Queen of the universe and with her the King of kings and the Lord of lords, but he would assist at the birth of the Child and in this instance, rendered to his Creator, following Isaiah's prophecy, the service that men refused him and of which I will say more...

The august Mary and the glorious Joseph left Nazareth for Bethlehem, alone as poor and humble travelers in the eyes of the world, without according them a greater esteem except that which humility and poverty can obtain. But, admirable secrets of the Most High hidden to the superb and impenetrable prudence of the flesh, they didn't walk alone, neither poor, nor despised, but with a magnificent cortege of inestimable wealth and a great glory. They were the most worthy object of the eternal Father and His immense love, and most esteemed in His sight. They carried with them the treasure of heaven and of the very Divinity. The entire celestial Court revered them. All the insensible creatures recognized the true and living Ark of the Testament, better than the waters of the Jordan knew the one who was the symbol, when they parted in respect to open for him a liberal passage, as well as to all who followed.

They were accompanied by this admirable celestial militia of which is spoken above. It is in this royal transport, hidden to the eyes of mortals, that walked the incomparable Mary and her spouse Joseph, certain that their feet would not stumble against the rock of tribulation because the Lord had ordered His own Angels to carry them in their hands, and guide them in all their ways. These very faithful ministers carried out this order, and served their great Queen as most submissive subjects, expressing their admiration and their joy at the sight of so many mysteries, so many perfections, and so much grandeur. All the treasures of the Divinity brought together in one simple creature, and with such a great dignity, such a lofty reason, that she surpassed their intelligence. They sang new hymns to the Lord, to the sovereign King of glory, they contemplated resting against her head of fine gold. She was the august Mother which they considered at once an incorruptible and animated chariot, a fertile kernel of the Promised Land which contained the living grain, also a merchant's rich vessel which carried to bring to birth in the house of bread, I mean Bethlehem, so that, dying on earth, he would multiply in heaven!

The voyage took five days, because the holy spouse didn't want to make the journey too arduous because of the condition of the Virgin Mother. There were no shadows for our divine Queen, for while our holy travelers traveled part of the night. The angels spread such a great light, that even if the stars had been suns, they would not have made a brighter day or the time more serene.

At these hours of the night, Saint Joseph took advantage of the prophecy and also enjoyed the sight of the Angels. So a celestial choir was formed, and our august Sovereign and her holy spouse responded to the blessed spirits with songs and admirable hymns of praise of the type that the fields changed into new heavens. The Queen of the universe rejoiced during the entire trip at the sight and the splendor of her ministers and her subjects, as well as their gentle conversations.

The Lord mixed into these favors and ineffable privileges, some embarrassment and some suffering caused by the voyage for his divine Mother. In fact, meeting so many people who filled the inns and who covered the route to obey the emperor's edict, it sensibly embarrassed the most pure Mother and Virgin's extreme modesty, and afflicted her spouse.

Poor and timid, they were less well received than the others, and exposed to more inconveniences than the rich. The world which consults only appearances, ordinarily gives out its favors unjustly with regards accepting people. That is why our holy voyagers heard many disagreeable suggestions where they arrived tired. Sometimes they were treated like useless and despicable people, or they relegated the Mistress of heaven and earth to the corner of a vestibule. Often she wasn't even received, therefore she and her spouse retreated and lodged in lesser, even more abject and distasteful facilities. But however miserable the place, the celestial Spirits were with their sovereign Lord and their august Queen. She was immediately surrounded like an impenetrable wall in such a way that the lying in of the true Solomon was assured and protected against the fear and surprises of the night. The most faithful spouse Joseph, seeing that the Mistress of the universe was so well guarded, rested and slept in peace at the prayer of our charitable Sovereign who kept much of what was recalled of the fatigue of the trip. During that time, for her part, she yielded to celestial conversations with her sublime Spirits who attended her.

However Solomon announced in his Songs the great mysteries of the Queen of heaven under assorted metaphors and similarities. He spoke more specifically in chapter three of what happened to the divine Mother after the Incarnation and during the voyage she took to Bethlehem, for all that is told or read in Solomon was carried out to the letter, of her chariot, of the head of fine gold, and the guard that was placed by the strongest and the most courageous of Israel who rejoiced in the divine vision, and all the rest that is contained in the prophecy.

Finally, to make the point, all that I said should suffice to turn all my admiration toward the mystery of the infinite wisdom that encompasses this work so worthy of a creature's veneration. Who then among the mortals would be so hardened that he wouldn't understand? or so superb that he wouldn't blush with confusion? or so preoccupied that he would not be amazed at the sight of such a prodigious event occurring in most extreme and most distanced? An infinite God is truly hidden in the virginal womb of a young girl full of beauty and grace, innocent, pure, agreeable and gentle, lovable in the eyes of God and of men above all that this very Lord created and would ever create! This august Sovereign, with the treasure of the Divinity, distained, afflicted and pushed away by the blind ignorance and the stupid pride of the worldly! Yet even when she is retreated into the most abject places, loved and esteemed by the

most holy Trinity, favored with his caresses, served, revered, defended and protected by the Angels who form her vigilant guard!

O children of men! When will you have a heavy heart! You esteem riches, you disdain the poor, you raise the mighty, you beat down the humble, you rebuke the just and you applaud those who are full of pride. Your discernment is blind and your reasoning perverted in such a way that you find yourself deceived in your own desires. Ambitious, seeking riches, you are reduced to a greater poverty because you have embraced what is vapor . If you had received the Ark of the true God, you would have obtained a thousand benedictions from His liberal hand, like Obededon, but because you have disstained her, a large number among you have experienced the same as Azariah. You have been chastised!

Among the diversity of successive events, our travelers the most pure Mary and Joseph arrived in the city of Bethlehem, on the fifth day of their journey, which was a Saturday, around four o'clock in the evening, the time when, during the winter solstice, the sun sets and night approaches in the Holy Land. They entered the city to find lodging, and having gone through several streets and asking for hospitality, not only at hostels, but at the homes of their friends and close relatives, they were not received anywhere. In many places, they were dismissed in an uncivil and demeaning way. Our august Queen followed her spouse who went from house to house, from door to door, across the chaos formed by so many people. She knew well that the homes and the hearts of men would be closed to them, yet she wished to suffer this sorrow and humiliation. Her extreme modesty inspired her in order to obey Saint Joseph, for it was more painful for her due to her condition and her age, to circulate in the middle of this multitude than failing to find lodging.

Continuing through the city, they came upon the house where the common registry located, and in order not to have to return, they stopped to be recorded and pay the royal tribute. Rid of that business, they resumed their search and stopped at other hostels. They asked for hospitality in more than fifty houses where they experienced blunt refusals, while the celestial Spirits admired the very lofty mysteries of the Lord, the patience and gentleness of His Virgin Mother, the magnanimity of Saint Joseph and the insensibility of the people. With these feelings, they blessed the Almighty in His works and in His mysterious designs, understanding that He wanted this very day to raise to the highest glorr the humility and the poverty that men distained!... Mary and Joseph found a stable and: OUR LORD JESUS-CHRIST CAME INTO THE WORLD. (This chapter ends with the text of St. Luke 2:7-17, and by the narration of the adoration of the shepherds, described further.)

THE BIRTH OF JESUS-CHRIST

(In the Life of Jesus Christ (pp. 11-14) Father Frederic quotes simply the second chapter of the Gospel of St. Luke verses 1-17. In the Life of the Most Holy Virgin he adds several reflections and details; in the Life of Saint Joseph repeats part of the preceding, with a few other considerations, and finally in the Annals of the Most Holy Rosary 1896 (March, April and May) he takes up one text, then another, but in a reverse order. Here we give the same text just one time, keeping it in a logical sequence.)

(Gospel text: Luke 2:1-7)

"In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled.

This was the first enrollment when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." (The expression **first born** according to St. Jerome, does not always imply in Scripture the idea that other children would be born later. Thus it simply means that Mary did not have any children previously. The Hebrews also call **first born** children who were an only child, as well as those who had brothers and sisters. (Note in the **Life of Jesus Christ p. 11**)

(Father Frederic's Text)

Before penetrating the august Sanctuary of the Holy Grotto, let us stop for a minute, pious reader. After having meditating on the page of the sacred text that tells us the story of the Birth of the Savior of the world, let us read here at the foot of the stable, a gripping page of profane history which solemnly announces the Monarch of the world, holding in our hands the Book of the Holy Evangelists, and then we will accompany Joseph and Mary, surrounded by Pious traditions and gracious Legends.

Then we will describe the topography of these Holy Sites and we will visit them, one by one with the Franciscans, Guardians of the Holy Sites in their Daily Procession.

Finally we will describe the religious Parish that has the joy of having them, and we will end our visit to Bethlehem with the application of the Third Mystery of the Most Holy Rosary.

The universe breathed in silence; the chaos of wars, the confusion of arms was extinguished in the Empire. Rejoicing at rest for the first time in ten centuries, the Romans raised a magnificent temple to Peace and placed in it a statue of Romulus, founder of the eternal City. They consulted Apollo to know how long it should last. The oracle replied that it would last "until a Virgin gave birth to a Son." Believing that the temple would be eternal, they engraved on the front of the magnificent edifice: TEMPLE TO PEACE FOR ETERNITY.

Augustus, master of the world wanted to know how many heads were bowed under his yoke in the cities, the villages and the countryside. He ordered that the inhabitants from all parts of the earth go to the place of their family origin, to pay the tribute of a coin which had the effigy of Caesar, and have their names inscribed in the public registers either as a citizen or as a slave of Rome.

Mary and Joseph, of the royal race of David, were obliged to go to Bethlehem, the city of their fathers to which the prophets had promised a glorious destiny and an illustrious rank among the great cities of Judea.

The time was approaching where the heavens would make their dew fall and the earth would engender its Savior. The illustrious travelers stopped their walk. The legendary stories represent the divine Virgin seated on a humble donkey that would later serve her in the flight to Egypt, and would be part of the triumphal procession of the new king of Zion. They arrived in Bethlehem but there was a large crowd in the city of kings; and there was no room for them at the inn. So they left the inhospitable city. Mary said to Joseph: "I see before me two peoples, one is joyful and the other is in tears." The holy patriarch didn't understand these words. Perhaps it applied to the contrast between the prideful air of the wealthy travelers who found comforts and sumptuous hospitality on their journey and the indigence of obscure strangers like them, obliged to search in the countryside for a poor and modest shelter. But the simple and resigned soul of Joseph pushed to the brink of complaint, kept in his heart the words of his divine Spouse.

At that moment, he saw in front of him, a young adolescent whose vestments were white as snow. This stranger explained to him the mysterious message of the Virgin: "The people who are in tears are the Jewish people because the hand of the Lord will be withdrawn from them, the people who are joyful are the multitude of nations which the light from above will visit..."

They came upon a grotto that served as a shelter for the animals of the countryside after their daily work, Joseph stopped the donkey. Mary descended, and entered the cave as the last rays of daylight already in decline, left it in obscurity. Hardly had the Virgin set foot, that the grotto was illuminated by her presence like the hour when the sun spreads her sparkling fires upon nature. This accomplished the oracle of Isaiah: "The people who were sitting in darkness, in the shadow of death, saw a great light and day rose for them". The interior of the cave was already occupied by an ox, which the shepherds had left there to spend the night.

And it is in this company that the Virgin gave birth, without pain, to her first-born son, the Son of God. She wrapped him in poor swaddling clothes, and laid him in the crib of the manger on a bit of fresh hay that the shepherds had left. The ox and the donkey approached, and warmed Him with their breath, and the angels formed an invisible court around the man-God. Having taken a stone, Mary covered it with hay and placed it in the form of a pillow under the head of her Son. Saint Bonaventure adds: "The faith of our fathers conserved for us this testament to the poverty of God."

ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS **(Gospel Text: Luke 2:7-17)**

...and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of

the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them: "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." When the angels went away from them to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go, then to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child."

(Father Frederic's Text)

(In **The Life of the Most Holy Virgin Mary** (pp. 79-81); **The Life of Saint Joseph** (pp. 114-116) and in the **Annals of the Most Holy Rosary , 1897, April p. 69** it reads: "*In the countryside surrounding the manger, near the tower of Eder where Jacob used to pasture his flock, the shepherds were watching... They went in haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in this poor crib, become according to the **Flowers of the Saints**, a seat of celestial philosophy where the Word taught the people by His silence.)*

*The sign the angel had given them didn't seem very appropriate to convince the eyes of the flesh, of the grandeur of the newborn. To find one's self in a manger, wrapped in poor swaddling clothes, was not sufficient indication to reveal the majesty of a King, if it had not been brought to their attention with the help of a divine light with which they were enlightened. It is because they were humble and free of worldly wisdom that they were immediately filled with divine wisdom. (In the **Life of Saint Joseph** (p.115) the end of this paragraph is changed as follows: "Hardly had it been mutually communicated, they thought about this astonishing ambassador and they resolved to go quickly to Bethlehem to see this marvel that they had just learned about from the Lord. They left at once, and upon entering the grotto, saw as it was described by the evangelist Saint Luke, Mary and Joseph and the Infant lying in a manger. Upon seeing that, they recognized the truth that had been announced to them.")*

Also, the evangelist Saint Luke adds again, it happened that when the angels returned to heaven, having left them, the shepherds said to each other: Let us go all the way to Bethlehem, and see this wonder that has come and that the Lord has made known to us. So they came in great haste, and they found Mary and Joseph and the child laying in a manger. So, upon seeing Him, they recognized the word that had been told them regarding this child". (Luke 2:15-17).

This experience and this visit was followed by an interior revelation they received at the sight of the Word made man. At the very moment the shepherds laid eyes on Him, the divine Child also looked at them, face radiant with great splendor, whose rays and brilliance blessed the candid hearts of these poor and happy men. By His divine virtue He rejuvenated them by giving them new being in grace and holiness, and left them

elevated to the heights and enriched with the treasures of a celestial science and the ineffable mysteries of the Incarnation and the Redemption of the human race. "Then all who heard about this Child admired what had been told them by the shepherds. So, Mary conserved all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had seen and heard, as had been announced to them.

(In the **Life of Saint Joseph** p. 116 the chapter ends as follows: *"The holy shepherds made other visits to the most pure Mary, the Child and Saint Joseph during the time they stayed in the grotto. They brought them gifts proportionate to their poverty. The Evangelist Saint Luke said that all those who heard them talk about what they had seen, admired what they had heard. However that didn't take place until after Mary, the Infant and Joseph had left Bethlehem.*

Divine Wisdom disposed them in such a way, that they did not speak of it before their departure. All would not believe their words. There were some who regarded them as only ignorant, vulgar shepherds. As for the latter, now full of the divine science, they lived in holiness until their deaths.")

TRADITIONS AND LEGENDS

Of ancient Christmases, monuments of simplicity and enthusiasm, shows us bands of happy pilgrims running toward the stable and asking themselves if they could still see these marvels: "Where is the little newborn? Will we see him again?"

Who was not rocked on their mother's knee by one of these old, loved airs that echoed in our cathedrals? Who doesn't have among the souvenirs of their youth the stories of Christmas eve around the hearth where the knotted trunk of an oak burned? On that night, the churches glittered from a thousand fires, the light of lamps and torches glowed all the way under the portico. The sight of this clarity, which makes even more vivid the decoration of the house of God, recalls the words of Clovis entering the same day the basilica of Rheims where he was rejuvenated: "The Sicambri writes, "My father, dazzled and agitated by an unknown emotion, is that the kingdom that you promised me? "No my son" replied Remi, "it is but the road which will lead to it."

This Christmas night which lighted the light of the Franks to the enlightenment of faith, was always loved by France as a family feast. Christmas is the cry of joy of our fathers. It was to the cries of Christmas that they planted in the enemy towers the banner of the lily. The ballads of Christmas were popular, and we still sing them in our countries. (Written in 1852.)

According to Jacques de Voragine, the day of the Savior's birth was announced to the world by the apparition of three suns in the orient. These three luminous globes came up together at the horizon for a few hours until they combined their rays and their glory, they formed a single disk whose splendor lighted the air. The three Masses that the Church reserved for Christmas day was credited to this legend in the spirit of the peoples.

True or not, the fact is reported by Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History and interpreted in different ways by the chroniclers, who see it as a figure of the Trinity, where one of the

persons was made man without altering his indivisible unity or the reunion in the Son of Mary's body, with the soul of the Divinity.

But it is in the middle of Rome that the event of the Messiah was especially proclaimed. Augustus had risen as high as was possible for a man. The senate, that assembly of kings had become the first of the courtesans. To attach a new glory to his purple mantle, it had voted Caesar, august and immortal, a statue in the temples and incense reserved to the cult of the gods. The wise emperor, understanding that he was only a man, refused the imposed honors. He called one of the Sybils to whom the masters of the world sometimes submitted to their decisions in very important matters. Alone with Pythonissa in a palace apartment, he asked her if one greater than he would be born at a later time.

The day was precisely the day of the Lord's birth. The attentive Sybil consulted ancient oracles to satisfy the imperial curiosity and when, toward noon, the disk of the sun appeared with a halo of gold in the middle of which could be seen a Virgin bright with glory, seated on an altar, holding a young child that she held with love upon her bosom. Astonished, the Sybil showed the vision to Caesar. While he was pondering it attentively, an unknown voice shook the palace walls, and the words were heard: "This is the altar of the King of the heavens." Then the hair of the Priestess stood on end, the inspiration swelled her breast, and turning to face the emperor with a superhuman majesty, she told him: Powerful Caesar, this Child is greater than you. It is he who must be adored." Augustus fell to his knees, full of an indescribable terror, he offered incense to the celestial Child and forbid that anyone should call him himself god. (The illuminated Hours of the middle ages almost always had this subject represented among their miniatures.)

The room of the emperor's palace where this scene took place became the church of Ara Coeli (altar of heaven), in honor of the most pure Virgin. Two columns made from the Reinforcements from the vessels of Anthony taken from Actium presently support the ceiling of an edifice dedicated to Mary. The Daughter of David triumphed over the son of the Caesars.

One of these fresh compositions in honor of the Infant God and his Mother shows us a gentle vigilant and early pastoral keeping watch over the sheep. The angel also reveals the birth of the King of kings and a convoy to visit the Virgin Mother.

Through moving images, other legends show us the God of nature receiving gifts of some poor shepherds. They brought to the manger the fruits of their fields, the milk and the fleece of their lambs. Mary accepted these poor gifts to the King of heaven and conserved the memory in her heart. That same night not far from the stable, the vines of Ein Gedi which produced balm sprouted their precious shoots and the countryside inhaled the most gentle perfums. It is thus that the cradle of the Son of Mary was covered with their flowers, and the Assyriens' perfumes were borne under their feet.

In their mountains, a watchful tribe of Arabs, alerted by the shepherds of the wonders of the stable in Bethlehem came themselves to pay a sort of homage of fidelity to this newborn King. "The chroniclers say that with great faith and simplicity, they recognized in the Infant Jesus the Savior God awaited by the patriarchs and whose home was conserved

in the desert." They continued on the road of the solitudes, bringing in their hearts the memory of Mary and of God her Son. At night, when the caravans stopped at the foot of some solitary palm tree, the Arab who guided them told this miraculous story to the travelers of Egypt, or to the wealthy Assyrien merchants who came to exchange rich fabrics of their country for the gold and the perfumes of Arabia.

Then they prostrated themselves before an image which represented the Infant Jesus seated on the knees of the Immaculate Virgin, asking the God who holds storms in His hands and who sets order among the armies and battles of the planets, to grant them stars and favorable winds. This gentle image of Jesus and Mary is sculpted on one of the columns of their sacred house (caaba) where it was still seen in the time of Mohamed, and Jesus was solemnly placed among the number of divinities revered by the three Arabias.

Meanwhile in Rome, the eternal temple of Peace was crumbling on its young foundations, to announce to the capital of the world that, in an unknown country of its vast empire, a Virgin has given birth to a feeble Infant, whose kingdom would have no end.

And, while the king and the temple, Jupiter and the Capitoline edifice ceased to exist, some monks went to work. From the Quirinal they brought blocks of marble from the temple of Romulus, and made a stair of a hundred and twenty four steps, which went all the way up to the Capitoline, and above these majestic terraces they raised the columns they had found here and there lying among the ruins. One of them had held up the roof of the chamber of the emperors and assisted, in silent witness to the orgies of Nero and Tiberius. Henceforth they would not hear anything but pious hymns, for all the glorious vestiges of the temples and the palaces of antiquity became the ornamentation of a church which the monk placed under the protection of the Virgin, and to which they gave the name "Altar of Heaven", Ara Coeli.

The church of Ara Coeli is one of the twenty great abbeys of Rome. It belongs to the Franciscans, and they preserve the rustic altar which, according to tradition, was consecrated by (pope) Saint Anacletus and whose little cupola is held up by columns of oriental alabaster.

Each year, around Christmas, at Ara Coeli a famous little miraculous statue of the Infant Jesus (il Santo Bambino) dressed in silk and rich laces... Pious exercises accompany this solemnity, and the homily is preached by a child, for it is the feast of children. There is an infinite charm in the purity of this voice which teaches the truth to doctors, like Jesus in the Temple, and with the very uncertainty of the inflections which breathe of innocence and candor. (Christian Rome, by Eugene of Gournie, vol. 1)

The Convent of Ara Coeli, with its church (one of the most famous in Rome) served through the centuries as the Mother House of the Order of Saint Francis. The Revolution chased them away in recent years. The convent was converted to a barracks.

The famous church, where we conserve the Tomb of Saint Helena, the mother of the first Christian Emperor, is still served by the Children of the Patriarch of Assisi, to whom permission was given to build a few narrow, wooden cells next to the ancient Sanctuary. The residence of the Minister General of the entire Council of the Order, which consisted of an ancient tower built by

the Roman Pontiffs and to which were attached precious souvenirs, was demolished with no regard for the history or religion, by order of the spoiler Government to place a statue of Victor Emmanuel on the ruins! (This paragraph is noted in the original text.)

The first of the churches of Rome dedicated to the Virgin still carries the name today of Fountain of Oil Fons Olei. It was consecrated by Saint Callixtus in the third century, in the ancient Taberna meritoria, the famous site for the pagan authors whose prophecy we will relate.

In the Golden Book containing the destiny of Rome, was this prediction:

"When oil gushes from the fountain, a Savior will appear". The very day when in the manger of Bethlehem the Virgin Mary gave birth to her divine Son, in Rome a fountain which sprayed the city brought from the Tiber only drops of a pure, limpid oil. During twenty four hours the miraculous source flowed in abundance and didn't slow down until the end of that blessed day. In memory of that event, the Christians built the church about which we just spoke and which has the name Saint Mary of the Tiber.

Christmas night, we see again the divine shoot of the stem of Jesse was celebrated in the annals of all the Christian peoples by more poetic legends. In the climate of Northern Europe we see flowers spread in the middle of the frosts and snows to rejoice the birth of the Infant Jesus. It is not without tenderness that in the chronicles of England, ancient island of Saints, today stripped of its crown of naïve traditions and gracious souvenirs by an icy Protestantism that we read this treatise of the ages of faith:

At a monastery in Glasgow, founded in 727 by Ine, king of Wessex, on Christmas night they saw each year the same wonder. In the abbey cemetery, there was a hawthorne bush whose branches cover the tomb of monks whose souls had passed to a better life. During the entire winter, the bush remained like the other shrubs stripped of leaves and flowers, buried under the snow and ice, battered by the north wind and arid branches bowing under the storm wind. But on Christmas night, it recovered its vigor and springtime sap, shook off its covering of frost and displayed its lovely greenery. "No doubt, the legend continues" since this was the first place in the kingdom where faith in Jesus Christ is planted and nurtured, our Lord wanted the memory to be conserved with a particular and miraculous demonstration, and this bush was mysterious like the one of Moses."

The northern cultures have a number of strange Christmas legends. The power of the Infant Jesus, the blaze of this sun rising in the Orient consoled the long nights of the North, and chased away malign influences. The great English poet, Shakespeare interpreted these naïve beliefs: "He wrote: We pretend that always when comes the season when we celebrate the birth of the Savior, the birds of dusk sing as long as the night endures, and thus, we are assured no spirit dares rise into the air. The nights are calm, the planets have no bad influences, the fairies do not take over man, the sorceresses do not have the power to charm. That's how this time of the year is blessed and full of graces!"

THE MAGI KINGS

Evangelical Text (Matthew 2:1-12)

According to the evangelist Matthew: When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage. When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: "And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel."

The Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance.

He sent them to Bethlehem and said "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, so that I too may go and do him homage." After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way."

[Text of Father Frederic]

(In the **Life of Jesus Christ**, p. 13 there is only one note: "*The magi were sages or scholars who we believe came from the Arabian Desert, from Chaldea or from Mesopotamia near the Euphrates.*" Cf. **The Life of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary** pp. 82-93; **The Life of Saint Joseph** pp. 117-126; **the Annals of the Most Holy Rosary**, 1896, July p 129 and following.)

According to the legends, in the very areas where day begins, the regions near the Ocean, lived a race of people descended from the patriarchs. These distant inhabitants of the earth brought in exile with them a mysterious book whose origin went back to Seth, son of Adam. It predicted that a marvelous star would shine in the heavens to announce the birth of a Savior, and at the crib of the God, the sons of the Orient would bring with their homages, the tribute and the gifts from their country. Religious observers of the laws of this inspired code, the descendants of Seth had chosen among themselves, ten sages to wait for the apparition of the promised planet and to alert the country. They were called Magi, which in their language, meant repositories of science.

Inherited in one family, their function was perpetuated until the time specified by the oracles. Established at the foot of a famous mountain, which was called the mountain of the Victory, each year, after the time when the stalks fell under the scythe of the harvesters, three among them went up to the peak. They stopped near a mysterious cave surrounded on the outside by century old trees, which protected it with their shade. A sacred fountain, with mystical waters bubbled on the inside. After having done assorted ablutions, the Magi adored the majesty of the Lord in silence, while continuing to observe the course of the planets to finally discover the long awaited

star. (In the **Life of the Most Holy Virgin, and the Life of Saint Joseph**. The three magi who came searching for the newly born Infant-God, were originally from Persia, Arabia and Sheba, regions to the East of Palestine. David particularly prophesized their coming, and before him, Balaam when he blessed by the Divine Will the people of Israel, what Balak the king of the Moabites had called to damned him. While blessing him, Balaam said that he would see the Christ King, but from afar. He would not see him himself, but through the magi, his descendants. This would be many centuries later. He also said that a star would come out of Jacob, because it would be destined to designate the One who was born to rule eternally in the house of Jacob.

These three were very well versed in the natural sciences as well as the Writings of the people of God and that is why they were called magi. From the notions they obtained in the holy Writings and their conversations with several Hebrews, they came to believe in the coming of the Messiah that the Hebrews awaited. Further, they were righteous men, friends of the truth and great observers of justice in the government of their States which were not as extensive as the kingdoms of our day. They easily ruled them by themselves, and rendered justice like wise and virtuous princes, which is the legitimate office of a king. That is why the Holy Spirit said that God holds His heart in His hands to conduct like running water according to His holy will.

They had noble, great and generous souls, incapable of this avarice and this greed which degrades and tyrannizes the hearts of certain princes. And since their States were neighbors, they visited each other and communicated the virtues and morals they practiced and the sciences they professed, always taking part in the important things they learned or got to know. In a word, they were intimate friends, very faithful in their relationship.

According to Saint John Chrysostom and other writers, two years previously, the very night of the birth of the Savior, the three Magi were watching and praying on mount Victory, following the custom of their fathers. They were named Gaspar, Melchior and Balthazar. All three, still young, but already venerable for their profound science and their premature experience.

All at once they noticed, descending from the vault of heaven, a star of extraordinary grandeur, which was approaching them. As it approached, they saw in the midst of its rays, a child of ravishing beauty, that had on its head, in the aura of light, the form of a cross. At the same time they heard the words: "Go to the country of Judah. There you will find the King that was promised you and who was just born."

Immediately they descended the mountain and set out. "and the star preceded them". Mounted on dromedaries from Median and Ephah, they brought to the God-Infant the riches of their country. That is how they crossed the deserts and the vast regions which separated them from Jerusalem, the center of the world, as described by the naïve chroniclers. (Even today, the non-united Greek of Jerusalem show in their vast choir, facing the Tomb of Our Lord, a rosetta in the pavement, and in the middle of this rosetta a hemisphere is placed on a white marble base, which says to all who want to hear it, that this is the true center of the earth!)

The Lord who was leading them gave them wings; His attentive providence never let the water run out in their goatskins nor the provisions run out in the coffers. After thirteen days of walking, following those who wanted the star to appear the very night

of Christmas, or according to others, after a voyage of two years, they finally entered the capital of Judea.

There, they asked the children of Israel:

They said to them, "Where will we find the king of the Jews who is just born? We saw his star in the Orient, and we have come with gifts to adore Him." (***Annals of the Most Holy Rosary, 1896, July p 130-121.*** We also take up the text in the ***Life of Saint Joseph pp. 119-124.***)

(The audience with Herod, who sends them to Bethlehem – See the Evangelical Text)

Leaving Jerusalem, the Magi saw the star again which had disappeared from their eyes when they entered the city, and they were guided by its light. They arrived in Bethlehem and the grotto of the Nativity, where the star had stopped, then imperceptibly diminishing and shrinking in size, it entered through the door and placed itself over the head of the Infant Jesus and covered Him with its rays after which it eclipsed itself to dissolve in the elements from which it was formed.

The Lord had already announced the arrival of the Magi to our august Sovereign, and when she learned they were near the grotto, she alerted her holy spouse Joseph, so he would not go away, but so he would stay by her side, which he did.

(In the ***Life of the Most Holy Virgin Mary*** and in the ***Annals of the Most Holy Rosary*** the author expressed it thusly: "Our great Queen (Mary) knew by an infused knowledge she had from the holy Scriptures and from several sublime revelations that the magi would come from the Orient to recognize and adore her most holy Son as the true God. She was particularly informed of this coming mystery by the angels who were in charge of announcing to these kings the birth of the incarnate Word. Actually, the guardian angels of our august Sovereign went to find each one in particular in the regions of the Orient where they lived, and revealed to them intellectually by interior words that the Redeemer of the human race was born in abject poverty. This revelation inspired in them new desires to seek Him and adore Him, and soon, they saw the miraculous star that led them to Bethlehem, as we will see.")

Then follow the evangelical text of St. Matthew (2:1-12)

Useless to the mystery, the Evangelists passed over in silence, the sacred Text of Scripture doesn't say but it is certain that Saint Joseph was present when the Kings adored the Infant Jesus. It was not necessary to take precautions in this respect, because the Magi were already informed that the Mother of the Newborn was a Virgin, and that her most holy Son was God, and that Saint Joseph was not His true Father.

It is also consistent that God wouldn't call the Kings to adore him without having previously instructed them of such an essential fact, and warned against the error that would have made them believe that He was the Son of Joseph and a mother that would not have been a virgin. They came well informed of everything, and with sentiments that were proportionate to such sublime mysteries.

The divine Mother waited for these devoted and pious Kings with the Infant Jesus, which she held in her arms. She appeared with an incomparable modesty and beauty, and through her humble poverty, they discovered the marks of a more than human majesty whose rays shown on her face. The splendor of the Child was so much greater, and there gushed from His adorable person such a soft and agreeable light, that the grotto became a paradise. The three Kings of the Orient went inside, and at the first sight of the Son and the Mother, they were overcome with admiration for a long time. Then they prostrated themselves, and in this position, they adored the Child, recognizing him as true God and man, and as the Restorer of the human race.

Once again they were enlightened interiorly by the divine grace and by the presence of the most gentle Jesus, and thus they saw the multitude of angelic spirits who, as servants and ministers of the great King of kings and the Lord of lords, assisted with a holy fear and a most profound respect.

After paying homage, they got up and also congratulated their Queen and ours, of the joy she had being the Mother of the Son of the eternal Father; they paid her homage by genuflecting before her, and asked to kiss her hand, as was the practice in their countries toward queens. The most prudent Sovereign withdrew hers, and presented that of the Redeemer of the world, saying to them My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in Him that He chose you and called you from all the nations to see and know the Word incarnate. It is a joy that most kings and prophets wished for without obtaining it. Let us glorify and praise His holy Name for the sublime mysteries and the great mercy He has toward His people. Let us kiss the earth He sanctifies by His real presence."

After the discourse of the august Mary, the three Kings prostrated themselves and adored again the Infant Jesus. They recognized the great benefit they received from Heaven that made them see so joyfully the Sun of justice to dissipate their shadows. Then they addressed Saint Joseph, and congratulated him of the joy he had of being the spouse of the Mother of God, admiring with a sort of compassion that all the great mysteries of heaven and earth were hidden in such an extreme poverty.

Then after three hours had passed, they asked the Holy Virgin permission to go to the city to find lodging, because the grotto was too small for them to stay there. They were accompanied by several people, but it was only the Magi who received the effects of light and grace. The others, attracted only to the exterior and the poor and miserable condition of the mother and her spouse didn't know the mystery. They were only surprised at the oddity of the spectacle.

Finally the Kings took their leave, and the most pure Mary and Joseph remained alone with the Infant, glorifying with new hymns and praises the divine Majesty that his holy Name began to be known and adored by Nations.

The three Kings left the grotto where they had entered, and took the most direct road to go rest in a hotel in the city of Bethlehem. Retired alone in an apartment, they spent the greater part of the night discussing with an abundance of sighs and tears, what they had seen, the effects they

had felt, and what they had observed in the Infant-God and His most holy Mother. During this pious exchange they were further enflamed with divine love, never ceasing to admire the majesty and the splendor of the Infant-Jesus, the prudence, the seriousness and the incomparable modesty of the divine, Mother, the holiness of the blessed spouse Joseph, their extreme poverty, and the lowliness of the place where the Lord of heaven and earth had chosen to be born.

These Kings felt a celestial flame embrace their hearts, and unable to contain their exquisite transports, together they exuded the gentle sentiments of veneration and love this mystery penetrated in them.

The next day, they returned at dawn to the grotto of the Nativity to offer to the celestial King the gifts they had brought. As soon as they arrived, they prostrated themselves before Him and adored Him with a profound humility, and opening their treasures, according to the Gospel, they presented gold, frankincense and myrrh.

*(We interrupt this recitation to recall a conversation the author placed in the **Annals of the Most Holy Rosary, 1896, August**, pp. 148-150).*

At the sight of this magnificence, adds Saint Ephrem, from whom we borrow the following Conversation:

Mary said to the Magi: "Powerful strangers, to whom do you offer these riches? Why have you come to this poor retreat? Who made you leave the country of the Sunrise to come lay these treasures at the feet of a child?"

The Magi: But this child, your son is the King of the world and all obey his empire."

Mary: Oh! what king ever had a manger for a cradle, a stable for a home? Where is the diadem and the throne of this little child?

The Magi: This child, your son, o Virgin, is the Ancient of days, the Monarch of the centuries. He made himself small because he loves the small and the poor, so the kings will bow their crowns before him and adore him.

Mary: How were these mysteries revealed to you at the extremities of the world? Who called you from the depths of the Orient?

The Magi: An extraordinary star, greater than all the planets appeared to us. It announced that our King had just been born. We walked in its light, and it led us here.

Mary: Noble strangers, don't speak of royalty and grandeur in this country. Jerusalem is changed into a river of blood. All the great perish. I fear that Herod, hearing speak of a king that is just born, will draw his sword and cut this tender flower before it can bring life to fruition.

The Magi: Don't fear the furor of Herod, o Virgin, your son is above the strong and the mighty. He will turn his throne upside down to found an eternal empire.

Mary: *Wise strangers, God made known the marvelous secrets of His goodness to you before the birth of this son. The angel of the Lord made known to me who He is, and told me that His kingdom would have no end.*

The Magi: *This angel is no doubt the same one who brought the miraculous star near us and made us hear its voice.*

Mary: *Go then, glorious sons of the Orient, announce to your country the birth of the Son of God!*

The Magi: *O Virgin, may the blessing and the peace of your divine Child accompany us on the return to the shores of the Sunrise! and when His empire is manifested to the world, may He come and visit our country!*

Mary: *May Persia rejoice when learning of these wonders. May Assyria shudder with joy at your return When the reign of my son is extended to the world, one of his envoys will go to your country to plant his banner."*

*(We return to the text in the **Life of Saint Joseph** p.124)*

The Magi addressed the blessed Mother and consulted her on many mysteries concerning the faith, their conscience and the government of their States, as they wished to be informed of everything before leaving, to regulate their conduct following the principles of the greatest perfection. The august Mary listened to them with a lot of condescension and when they brought up some doubt, they interiorly asked her adorable Son what she should reply and teach these new children of the holy Law. Mistress and source of divine Wisdom, all the difficulties of such a sublime nature, she instructed and sanctified them so effectively that, charmed by the knowledge and gentleness of our amiable Sovereign, they couldn't take their leave, so that an Angel had to tell them it was the will of the Lord that they return to their country.

We must not be surprised that, by the words of the holy Virgin, they were enlightened by the Holy Spirit who filled them with an infused science on all that they discussed with her and on many other subjects.

The magi left the child and his mother. They extended a last look at the poor stable where the King of heaven rested, and they went by the sea road to their country, because an angel had forbidden them to return to Herod in Jerusalem.

Returned to the mountain of Victory, they told everything they saw on their distant pilgrimage, and they served God more zealously.

For the rest of their lives, these fortunate Kings responded to their divine vocation, for they acted as true disciples of the Mistress of holiness, governing their souls and their subjects according to her doctrine. They converted a large number of people in the knowledge of God and the way of salvation by their good examples and the proof they gave of the coming of the Savior of the

world. Thus they ended their lives in all holiness and justice. Their days full of merit were favored by the Mother of mercy during their lives and at the moment of their deaths.

After the kings had left, our august Sovereign and her holy spouse Joseph started to sing new hymns of homage to thank the Most High for the wonders He had just carried out. They consulted with the holy Scriptures and with the prophecies of the Patriarchs they saw with an inexplicable joy that their predictions started to be carried out in the Infant Jesus. But the most prudent Mother, who deeply pondered these sublime mysteries, conserved them in her heart and frequently recalled them in her spirit. The Angels who assisted at all these wonders congratulated their Queen that her most holy Son was known and adored by men and sang again new hymns at the divine incarnate Majesty to glorify the mercy that was carried out in favor of men.

*(We return to the text of **Annals of the Most Holy Rosary**, p. 150-1).*

About forty years later, Saint Thomas, having traveled to their provinces, poured the water of baptism on the elderly foreheads of the three Magi, who still helped instruct their brothers in the faith. Thus the promise of Mary was accomplished.

After this happy event, they fell asleep in the peace of Christ. Their precious relics, collected by the empress Helena, were transported to Constantinople where the holy Bishop Eustorge brought them to Milan. But emperor Henry of Germany, having captured this city, brought them as a rich gift to Cologne, on the Rhine river where the piety of the faithful still conserve them with a great veneration. (Legend of Our Lady.)

The Bollandists say that the Magi died as martyrs. However they add, the Martyrology of Cologne reports their death differently. They died, as was mentioned above, peaceably in Christ, but the martyrology adds the following details. Already being priests and bishops, and after numerous evangelical travels in the year 54 of Our Lord, the three of them went to the city of Servan where they celebrated the Christmas holidays. It was to die there. Melchior died on the first of January, at the age of one hundred and sixteen years. Balthazar died the sixth of the same month, at the age of one hundred. In turn, Gaspar followed him to the grave. The body of Melchior moved itself to make way for Balthazar, and the two relinquished the place in the middle to Gaspar the day of his burial.

Melchior, who had a bald forehead, a long beard and floating hair, offered gold to the Infant in the manger. Bronze toned Balthazar who had a bearded face, offered myrrh. Gaspar, who had no beard and a rubicund figure, offered incense.

FROM JERUSALEM TO BETHLEHEM

*(Ref, **The Pilgrim of Palestine** and **Saint Francis Messenger**, New York,, 1888, No. 10: Item: **Annals of the Most Holy Rosary**, Cap de la Madeleine, vol. 3, 1894; November pp. 206 and following; item: **Life of Saint Joseph** by Father Frederic of Ghyvelde, Quebec, 1902, pp. 133 and following.)*

With gentle and pious emotions, we will visit the Sanctuary and the very charming Sanctuary of the Holy Manger of Bethlehem.

*The year is 1877. We write from the Holy Land to the Pilgrim of New York, the following account of a pilgrimage we took from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, on the eve of the Solemnity of the Epiphany: (In the **Life of Saint Joseph** Father Frederic wrote: "It was in the year 1876 that we left the City..." This date is certainly erroneous, because on the Epiphany of 1876, Father Frederic was still in France.)*

"... We leave the City of the great King, to go to the city of David. Bethlehem is approximately six miles from Jerusalem, going toward the midday sun. It is a fine paved European style route. The public vehicles easily make the trip in less than three quarters of an hour.

*(In the **Life of Saint Joseph**, we find the following note: "The pilgrims who preceded us didn't know the new roads. They visited the Holy Land on horseback, or mounted on small donkeys, or on the backs of camels, often through rocky terrain following the goat paths...")*

We went on foot, like true pilgrims. It is still early morning and the weather is splendid. We left Jerusalem by the Western gate in small groups. The roads were already crowded with vehicles, horses and little donkeys trotting, of animal handlers who were yelling, and a crowd of Catholic and protestant pilgrims: Russians, Greeks, Armenians, Copts, Syrians, Abyssinians, all Schmatics. The latter were going to the Grotto of the Nativity for their Christmas. We know that the oriental Schismatics did not accept the Gregorian Calendar, they follow the old calendar and subsequently they find themselves twelve days behind the Latin Church.

The route leaving the City, goes left and crosses the famous city of Gihon after which it rises rapidly. From the top of this incline, we see to the east, like an immense mural, a long chain of the Moab mountains and the view plunges down the deep basin of the Dead Sea. The sky is without clouds; the atmosphere is agreeably fresh. The sun already illuminates with its fire the mysterious solitariness of Arabian Petra, but its rays hidden by the mountains don't blur our eyes. The dual sentiment of sadness and terror overtakes the soul of the pilgrim. Its memories go back forty centuries earlier. These formerly fertile plains watered by great water, and that the Nephew of the Father of the Believers had chosen for their home had been a place of delights... the garden of the Lord. The inhabitants of this fortunate region in their ingratitude, abused the rich gifts of Heaven, fell into an atrocious corruption. The cry of their iniquities rose all the way to Heaven. In His anger, God caused a rain of sulphur and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah , and reduced them to ashes in an immense conflagration as well as all the guilty cities, with their inhabitants, and the surrounding countryside with everything that had any value on the land.

Recalling the deliverance of Lot who escaped by fleeing in the midst of the guilty, the Sage assures us after so many centuries, that the corruption of the inhabitants of Sodom remains marked by this land which still smolders, and which remains deserted and where the trees bear fruit that never ripens, and where we see a statue of salt (Lot's wife), eternal monument to an unbelieving soul. The wrath of God still appears visible on this unfortunate country where sterility, desolation and death reign.

After this biblical reminder which leaves a great sorrow of heart, here is another that fills the soul with surprise and humiliation. It is of the most wise King who became the most insensitive of men. The Mount of Scandal is facing us, a the rising son, immediately at the Valley of Judgement. The Holy Books tells us the Solomon was already elderly when his heart was corrupted to the point of adoring false gods: Astarte goddess of the Sidonians and Molochidol of the sons of Hennon and Chemosh idol of the Moabites to whom he built a temple on the mountain of Jerusalem.

Oh! Poor human heart, unfathomable abyss! Solomon's scandal caused incalculable ravages in the spirit of his successors. The Valley of the sons of Hennon are at our feet. It was also the place of many delights. The King's sumptuous gardens extended their luxurious vegetation to her eastern limits. The Jews made it a place of abominations. Before this revolting ingratitude on the part of the people always inundated with the blessings of Heaven, the Lord in anger said: "I will chastise Jerusalem and I will bring a deluge of pain upon its people because they abandoned me and they profaned this place by offering sacrifices to strange gods, a crime formerly unknown to them and their fathers, and because they raised a temple to Baal where they were sufficiently insensitive and cruel enough to burn their own sons and their own daughters in holocaust to Baal, their horrid idol. That's why the time will come when they will call this delightful place, The Valley of Carnage!"

Since the Babylonian captivity, we know all the wrong that fell on this apostate and sacrilegious city. We shudder still at the very thought of the horrors that accompanied and followed the conquest and the destruction by the Romans. Jeremiah's great prediction came to fall on her. Her people remain the fable and the mockery of nations and passersby are stricken with stupor at the sight of these ruins!

These grave and melancholy thoughts overcome the pilgrim's soul who travels toward the City of David. However, arriving on the plateau, an open plain opens up before him that consoles the earlier sadness.

On the right, at a certain distance along the route, in this ancient plain of giants, we notice a yellowish ruin. Pious traditions wants it to be the ancient home of the holy elder Simeon, who holding in his trembling arms the Savior of the world, proclaimed He destined by God the Father to be the light of the peoples and the glory of Israel. Today these ruins almost at ground level, at the time of our Father Quaresmius in the seventeenth century, had the form of a tower with a cistern and six small rooms.

Despite the crowd, slowly continuing our walk across the plain, we meditate with delight the gentle mystery of the Holy Family which had passed more than once along this road. After crossing the valley of Raphaim, we see a little further to our right the place where the famous terebinth was located. An ancient legend calls it the Virgin's Tree.

According to the testimony of Boniface of Ragusa, ancient Custodian of the Holy Land, it is in the shade of this tree that the Blessed Virgin rested, when she carried her divine Infant from Bethlehem to Jerusalem to offer Him to the Lord in the Temple. By virtue of the Most High, this

tree's branches bow all the way down to the earth to cover the Holy Family in its refreshing shade, as the gigantic sycamore of Heliopolis would later do during the flight to Egypt. This terebinth is greatly venerated by all, believers and nonbelievers, until regrettably the day when the Muslim owner of the property, pushed by a sordid greed, put his sacrilegious hands on it, uprooted it and burned it. Visitors had damaged the wheat that he was growing around it!

According to an eye-witness of that time, Catholics and all pious pilgrims on their way to Bethlehem or returning to Jerusalem would devoutly kneel at the foot of this tree, make the sign of the Cross and with fervor implore the protection of Jesus and his divine Mother who had previously rested under its shade, and if they were happy enough to obtain a bit of the wood, they kept it like a true relic, more precious than gold, and would fabricate rosaries, crosses, or other objects of piety .

If the Superiors of the Holy Land, in their wise foresight, had not placed excommunication upon whoever touched this secular tree, the indiscreet devotion of the pilgrims would have long since stripped it to its roots. This remark by the Author leads us to believe that this venerable Tree was, at that time, the property of the Holy Land, otherwise his reflection would seem to lack credence. The Muslims themselves held it in great reverence and told of many truly marvelous things. Actually, this is what happened, a few years ago to a disciple of Mohamed. Like the shepherds on Christmas night, one night a man was watching over his flock a short distance from this tree. He saw a great jet of flames come from the terebinth and raise toward heaven.

Like Moses in his time, recollected and full of astonishment he approached to contemplate this great vision. The terebinth, like a burning bush burned yet remained intact in the middle of the great flame. The Muslim's zeal sometimes went so far, as to stone our poor Religious themselves, to keep them away when they wanted to kneel and pray under the shade of Mary's Tree, for fear that they would cut the palms, which only the Superiors permitted very secretly at night.

Passing in front of the destroyed terebinth, we ask a blessing of the Holy Family and we arrive at a cistern dug along the ancient route followed by the divine Jesus and by Joseph and Mary, and which joins today with the new road. It is the well of the Three Kings. According to tradition, it is here that the star which had disappeared when they presented themselves to Herod, reappeared to lead them directly to Bethlehem.

We will now walk in the steps of Mary and Joseph on their way to the City of David, their illustrious ancestor, the night preceding the mysterious night of Christmas. We see that the route to Bethlehem is full of biblical reminders.

A few steps from the well of the Magi, we reach the ancient convent of Saint Elija, formerly occupied by true saints, served today by the blind disciples of Photeus. Facing the Convent, on the right hand side of the road, we see a relief on a rock, the imprint of a human body. We are assured it was formerly very well marked . Today it is barely recognizable.

A pious belief is in kept with difficulty with our Holy Books, establishes the precise place where the Prophet rested while he fled the pursuits of the impious queen who wanted to kill him. An angel appeared, shook the Prophet who was sleeping wearily under the juniper tree, a jug of

fresh water, and a mysterious loaf, everything was there. In a similar approach, an wandering Bedoin, and a vagabond Bedoin always stopped near this rock. They ate the bread cooked under cinders, and drew from the cistern nearby fresh water in their traditional jug. Pilgrims fall on their knees at this same place, and ask the protection of the prophet Elijah, and if they are priests, a large share in his zeal. The contemplative souls follow the Prophet across the desert, in his irresistible walk of forty days and forty nights, all the way to the mountain of Horeb. That is to learn the true spirit of the Lord, the spirit which is manifested, not in the impetuous wind that topples mountains and shatters cliffs, and which shakes the earth and causes bursts of volcanic fire, but the almost imperceptible breath of a gentle whisper!

Leaving the height of Saint Elijah we notice on the left, very distinctly despite the rays of the sun between the tears of the mountains, the dormant shade of Asphalt Lake.

A little further, on the right of the road ahead of us, saint Rachel the beloved spouse of the patriarch Jacob , appears to us as a vision, dying, but resigned in her deep sorrow. By the side of the road is her tomb. Everyone passing it bows with emotion and venerates her. The Schismatics pray to her, the Catholics invoke her like a saint. The remaining dispersed of Israel, the poor Jews, not only pray to her, but they come from Jerusalem, making numerous and frequent pilgrimages to her tomb.

*Another half mile, and we reach the end of our morning peregrination... the joyful and active city of Bethlehem. Entering this small city, the pilgrim senses an abundance of joy in his heart. I was not the first to experience these gentle emotions. They are common to all. Jerusalem is the city of tears, Bethlehem is the city of gentle joy. (Bethlehem, December 25, 1876. Recollection of our first Pilgrimage. (This note is in the **Life of Saint Joseph**, p. 141)*

Now, before describing the Sanctuary of Bethlehem with all its related marvels, let us prostrate ourselves before the Holy Manger, and with a recollected soul in tranquil peace, let us meditate with the pious and gentle author that we learned to know in the beautiful Paraphrase of the Magnificat, at the Sanctuary of the Visitation (Msgr. L-Charles Gay, Bishop of Anthidon of pious memory).

(Conversations on the Mysteries of the Holy Rosary, Paris, 1888. Father Frederic borrows from Msgr. Gay pages 189-191 of vol.I (III rd mystery) entitled “**Infinite charms of Jesus, born in a Stable**” (**Annals of the Most Holy Rosary**, 1895, January pp 8-12), and pages 206-218 under the title: “**The four joys of Mary at the birth of Jesus**” (Feb. pp. 28-32; March pp. 48-52; April pp. 67-71) finally, pages 218-226 entitled “**Fruits of this blessed Nativity**” (May pp88-91; and June pp 107-112). We do not believe it is necessary to reproduce those pages here, though we would certainly find in them the subject of fervent meditations of the Servant of God.)

PART TWO (French pages 141 – 207)

(In the **Vie de Saint Joseph** p. 142 the Author abandons the history of the basilica and continues as follows: *“This is the same Basilica that the pilgrims still admire, after many centuries. She stands there, alone, after so many revolutions, the result of a visible protection from heaven. Except for the roof which underwent major renovations at different times, the rest of the monument goes back to its original construction. “The Basilica of the Nativity is one of the most beautiful properties of which the Seraphic Family is guardian for the Catholic Church in the Orient. Unfortunately, it is currently in the hands of the dissident Greeks and Armenians who use the choir and the transept as their parish church. As for the naves, unfortunately we saw them converted to a market and a reunion place for loiterers.*

Toward the end of the 4th century, Saint Jerome and Saint Paula came to settle next to the Grotto of the Nativity. In 414, the Pelagians destroyed their convents. Emperor Justinian restored the Basilica in the year 530. Later, in 636 we see that the Patriarch Sophronius complained bitterly in a homily that he preached in Jerusalem, that he could not visit the Grotto of the Nativity because the army of Omar had laid siege on Bethlehem. The following year, the caliph Omar Hafes-ibn-el-Khatib visited the Basilica of the Nativity. Saint Willibald came in the 8th century, and it was described by the monk Bernard in the 9th century.

At the beginning of the 11th century, a terrible persecution ordered by caliph Hakim brought devastation and ruin to all the churches in the Holy Land. Only the church of Bethlehem escaped destruction.

A French chronicler, Ademar of Chabennes (1029) describes as follows how it was saved: “While the pagans worked at destroying the church of Bethlehem, the site of the Birth of Christ, suddenly a bright light appeared to them and floored them. Getting up, they still wanted to continue their work, but this same light instantly struck them dead.”

In 1099, having learned of the arrival of the Crusades at Emmaus, the people of Bethlehem sent a few men to beg them to deliver them from the Muslims and come take possession of the city. Godfrey de Bouillon sent Tancred with a hundred brave men who, leaving Emmaus around midnight, before sunrise raised the flag of the Cross over the holy Basilica.

Two years later, on December 25, 1101, Beaudoin I was anointed and crowned king of Jerusalem by Daimbert the Patriarch of Jerusalem. At the request of Beaudoin, Pope Paschal II raised the church of Bethlehem to cathedral status and gave it for its first bishop Asquitinius, Canon of the church of Jerusalem, which united the seat of Bethlehem to that of Ascalon for which he was already designated. Until that time, the Basilica of Our Lady of the Manger or the Nativity had been served by a chapter of regular canons having a Prior at their head.

However the ancient authors whom we quoted above, made no mention in the description of the Basilica, of the rich interior decorations which were greatly admired by the more contemporary writers. It isn't until around 1185 that there is question of the beautiful mosaics and figures that adorn the entire church. This seems to prove that the Basilica of Constantine, though spared from the destruction and saved from total ruin, nonetheless suffered the loss of her ancient ornamentation as a result of subsequent profanations. The Crusades undertook restoring its former splendor, and carried out extensive interior work of which we still admire the remains which we will describe later.

After the expulsion of the Crusades (1187) and before the year 1192, no Christian priest served the deserted altars of the main sanctuaries. That year, it was the Bishop of Salisbury who obtained with the magnanimity of the Saladin, that in addition to a small group of local clergy, two Latin priests with their deacons were assigned to each of the cities of Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth.

In 1211, the church of the Holy Sepulcher didn't even have these rare representatives of western Christianity. Only Syrian priests celebrated the holy offices in its abandoned chapels. Six years later, Thetmar found the city of Jerusalem effectively closed to Christians, and the Holy Sites deprived of candles, cult and all exterior honor.

During the first centuries following the fall of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, the Basilica of Bethlehem suffered little, and kept her precious ornamentation. The monk Brocard who visited it in the second half of the 13th century, admit never having seen in the rest of the universe, such a splendid edifice. He speaks with admiration of her columns, the rich mosaics, the beautiful marble panels that covered the lateral walls. It was during his time that the first mutilation took place.

The Egyptian sultan seduced by the beauty of the materials, had ordered his agents to have the columns and marble from the church of Bethlehem removed and transported to his palace in Cairo. "However, with the first blow of the hammer" said the chronicler monk, "an extraordinarily large snake came out of the wall, bit the marble table and shattered the entire length of it, then going to the next one, did the same thing and continued all the way to the fourteenth one, imprinting along the way, a mark similar to the passage of a flame. Then it disappeared, leaving all the assistants in a stupor. The sultan himself decided to abandon the project. Thus the church was saved.

Now we arrive to the era when the Franciscans were established at the Manger of the Lord. According to the chronicles of the Order and the most accredited authors, the Friars Minor took possession of the illustrious sanctuaries of Bethlehem. This concession was made by Saladin, also called Melek-es-Saleh, sultan of Damascus, brother of Malek-el-Kamel (the Meledin of historians), friend of Saint Francis.

In 1263, the convent of Bethlehem was destroyed in part by the Muslims, but in 1271, the religious obtained from Bibars, Sultan of Egypt and Syria, a firman (see definition) by which he permitted them to restore the church of Saint Mary of Bethlehem. In 1306, the government granted permission to do work in the Grotto of the Nativity and in the Basilica of Saint Mary.

Finally, in 1333, the convent of Bethlehem was completely restored.

In 1447, Phillip the Good, son of John the Fearless, and father of Charles the Timid, duke of Burgundy and count of Flanders, obtained a bull from Pope Nicholas V which permitted him to send to the Holy Land, Lord Peter of Vaudray, his councilor with a few other necessary people to proceed with the reparation of the large church of Saint Mary and the convent of Bethlehem which was surrounded by moats like a fortress. The work was carried out under the direction of a Franciscan religious, architect sent by Pope Pius II (1459-1474). Some years later, King Edward IV, king of England, sent all the lead necessary to cover the Basilica roof. In 1464, the most Reverent John Thomacelli, Custodian of the Holy Land finished the restoration work started by his predecessors and entirely renewed the woodwork and the roof. All the pieces of pine wood, processed in Venice, were transported to Tel-Aviv on galleons of the Venetian Republic, and on the backs of camels all the way to Bethlehem.

In 1537, following the destruction of his flotilla by Andria Gritti the doge of Venice, the sultan Soliman-el-Kamonnî ordered the governor of Jerusalem, to lock all the Franciscans of Jerusalem and Bethlehem in the chateau (the tower of David). From there the religious were transported to Damascus where after three years of captivity, they regained their freedom with the help of Francis I, king of France. In 1549 an earthquake destroyed a part of the walls of the church and the convent of Bethlehem.

In 1564, the non-united Greeks presented their petition for the first time, for the site of the Nativity of the Lord, but their request was rejected for lacking substance. Nonetheless the process was taken up six times in the course of a single year. To assure their success, the Greeks, always fertile and persistent, created the fear of revolt in Constantinople, but their efforts failed and the Franciscans won the case.

However the disciples of Photius, seeing with a jealous eye the children of Saint Francis in peaceful possession of the Sanctuaries, seized every opportunity to deprive them of it. Each time there was a new Sultan, they rushed to have their unjust pretensions validated, they went so far as to falsify public documents and produce false firmans.. That is a fact confirmed in 1630 by the governor himself.

In 1619, the non-catholic Armenian bishop of Bethlehem, desiring a key to the Sanctuary of Bethlehem, made a sacrifice of five hundred sheep for the benefit of the throne of the Sultan, to obtain a firman by this base adulation, which put him in possession of this key. But the French Ambassador having threatened the messenger leaving Constantinople, the firman was revoked. In 1620, this same ambassador obtained from the Sultan a firman which acknowledged the authenticity of our documents granted by the preceding Sovereigns, and confirmed once again, that the Kat-ech-Cherif of Soliman and further recognized our exclusive rights over the Basilica of Bethlehem, the Holy Sepulchre, the Rock of Anointing, the Tomb of the Blessed Virgin.

In 1628, Philip IV, king of Spain sent 30,000 ducats for the repair of the convent of Bethlehem and the church. He restored it to the French Religious the church of Bethlehem, the Grotto of the

Nativity with the three keys, as well as the gardens and surroundings. Further he declared that since the conquest of Jerusalem by Omar the Latins were the legitimate owners.

In the meantime, the Greeks never stopped plotting their intrigues. At the instigation of the Sultan-mother who was of Greek origin, Amurah IV signed in 1633, the order to expel the Franciscans from the Shrines, which were immediately given to the non-united Greeks. Chased from Holy Sepulcher, Calvary, the site of the birth of the Savior, the Tomb of the Blessed Virgin, the legitimate owners of the Holy Sites could not even visit the Sanctuaries without paying the price.

However, the ambassadors of France, Austria and Venice energetically intervened in this affair and finally obtained in 1635, a firman which revoked the order of expulsion launched against the Franciscans. However, two years later, in 1637 another firman yielded once more the Sanctuaries of Bethlehem into the hands of the Greeks.

This was the situation until in 1673, France having to settle with the tribunal, Louis XIV took advantage of the occasion to obtain from Sultan Mohamed IV a firman which put them back in the possession of the Guardians of the Holy Sites. The firman was granted in 1676, the same Sultan delivered to the Greeks another firman which annulled the preceding one, and the Franciscans were once again deprived of their Sanctuaries.

This state of affairs lasted until 1690. At this time, Rev. Father Lardizabal, helped by the French ambassador M. Castagneres of Chateau Neuf, obtained from Soliman III a favorable firman. This firman dated April 20, 1690 (1,101 of hegire) put the Franciscans back in possession of Holy Sepulcher, the site of the Crucifixion, the Invention of the Holy Cross, the Stone of Ointment, the seven Arcades of Saint Mary and the great cupola at the site of the Nativity and the Basilica, as well as the little garden.

(During my stay in the Holy Land, in charge of construction of the new parish church of Bethlehem, I was working in broad daylight in this little garden, on the foundations of the new building. All the Monks of the Schismatic Greek convent went up on the terrace of the Basilica's apse. They could see us working at their feet. Nothing stopped them from telegraphing the Pacha in Jerusalem to accuse us of secretly digging a passage to go from there to the Holy Grotto! And they made a very serious issue of it! (See above: The works of Father Frederic in Bethlehem. The copyist.) This was subsequently confirmed several times.

At the treaty of Karlowitz (June 26, 1699) emperor Leopold had inserted an article (the XVIIIth) in favor of the free possession of the Sanctuaries by the Franciscans, and in 1700 the Sultan, at the insistence of the emperor, gave a firman confirming this article.

In 1718 in the treaty of Passarowitz, the interests of the Holy Land were taken under consideration but they were as always more rhetoric than effective.

In 1719 the Marquis of Bonnac, French ambassador in Constantinople, obtained from the Tribunal, a firman which authorized the Franciscans to renew the lead covering on the church of the Nativity.

In 1740 after a discussion between the Most Christian king and the tribunal (Louis XV and Mahmoud Ist), they examined article 33 of the firman obtained by Louis XIV concerning the Holy Sites. This article was again confirmed and to give it more authority, the Sultan inserted the following clause: "All former or later ordres contrary to the present document must be seen as nul and void". This was a formal text but in Turkey what are the texts and justice compared to the solemn word!... In spite of this convention which should have safeguarded the rights of the Franciscans in the future, in 1757 the Greeks bringing more than a thousand pilgrims sacked the principal sanctuaries of Bethlehem and Jerusalem and taking possession of them while half a million Turkish dollars corrupted the Grand Vizir, Regyb-Pacha, who obtained for them a firman ratifying their usurpations. In vain the French ambassador M. de Vergennes strongly protested against this injustice, the Grand Vizir insolently replied: "These places belong to my master the Sultan. He can concede them to whoever he pleases. Whatever was until this day in the hands of the French, his Highness now wants in the hands of the Greeks".

It is true that the ambassador finally obtained from Sultan Othman II a new firman annulling the first one and permitting the Latins to obtain in an exclusive way the Sanctuaries that Louis XIV had obtained for them in 1690. Unfortunately this firman never reached its entire execution. In 1814 the Armenians in turn took the chapel (apse) north of the Basilica from the Greeks. (This paragraph is noted in the original text.) I was still in Jerusalem when the Schismatic Armenians devised one day, to prevent the Fathers of the Holy Land from passing through this chapel North of the Basilica. The right of usage was by Vizir's decree and not challenged. It was to prevent all access by that way to the Holy Grotto. To this end, they posted one of their own people in the passage and when the Catholic priest came from the Latins' sacristy, dressed in the sacred vestments to celebrate Mass at the Holy Crib, this Armenian gave him a poke of the elbow in the chest and thus threw him brutally and sacrilegiously outside the passage. That lasted for several months while the question was addressed in Constantinople, they recommended patience on the part of the Latins. Finally, the people of Bethlehem, outraged at these intolerable delays forced the Franciscans to make justice themselves. They were in peril of their lives and only the cowardice of the Armenians prevented bloodshed!

In 1852, at the request of the government of Napoleon III, the tribunal gave the Franciscan Fathers of the Holy Land a key to the Main Door of the Basilica of Bethlehem, and recognized their right to passage in the choir.

Today the Basilica of Bethlehem is in the hands of the dissident Greeks and Armenians who use the choir and the transept as their parish church. Below the transept, the Greeks erected in 1842 an atrocious wall enclosure, pierced by three doors that disrupt the vue of the ensemble. This fosters in the soul of every visitor a sentiment of sadness and indignation. (This paragraph is noted in the original text. Since then, the wall in question here has been removed.

But the defficulties between the Rites has not ceased. On the Epiphany of 1928, I myself was witness to the sacrileges of the Greek Monks against the Franciscan Religious by their desecration of paintings and mosaics. (The copyist.)

DESCRIPTION OF THE BASILICA

The church of Saint Mary of Bethlehem, or the Basilica of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ is situated on the extreme western side of Bethlehem, outside the enclosure of the ancient city, on the northern slope of the mountain that serves as its base. On the exterior it is surrounded by several buildings that obstruct the form and hides it from view. On one side is the Franciscan convent supported by tall terraces that dominate the valley (ouadi Djemel); on the other side are the schismatic Greek and Armenian convents which mask the view of the Basilica except the roof where the pointed gable is seen from every direction.

From the atrium, we used to enter into the vestibule through three doors. The two lateral ones have disappeared due to exterior construction. The center door is the only visible one though part of it is obstructed by a large modern buttress and walled on the interior, with the exception of a low and narrow passage in the form of a vent.

The vestibule extends the entire length of the nave, to the height of the lower sides. In the interior, it is dark and without ornamentation. The walls divide it into three parts, and give access to the interior of the Basilica through a single door.

As we enter this door, we have a magnificent spectacle before our eyes. We embrace in a single glance, five naves more than a hundred feet long, formed by four rows of red monolithic columns veined with white that we would take to be marble and mounted with Corinthian capitals.

*At the far end of these five naves, ignoring the wall put up by the Greeks which we described in the preceding note (In the **Life of Saint Joseph** we read: "Suppressing... the gates put up by the Greeks in 1842, and which are pierced by three doors, we see...") we see the large transept, the choir, the apses, all perfectly lighted by a series of open windows in the main part of the edifice.*

Each colonnade supports, following the ancient rules, an architrave whose long borders bring us back to the days of classical art. On the lower sides, these architraves support the beams of the ceiling. In the central nave, they support two twenty-seven to thirty foot walls on which rest the beams of the framework. The main part of these walls are pierced with a series of windows. In the XIIIth century, these walls were covered with mosaics. Only a few fragments remain to this day.

*(In the **Life of Saint Joseph**, p 144-145, the Author skips the rest of the following description to say: "Like all the ancient Basilicas, that of Bethlehem is not vaulted, but covered with a simple framework roof. The one that is seen today dates to the end of the XVIIth century, the beams are apparent in the interior and it is probable that at the time of the first construction all the way to the middle ages, they were hidden by a ceiling of wood adorned with paintings and gilding consistent with the magnificent interior decoration.*

"The five naves of the Basilica, made up of eleven spans of equal length, those of the center are larger than the two bottom-sides together. The transept is as large as the central nave and

together they form the figure of the latin cross. The North and South extremities are terminated by semi-circular aspes which project to the exterior wall.

*Finally, the central part of the choir is raised a bit more than two feet above the rest of the ground, it is under this elevation that we find the Grotto of the Nativity of Our Lord." Follow this description.) *** Translator's note: Insert the floor plan French text page 151.*

Phocas thoroughly describes the ornamentation of the Crypt of the Nativity, but he gives no detail of the mosaics in the Basilica. After having described the interior as it exists today, he says thusly: "A capable artist had painted in this Grotto all the mysteries that were accomplished..." and he described them.

THE MOSAICS

Father Quaresnius, Franciscan religious, former Custodian of the Holy Land, in his great and wise work on the Holy Sites (two large volumes in-folio entitled: "Dilucidatio Terrae Sanctae") said that upon entering the Basilica of Bethlehem by the main door, the first mosaic that was encountered and which covered the entire interior of the western wall represented a tree whose branches supported the figures of the prophets. Each held in hand a scroll on which was written in Latin a verse of his prophecy regarding the Birth of Christ. Already in the days of Father Quaresmius, that is since more than two hundred years (in 1885) – there were only a few fragments left. These fragments belonged to a tree of Jesse, figure very frequently represented in the monuments of Middle-Age Latin.

Let us penetrate the nave. Everything is painted, from the floor to the top of the walls. Probably the ceiling was formerly colored. That completed the system of decoration. The columns themselves were painted. Figures of the saints were represented. Their long silhouettes are still seen in several places.

The entire surface of the walls were covered with mosaics whose subjects were determined. These mosaics started immediately above the architrave of the columns and extended all the way to the woodwork surrounding the windows.

On both sides of the nave though different in details, they followed the same rules and the same type of subjects disposed in the following order: 1. A row of personages, seen at mid-length, representing the genealogy of Christ. 2. A series of paintings representing the major Councils, separated by groups of fantastic foliage; 3. A frieze made up of molding depicting foliage, between two rows of pearls, the windows came to rest on the top row. 4. A row of angels situated in the space between the windows; 5. A frieze similar to the first one.

Like the figures, this entire composition was executed from tiny cubes of glass and are fixed to a gold background. The colors used are red, yellow, blue, green, and brown/scarlet. The vibrant white, like the brilliant parts of the censers and the chandeliers, and the field of the inscriptions are rendered by means of mother-of-pearl plaques.

The south side (still conserved) contains:

The seven busts representing the seven last ancestors of Joseph, spouse of the Virgin Mary. Their names are written in XII century latin characters: Azor – Sadoch – Eliud – Eleazar – Matthan – Jacob.

There are two groups of arcades, separated by arabesques. Between each group of columns is a square altar, covered with magnificent embroidered cloths, garlanded and embellished with precious stones holding a superbly bound book of scripture. Above, a long inscription in two rows contains a resume of the decrees of the Council of Constantinople.

The fragment on the north side has a similar ornamentation, but the edifices that contain the inscriptions related to the Councils have a completely different form. Instead of a simple arch, they complete the dome of the church, and are not identical to the preceding images, as the altar and the book of the Gospels. They subsist as two complete churches; that of Antioch and that of Sardinia and the portion of a third one; that of Gangres.

On the north wall the six Councils are represented; starting to the east: Ancyra , Antioch – Sardinia – Gangres - Laodicea - Carthage – with the text for each Council.

On the south wall were the seven ecumenical Councils in order by date, starting with the East: Nicea – Constantinople – Ephesus – Chalcedon – 2nd Constantinople – 3rd Constantinople – 2nd Nicea. The fifth and seventh have completely disappeared. The inscription on the second Council is complete, and only fragments are left of the other four. The second council of Nicea was in Latin. So, we know this second Council was the last ecumenical Council recognized by the Greeks. The heresy of Photius caused the schism a short time later.

The transept and the choir. Here is what was left of the decoration in this part of the church during the time of Quaresmius:

The lower south central part of the transept we could see in the apse:

The Nativity of Our Lord – The Adoration of the Magi – The return of the Magi guided by the Angel. On the east wall - The Conversation of Our Lord with the Samaritan – The Transfiguration – Jesus-Christ's entrance into Jerusalem with the Palms; above – Saint John the Evangelist. On the west wall: The Arrest of Our Lord in the garden of Olives. The other images on this façade were destroyed.

The north transept had only two images left: The Incredulity of Saint Thomas and the Ascension.

In the main choir were represented: On the North side; Pentecost and the Wake of the Virgin; on the south side; The Presentation in the Temple; and in the apse, the Annunciation. Above are figures of saints and prophets.

We see that this ensemble of mosaics presents a complete summary of the New Testament in a series of images.

Of all these decorations, today there are only three images left: The Entrance with the Palms; Saint Thomas touching the wounds of Jesus Christ, and a fragment of the Ascension.

First image: Entrance on Palm day: We see Christ, seated on a donkey, blessing with the right hand and leading the animal with his left. An apostle is walking next to him. The other apostles no doubt were right behind the Lord, in the part of the mosaic that has been destroyed. In front, there is a tree in which a child is climbing to cut the branches. Below, next to the donkey, other children are spreading their vestments on the ground. A little further, before the gate to the city, the crowd is waiting for Christ. Men and women are huddled, holding palms and leading their children. One of the women is carrying hers on her shoulder, in the way Arab women of today do, by the seat of his pants. At the back there is a tree covered mountain, and a city fortified by a wall and its houses.

This composition conforms entirely with the Rules given in the Painter's Guide – collection of manuscripts, formulas in use by Greek painters, recently found at Mount Athos. – The identification is so complete that we could believe the mosaic of Bethlehem made directly after the chapter of this Guide consecrated to the feast of the Palms. The Latin inscription which accompanied it has disappeared. Quaresmius saw the words: RAMIS PALMARUM HIS XPS.

The second image. (We pass under it going to the Joinville door to the Holy Grotto): The Incredulity of Saint Thomas. The second fragment represents Jesus standing, His head surrounded by a cruciform halo, in the middle of the eleven apostles. With one hand He holds back his garb and uncovers the wound on his right side; with the other he takes the arm of Thomas and makes him put his finger in the hole of the wound. The unbeliever bows with fear; the ten others look with admiration.

None of the apostles have halos, which is completely contrary to tradition of Greek iconography. At the back is a closed door whose two panels are historiated, and panels whose frame forms a series of scrollwork resembling superimposed hearts whose point is adorned with a bud which resembles a fleur de lis. (stylized...lily blossom). On each side of the door, a colonnade with leafed capitals contain an arch alternatively in full curve and ribbed.

The arched vaults are adorned with encrusted stones, exactly like the churches having great naves. Formerly we read over the door: JANUIS CLAUSIS; and over the head of Saint Thomas on each side of the column INFER DI GITUM TUUM HIC. These inscriptions have disappeared along with a part of the gold background that surrounded them.

We clearly distinguish in the colonnades, the central ribs and the two full curves which accompany them. The bend at a third of the way was always foreign to the Greeks properly said, as were the mosaic painters of the emperor Manuel. Those that we see here are evidently a concession to the tastes of the Crusaders.

The third image: The Ascension: (Also above the passage.) The third fragment belongs to the image of the Ascension, whose upper part has disappeared. We see the eleven apostles, with

beards and no haloes, separated into two groups and looking toward heaven. At the center, the Virgin with halo and raised hands. On each side of the Mother of God, two angels dressed like the apostles, but without beards, with wings and halos, speak to the two groups.

Next to one, we formerly read these words: VIRI GALILEI QUID STATIS ASPICIENTES IN CAELUM. Next to the other: HIC HIS QUI ASSUMPTUS EST SIC VENIET QUEMADMODUM VIDISTIS EUM.

The soil is rounded in the shape of a dome in such a way as to indicate that the scene takes place on the summit of a mountain.

A final, less considerable fragment is found in the southern transept. It foreshadows the Transfiguration and represents the prophet Elijah. During the time of Father Quaresmius, the image was complete, and we saw the summit of the mountain, the three apostles, Peter, James and John, and Christ surrounded by two prophets with the inscription: HELIAS HIS CHS MOISES, and above: TRANSFIGURATIO DNI.

All these mosaics were executed with great care on a gold background. They are far superior to the Roman paintings of the XIIth century, such as we know them by the rare monuments of the West.

These details already call attention to the characteristics of the mosaics in the nave. Actually, as examples, they appeared to me similar to those we just described. For my part, I don't hesitate to consider them all as contemporary.

In the choir there is nothing left. All the mosaics described by Quaresmius have completely disappeared. Only one small fragment remains in the apse. It comes from a long bilingual inscription, in five lines, which occupied the perimeter of the hemicycle a few meters from the ground.

M. de Vogue translated the inscription given in its entirety by Quaresmius but with a few errors, that the wise archaeologist rectified as follows: "The present work was done by the hand of Ephrem, painter and mosaic maker, during the reign of the emperor Manuel Porphyrogenete Comnene, and in the days of the great king of Jerusalem, the Lord Amaury and the most holy bishop of holy Bethlehem, Msgr. Raoul, in the year 6677, Convocation 2". The author continues, this date is according to the Greek calculation which places the birth of Jesus Christ in the year 5508 and corresponds to the Christian year 1169, which is actually the 2nd Convocation of Constantinople.

The emperor Manuel reigned from 1145 to 1180. Amaury, the 5th king of Jerusalem, from 1163 to 1173, and Raoul (Ralph) was bishop of Bethlehem from 1159 or 1160 to 1173. So there is a perfect concordance between the different parts of the inscription. The form of the letters, the abbreviations and the ribbons of this inscription is the same as the Greek inscriptions in the nave. That is another reason to consider them all contemporaries and to attribute them all to the same school as all the decoration inside this splendid Basilica."

DESCRIPTION OF THE HOLY GROTTO AND THE OTHER SANCTUARIES

(c. **Annales du T.S. Rosaire**, 1896, September p. 169 and following; Item: **Vie de Saint Joseph** p. 145-159)

Translator's note: photo references French edition page 160: Grotto of the Nativity

Plan of the grottoes of Bethlehem 1. The Holy Grotto; 2. Site of the Holy Manger; 3. Altar of the Three Kings; 4. Stairs; 5. Site of the Birth of Jesus; 6. The fountain; 7. The exit door; 8. The altar to Saint Joseph; 9. The Grotto of the Holy Innocents; 10. The Tomb of Saint Eusebius; 11. The Tombs of Saints Paula and Eustochia; 12. The Tomb of Saint Jerome; 13. Saint Jerome's Oratory.

The Stable of Bethlehem is below the choir (in raising) of the Basilica.

We descend via stairs indicated by the numbers 4, on the Plan of the Holy Grotto (see December 1895, p.221). One, on the south side, serves the non-united Greeks who have their convent on that side of the Basilica. the other, on the north side, is where our pilgrims go. It is made up of sixteen steps and is on the the side of the Convent of the Fathers of the Holy Land.

"While the Grotto of the Nativity is our property, we do not have exclusive use of it. The non-united Greek and the non-united Armenians knew to appropriate and through territorial power, have obtained the right to burn lamps and to celebrate one mass per day at the site of the Birth of the Lord. The Fathers of the Holy Land, for their part, celebrate one low Mass and one high Mass in the grotto, but they are not permitted to offer the holy Sacrifice at the very spot of the Nativity. (We borrow the descriptions of the Stable of Bethlehem and other underground Grottoes from the Work already frequently quoted: Guide to the Sanctuaries and historical Sites of the Holy Land by Father Lievin de Hamme, Franciscan residing in Jerusalem (3rd. ed). Work that all the pilgrims and tourists want to own because of its rigorous accuracy.)

In the middle of the XIIth century, the Grotto of the Nativity received from the Crusades, decorations of which we don't know the design, but in 1596 the entire ceiling of this chapel was also covered with mosaics. Today (1888) we see only a few traces of them in the niche that encloses the altar of the Nativity.

The Stable of Bethlehem, in its present state, is natural for the most part. It is practically on a bed of calcium rock and over it there is a ceiling which is probably false. It is forty feet long, and has an average width of ten to thirteen feet. The pavement consists of large white marble tiles, and the rock walls are covered with the same white marble.

The Holy Grotto has three doors: one at each of the stairs and a third one at the back which we will describe a bit later, but they do not lead to the outside. Fifty three lamps light the interior, of which fifteen belong to the Franciscans, Guardians of the Holy Sites, and the rest belong to the schismatic Greeks and Armenians.

The site of the Nativity – The site of the Nativity of Our Lord is in the main part (#5

on the plan) of the Manger, near the two stairways. The site is in the middle of a little apse which is covered by a white marble plaque. This plaque calls attention to a circular opening, almost in the center of a bluish colored rock which is probably jasper. This opening is surrounded by a silver star.

The silver star – The rays of this star are nailed to the marble plaque, and around the disc is engraved the following inscription: Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus-Christus Natus est. 1717 (Translation: Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary).

Next to the ground, around the apse 16 lamps burn night and day. They belong to the three Communities, Latin, Greek and Armenian.

The Greeks and the Armenians place a table on which they say Mass over the marble plaque and the 16 lamps. This apse which occupies the eastern part of the Holy Grotto still preserves, as we mentioned above, some fragments of the beautiful mosaics which go back to the time of the Crusades. They represent the Infant Jesus at the time of His birth.

The Manger oratory – Ten feet southwest of this apse, we go down three steps into the oratory of the Manger. This oratory is barely ten feet long and six or seven feet wide. It is partly carved into the rock, whose ceiling is covered with draperies and whose north and northwest sides are held by three antique marble columns.

On the west side, we notice an excavation in the rock shaped like a Cradle. This is where the Blessed Virgin placed the Infant Jesus after His birth. This venerable spot (#2 on the plan) is clad with white marble and five lamps burn there continually. The back is hidden by an image representing the Infant Jesus in the cradle. The walls are covered with draperies but they permit us to see the rock.

Altar of the Magi – The altar of the Magi occupies a part of this oratory. This altar is so called because it is dedicated to the Magi who came from the Orient and is located at the place where these holy persons adored the Infant Jesus (#3 on the plan).

It is on this altar that Catholic priests celebrate the holy Mysteries when they have the pleasure of offering the holy Mass at the Oratory of the Crib.

This oratory belongs exclusively to the Latins. Nonetheless we already saw, they cannot officiate there all the time, as the dissidents have certain rights, such as incensing during their ceremonies, etc.

The Well of the Holy Family – At a southwest angle, near the door to the Grottoes (#7 on the plan, there is a small circular opening. According to ancient tradition, God made a source of fresh water burst forth while the Holy Family inhabited this always venerable Grotto.

Leaving the Manger through the above mentioned door, to visit the (other) subterranean Grottoes

The neighboring grottoes: This is an narrow passageway, carved almost entirely in the rock and just a few steps away, we come to

The Chapel dedicated to Saint Joseph – Local tradition says it was in the Grotto of the Nativity that the angel ordered Saint Joseph to take the Infant Jesus and Mary, His Mother and flee to Egypt. This chapel, also entirely under the main Basilica, is carved in the rock and is very low. The altar is dedicated to the flight into Egypt and we see an image representing this mystery. It is a true masterpiece which was painted in Cologne. It is protected by a metal grill to prevent the everyone from damaging it by passing their hand over it which they then kiss. From there, we go down a stair of five steps to the chapel of the Holy Innocents.

The chapel of Saint Joseph (#8 on the plan) has its true floor at the same level as the Holy Innocents: the digging of the 5 steps was necessitated by the accumulation of debris resulting from carving of the rock by our ancient Fathers and which hid them there under a false floor during the time of persecution.)

Altar of Saint Eusebius of Cremona. – This altar (#10 on the plan) is set above the very tomb of Saint Eusebius who sold his goods to help his master and his friend, Saint Jerome founded a monastery in Bethlehem. After the death of Saint Jerome, Eusebius was elected superior in his place, but he only outlived him by two years, and died in 422.

Through this passage of fifteen to twenty feet long, we come to the chapel of the tombs. This chapel is dug entirely into the rock. To the east, we see an altar (#11 on the plan) built on the Tombs of Saint Paula and Saint Eustochia - Born of Greek and Scipions blood, Paula after the death of her husband Toxius who was from an ancient Julli family, had no other ambition than to devote herself to the service of Jesus Christ.

Knowing both the Greek and Hebrew languages, she devoted herself to the reading of the Holy Books. Intimately associated with Saint Jerome, like him she distributed a large part of her goods to the poor, left Rome and came with her daughter Eustochia to Bethlehem where she founded monasteries. After a meritorious life, she died in 494 and was buried in the tomb that is named for her. Her daughter succeeded her as superior, and did 15 years later and shares her sepulcher.

On the west wall of this same chapel (#12 on the plan) we see an altar over the Tomb of Saint Jerome – Saint Jerome, from a rich and powerful family, was born in the City of Strido on the border of Dalmatia and Pannonie in 331. After having spent his youth in Rome where he studied, he converted to Christianity and after several trips to France, he retreated to the desert of Syria where he lived for eleven years, immersed in the study of Holy Scripture. Ordained to the priesthood by Paulin, bishop of Antioch, he visited Palestine and conceived the idea of spending the rest of his life near the manger of the Lord. Returning to Rome in 378, he became secretary to Pope Damasus, who gave him assorted very important functions, among other things, to explain publicly the Holy Books. Toward the end of the IVth century, Jerome returned to Bethlehem and built a monastery which he wasted no time in filling with pious cenobites, in such a large number that he had to sell the rest of his goods to provide for

their needs. He spent his days directing the various convents of men and of women, and part of the night studying the Hebrew language. Further, he wrote a treatise defending the Catholic faith and by his pen sustained some famous controversies. The end of his life was troubled by invasions of the barbarians and the persecution of heretics. The holy and wise Doctor died in Bethlehem in 420. His body was placed in a grotto near that of the Nativity of the Lord, which he had frequently watered with his tears. Since then, he was transported to Rome, to the church of Saint Mary Major, and placed near the Chapel where the Holy Crib (whose description appears later) in which the Savior of the world was placed at His birth. As we know, Saint Jerome is the author of the Vulgate edition of the bible, and was Canonized by the Holy Council of Trent.

From this chapel we go through a door on the north side to The Oratory of Saint Jerome - This is the chapel (#13 on the plan) called the Oratory of Saint Jerome because according to Tradition, this is the place where he spent night and day in prayer and study.

Note: There still exist two souvenirs of Saint Jerome in Bethlehem. 1. An orange tree planted by him, and 2. a room where he taught and which is called for this reason, "Saint Jerome School".

To see the orange tree, it is sufficient to request it of a Franciscan religious of Bethlehem who willingly show it in the little garden of their convent. This little parcel of land is located at the chevet of the large Basilica of Saint Helena.

As for the school of Saint Jerome, it is located in the Armenian convent near the Basilica. They also willingly allow visits.

THE REMAINS OF THE HOLY CRIB IN ROME IN THE BASILICA OF SAINT MARY MAJOR (Annales du T.S. Rosaire, 1897, April, pp. 69-71)

The Crib, or to be more specific, the five pieces of wood which remain, are enclosed in a crystal reliquary in the shape of an enormous egg, resting horizontally on a gold and silver carved base.

This object of art is around 20 inches high and 40 inches long. It is under a vermillion statue of the Infant Jesus in a cradle, to the right and the left in crystal muffs, we see in the distance some hay from the stable in Bethlehem and the divine Infant's swaddling clothes. This magnificent reliquary is a gift from the duchess of Ville-Hermosa.

These little wooden planks or crosspieces, the largest of which is three feet long, by two and a half inches thick, have wormholes and are a grayish tint. They look like pieces of old oak dusted with flour. They are suspended in the crystal egg by silver ribbons.

During the year, the Holy Crib is enclosed in a gold cabinet located on the altar of confession in Saint Mary Major.

This confession on which is found the body of the apostle Mathias in a magnificent urn of porphyry was constructed by Pius IV. The white marble statue of this Pontiff is at the center. The pope is represented kneeling in prayer.

Christmas day, the relic is exposed from first vespers to the following evening. The Feast of the Nativity is ended with a procession in the Basilica presided by a cardinal. The Holy Crib is carried by the White Penitents, in the midst of a large crowd. It is deposited in the sacristy at which time small groups are admitted to venerate it at close range.

It was brought from Bethlehem in 642 at the time of a Muslim invasion, and placed in Saint Mary Major by Pope Theodore.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE FATHERS OF THE HOLY LAND IN BETHLEHEM (Annales du T.S. Rosaire, 1896, November, p 208 and following)

We have just examined from a topographical point of view the august Sanctuaries of Bethlehem. Now let us visit like real pilgrims, and we will unite ourselves in spirit with the pious pilgrims who accompany the Franciscans, Guardians of these Sanctuaries in their daily procession and who communicates to one of his friends in America his impressions in these terms. "... Dear friend, I wanted to make my visit as a true pilgrim and I communicate to you all the impressions I experienced while visiting these august Sanctuaries.

Permit me to start my day with the Fathers of the Holy Land, Guardians of the Holy Sites who gave me cordial hospitality. Also the Associates of the Work of the Holy Land, and who are numerous in America as they will see once again what precious favors they participate in by their offerings on Good Friday, for the Holy Sites by virtue of the Bull of Pius VI, of pious memory, favors which were most recently confirmed by a Brief from His Holiness Leon XIII.

I must tell you that what goes on in Bethlehem, also takes place in Jerusalem, in Nazareth and in the other Sanctuaries. The Holy See applies to all the Benefactors, the merits resulting from the prayers, penances, fasts, pilgrimages, processions and whatever pious works, accomplished not only by the Franciscans, Guardians of the Holy Sites, but for the entire Catholic population that benefits from the collections for the Work of the Holy Land, and equally the fruits of all the Masses celebrated in all these august sanctuaries. (The number of Masses offered each year for these Benefactors of the Holy Land, at Calvary, the Tomb of Our Lord, at the Holy Crib... vary from twenty to twenty-five thousand!)

The Masses –

Between time, the Fathers of the Holy Land celebrate the holy Mass, either in the beautiful parish church, or in the underground grotto which we already visited and which we will see again tonight with the daily Procession. At a determined hour, the community descends to the choir and begins the recitation of the Little Hours of the Office of the Holy Virgin, followed by Prime, Tierce of the Canonical Office. All the religious assist at the regular masses which are always offered for the benefactors of the Holy Land. This mass is celebrated alternately between the parish church and the Sanctuary of the Crib.

At a predetermined time, the first Professor of language celebrates the Holy Mass for all the children of the parish school who receive a free education from the Fathers of the Holy Land. These dear children, we are very numerous and all catholic, attend the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass each day and pray for their benefactors. It is the Franciscans who teach them with the help of Arab masters.

While giving a good education to these children, the main goal is to form in them a sincere and solid virtue, and develop in them a firm attachment to the Catholic Church, to inspire them with a great horror of schism. The danger of perversion is permanent in this country by the inevitable and continuous mixture of all nationalities and religions in these countries. But God be praised! The Latin Catholics of Palestine and especially those of Bethlehem remain firm in their faith.

After the morning office, the young religious who do their philosophy studies here, retreat to that part of the convent which is reserved for them called the Seminary, to study. At the same time, the other religious go to their respective jobs, confirming with the monastic regulations, but with a difference. In Mission countries like Palestine, those jobs are more varied and time consuming.

At ten thirty, the bell calls the religious to the offices of Sexte and None, followed by half an hour of meditation. The community goes to the refectory. A most rigorous silence prevails at the table. A selected reading accompanies the meal.

Then we take a short recreation au divan. This word "divan" is an oriental expression to mean a room where recreation takes place, where there are chairs, and long benches covered with cushions and placed against the wall all around the room and where the Orientals, after having removed their shoes, lounge during their visits or moments of leisure.

At two o'clock, Vespers and Compline. Around four o'clock, Matines and Laudes of the main office, after which the Daily Procession begins, which is done daily except for Sundays because of the varied ceremonies in the Parish or again accidentally some day of the week for a particular reason.

DAILY PROCESSION OF THE FRANCISCANS, GUARDIANS OF THE HOLY SITES, AFTER COMPLINE OR MATINS, AT THE HOLY GROTTO OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN BETHLEHEM

(Annales du T.S. Rosaire, 1896, December p228 and following...)

As you can imagine, the pious pilgrims consider it a great privilege to be able to participate in this procession. The Canonical Office completed, the celebrant assisted by two cantors and accompanied by two altar boys from the parish go before the altar of the Blessed Sacrament, bless the incense, take the censor from the hands of the thurifer, censes the altar while standing then starts to sing the antiphon: O Sacrum Convivium, which is continued by the Religious and all the other people who accompany the procession. They all carry a candle... After the prayer, the assistants who were kneeling, stand ; the cantors sing the Christmas hymn Jesus Redemptor omnium, which all continue while going through the transept of the large Basilica toward the Chapel of the Nativity of the Lord.

How it is gentle and consoling for a true Catholic to sing, in the very place where this adorable mystery took place, the sublime prayer: "O Jesus Redeemer of all mankind, Only Son of the Father, engendered by Him before all ages, in a glory equal to His. You are the light and splendor of the Father. You are the eternal hope of all. Please listen to the prayers your servants send to you from everywhere and whose hearts are turned toward this august Site which we venerate here at this moment. Remember, Creator of all things, that you formerly took, in the chaste bosom of a Virgin, a body similar to ours. It is here, o adorable Jesus, in this Stable, after having left the bosom of Your Father and the splendors of Heaven, You came to earth to deliver us from the bondage of sin and open for us the doors to Paradise. And we who were washed by the effusion of Your Blood, we want to sing a hymn to honor here at the Site of Your Birth. Glory to You, oh Jesus, Son of Mary!"

Arriving at the venerable spot of the Nativity, the procession stops and everyone falls on their knees. The cantors sing the famous words of the great Solitary of Bethlehem, Saint Jerome: "O Bethlehem, contemplate this Site! It is here in this little cave in the earth that the Creator of the Heavens wanted to be born" And all the assistants continue alternating: "It is here He was wrapped in swaddling clothes. – It is here he was placed in the Crib – here the shepherds contemplated Him – here the star stopped – here the Magi adored Him – here the Angels repeated the sublime hymn: "Gloria in Excelsis, Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!"

Then the altar boys, two children from Bethlehem, get up and with a visible joy, extend their hands to the precise Site of the Nativity, and sing with a childlike pride: H I C notum fecit Dominus, alleluia! All the attendants reply: Salutare suum, allulia! This little scene is full of charm for the pilgrims and leaves a lasting impression on their hearts. The priest chants the Prayer and all recite in a low voice, Pater, Ave... to gain the plenary Indulgence attached to this Holy Site.

One of the great reasons for the Catholics' sadness is to see this august Sanctuary in the possession of the Schismatics. The Latins have no other right but to carry out this Ceremony which we described, despite the fact all the firmans are in their favor.

Strangers contemplate with astonishment in a Site served by the Armenians and the Greeks, ornamented exclusively by the latter, the great and magnificent silver star which carries the following surviving inscription Hic de Virgine Maria, Jesus Christus natus est, 1717. That is an inscription in Latin characters, which goes back no more than two centuries and which protests day and night, in favor of the undeniable rights of the Catholics! How long Lord, will You leave us under this desolate humiliation?

However, we continue this ceremony. The celebrant with his assistants descends three steps and stops before the Holy Crib. Here the Christian soul is at ease, for it is here that the Master of the world, setting aside all His majesty, appears to us in the form of a defenseless child and lying on a bit of straw. Yes, it is especially here that the confident soul can appreciate this word of the Divine Master: "Come to me all who work and are burdened, and I will give you rest." It is here that the Divine Child breaks the trifold idol of honors, riches and pleasures to which the entire pagan world offers a sacrilegious incense. It is here by His example that He will exalt the poor,

for whom He will let fall from His lips the divine words, the first of the Beatitudes: "Blessed are the Poor!" Let us sing here with the priest the hymn of our most sincere gratitude: Quando venit ergo sacri: and let us say with all the sincerity of our soul: "Lord Jesus, consoler of the poor and glory of the humble, oh You who deign to serve as a model by appearing poor and humble, here in this Manger, in hoc Proesepio, make us we beg You, walking here below in these places of true humility and detachment of all the things of the earth, we can arrive one day to the eternal joy of Paradise in the midst of the choir of Angels!" Pater, Ave...to obtain here a new Plenary Indulgence. After this fervent prayer, the assistants remain kneeling; only the celebrant turns with his ministers and censes the altar of the Magi just as he did at the Nativity and at the Crib and as he will do at all the other Sanctuaries. Here, imitating the Three Magi, all prostrate themselves and kiss the ground. The celebrant sings an antiphon which recalls this mystery and all the attendants celebrate the triple offering of these holy Persons. We too, fortunate pilgrims, after eighteen centuries, we offer in turn to the King of Kings, the gold of our charity, the incense of our prayer and the myrrh of our mortifications with humble confidence that God will not reject our offering if we make it with a sincere heart. Again we recite the Pater, Ave...to gain a third Plenary Indulgence.

It is here that new images were placed which I mentioned in one of my preceding letters (We did not find the preceding letter mentioned here by Father Frederic. (The copyist.)) to replace the two which disappeared thirteen years ago, in the night of April 25, by a savage and brutal act of vandalism which left in the hearts of the Latin population a wound which still bleeds.

From the Crib, the Procession continues to the other Sanctuaries which are the exclusive property of the Catholics.

At the back of the Holy Grotto of the Nativity, a little iron door leads to a narrow, obscure corridor. It is by that route that the Procession comes to the grotto and sanctuary of Saint Joseph, singing the praises of the chaste Spouse of the most pure of Virgins: "Joseph, Oh You, the noble shoot of the family of David, incomparable model of the hidden life, mirror of the simple soul always agreeable to God, spouse of Mary, hail. Here, you were the happy witness of the great Mystery, earthly father of Christ, who on the eighth day, you gave the name Jesus.

From here you took the road to exile, and in the deserts, you were the Protector and Guide of the Child and the Mother; their consolation at Memphis; and their provider upon returning to Nazareth. And there, oh prodigy, the Creator obeyed His creature!" We recite a Pater... Ave... to gain a seven year Indulgence attached to this Sanctuary.

From the Oratory of Saint Joseph, we descent five steps, to the Chapel of the Tomb of the Holy Innocents. "Hail, forerunners of Martyrs whom the persecutor of Jesus harvested you at the beginning of life, like a whirlwind brings new rosebuds. First victims for Jesus, tender lambs sacrificed for Him, you play innocently with your crowns under this very altar.

In the wall of the Grotto, under the altar an iron grille leads to a small cave. According to a pious tradition, this cave served as the sepulcher for a large number of tiny Martyrs after the massacre ordered by the cruel Herod. Each year on the Feast of the Holy Innocents, this underground is opened and the happy pilgrims who happen to be present are authorized to

remove bits of rock which they joyfully bring back to their families upon leaving the Holy Land. I would wish for all the mothers to have one of these souvenirs of Bethlehem. Oh, how the little Innocents in Heaven can obtain favors for their dear children, the Innocents of the earth!

From the Grotto of the Holy Innocents, the Procession passes again through a narrow corridor before the tomb of Saint Eusebius, at the far end of the Chapel of the Sepulcher of Saint Paula and stops at the oratory of Saint Jerome while singing the hymn of the Confessors.

This oratory, more spacious than the neighboring grottoes, formerly connected by a long underground with the church of Saint Nicholas, and at the same time was part of a great cloister which today still has the name of Saint Jerome.

According to Tradition, it is here that the great Doctor studied day and night the divine Law and carried out his vast work on Holy Scripture. "Lord, we beg You, through the intercession of this great Saint, make us always put into practice what he so admirably taught and by his word and his example!"

A few steps behind, we are facing the empty tomb of Saint Jerome, since everyone knows that today his body lies in Rome, near the very remains of the Holy Crib, in the Basilica of Saint Mary Major. Facing the tomb of the great Doctor of the Church we find that of the illustrious descendant of the Scipions and the Greeks, Saint Paula, with her daughter Saint Eustochia. After the liturgical prayer of the Processional, we pass by the tomb of Saint Eusebius of Cremona, disciple of Saint Jerome, to say a new prayer.

From here, the Procession goes up a modest stairway, while singing a hymn Common of Virgins, into the large church and stops in front of the Main Altar, dedicated to the illustrious Virgin and Martyr of Alexandria, Saint Catherine, the powerful Patron of the Parish whose body was so miraculously transported to the summit of Sinai, by the hand of Angels. In memory of this miracle, the Sovereign Pontiffs allow us to obtain a Plenary Indulgence like that accorded to the holy Mountain. Finally, to terminate this long and impressing Procession, we put ourselves under the Protection of the Queen of Virgins, by the recitation of the Litanies, of Tota Pulchra and other beautiful prayers which are in the Processional in use by the Fathers of the Holy Land.

After this long exercise, the religious take a little recreation, either inside or outdoors depending upon the season. Around seven o'clock the bell calls them all back again to the choir to recite Matins and Laudes from the Office of the Holy Virgin or the Office of the Dead, followed by meditation. This last exercise is followed by supper (around 8:30) and a little recreation at the divan and rest.

In detail, that is the life of the Fathers of the Holy Land in Bethlehem. We repeat, it is also the same at the Crib, in Jerusalem and all the other Sanctuaries, they pray and offer their work and trials and the work of all the souls that are commended to them according to the Bulls of the Sovereign Pontiffs for all those who, each year, on Good Friday or another day of the year, make a modest donation for the Keeping and Maintenance of the august Sanctuaries of the Holy Land!

THE SOLEMNITY OF CHRISTMAS IN BETHLEHEM

(Cf. **Annales du T.S. Rosaire**, 1897, pp. 48 and following. **The Pilgrim of Palestine**, 1886, January pp. 14-21)

The Christmas holidays in Bethlehem have a special character, both serene and grandiose. On the morning of the eve, the clock struck ten o'clock. Everything was ready at the Convent and in the Parish, directed by the Franciscans, for the reception according to ceremonial practice, of His Excellence the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, who officiates pontifically on Christmas just as the Most Reverend Father Custodian does on the Feast of the Magi Kings.

The Patriarch usually leaves his residence at Beitdjallah in the mountains about two miles north west of Bethlehem, to make his solemn entrance around one o'clock in the afternoon.

After dinner, I found myself at the place said to be Saint Helena, ancient atrium of the Basilica, with all the other pilgrims, to await the arrival of His Beatitude. The temperature was ideal and the sun was warm enough to force us to use our umbrellas. Around one o'clock the entire city was on foot. There appeared, at the end of the street from which the cortege was due to arrive, a group of soldiers. It was the Patriarch's escort. The bells of the monastery were all ringing. His Excellency was received in front of the exterior door of the Basilica of Saint Helena, and made his solemn entrance accompanied by all the secular clergy and regulars, reunited in Bethlehem for the occasion.

The Patriarch always accepts the hospitality of the Franciscans and he sits at the same table as the religious. This paternal simplicity and this fraternal union produces a salutary impression on the locals as well as the foreign pilgrims.

After a few moments of rest, all gather in the parish church of Saint Catherine, and the Patriarch pontifically sings the Vespers of the feast. The office ended, priests and simple faithful, pilgrims and locals, all go to the Holy Grotto to venerate the Site of the Nativity and the Holy Crib and to pray in silence until ten o'clock at night.

At this time (ten o'clock p.m.) we sing Matins and the solemn office starts in the church of Saint Catherine; The Holy Grotto, as everyone knows, is not spacious enough for the celebration of such ceremonies. Matins are chanted with all the solemnity possible.

The group of faithful joined with the number of pilgrims is enormous. This entire crowd, praying aloud in the oriental manner, jostle in the church and the adjacent cloisters, creating an indescribable spectacle.

Matins are followed (at Midnight) by the Pontifical Mass, and after mass, the imposing ceremony of the Procession, a very special ceremony for the Sanctuary of Bethlehem.

A little crib was prepared and placed in advance in front of the true Crib. An Infant Jesus of radiating beauty, which we had already exposed in the upper church, is placed in the arms of the Patriarch, and the Procession begins.

The clergy proceeding in two rows, leave the church by the door “in cornu Evangelii” and enters the vast and antique cloister of Saint Jerome, singing hymns and chants.

This long interior gallery terminates at a medium sized door which enters the north transept of the great Basilica. The Procession crosses that arm, barely allowed the Catholics by the Schismatic Armenians and descends the semi-circular stairway leading to the Sanctuary.

Arriving, the venerable Patriarch who is carrying the Infant Jesus places his precious charge on the Site where eighteen centuries ago, the Queen of Heaven placed her divine Son. The French Consul, representing the protector nation of the Holy Sites, is standing in full uniform, with all his staff at the foot of the stair.

The priests sing the Hymn of the Angels. The Gloria in Excelsis, sung by us in the Holy Grotto during this special night, leaves an ineffable impression in our hearts. It is no longer the earth; It is heaven come down to this Site! We are exhausted but we are happy. The ceremony has lasted five hours.

In the meantime, (as of midnight) the priests had started the celebration of low Masses at the altar of the Magi, in the opening in the rock where the Site of the true Crib is located. They will succeed each other without interruption (except for the moment of the Procession), from midnight until the hour when the Greeks celebrate their mass at the site of the Nativity, around five o'clock.

The office of the Greeks terminated, the Latin priests, according to the Regulations, continue to say their masses, one each per celebrant, until the last one has the privilege of celebrating his three Christmas masses in the august Sanctuary. The priests who concelebrate with him, have said their two other Masses, either in the church of Saint Catherine, or in one of the grottoes neighboring the Crib.

The last mass will finish this year (1885) around five o'clock in the evening. The Holy Church allows us this privilege at the Sanctuary of Bethlehem for the Feasts of Christmas and the Three Magi. The Armenians who have the right to celebrate each day like the Greeks, one Mass in the Sanctuary, must wait on these two days, so that all the Latin Masses are ended, which they never fail to do, to preserve the right that they would never want to compromise.

At a set time, His Excellency the Patriarch, takes his leave of the Religious of the Holy Land and returns to his residence on the mountain. The religious and the pilgrims for their part, make a pilgrimage to the “Shepherd’s Grotto” where the Angel announced to the shepherds the good news and where a multitude of celestial spirits sang: “Gloria in Altissimis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis”.

The ceremonies done at the Site and on a true night when the great mysteries were accomplished, leave a salvific and profound impression in the soul. They revive our faith, fortify our hope and increase our Charity.

It would be desirable for the pilgrims to arrive in larger numbers from Europe and America to rejoice with us at the coming of the Messiah, to salute with us the Divine Child in His little Cradle and to adore with us the Savior of the world! (This description was written by a missionary of the Holy Land.

(Copyist's note: Yes, but this missionary was Good Father Frederic, for we have this account translated in English in **Pilgrim of Palestine**, New York, January 7, 1886 pp. 14-21 and is signed by Fr. Frederic de Ghyvelde, Min. Obs. His letter is dated Jerusalem, September 30, 1885. It starts with a description of the voyage from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, the 24th of December which could be of any year for it is always the same ceremonies that are repeated each time.)

THE SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY IN BETHLEHEM

(Cf. Annales du Tres Saint Rosaire, 1897 pp. 88 and following. The Pilgrim of Palestine and Messenger of Saint Francis, 1888 March, #10)

Ceremony of the Latins, the Greeks and other dissident rites.

A person who never visited the Holy Sited would have difficulty visualizing what we are going to say, (This reference to Father X of the Holy Land. (Copyist's note: This Father X is always Father Frederic of Ghyvelde. Actually we find him again in the Pilgrim of Palestine and Messenger of Saint Francis, Vol. I, Sunday, March 4th 1888, number 10. Another proof, in the following note referring to a preceeding reference which is signed by Father Frederic of Ghyvelde, Min. Obs. and is dated Jerusalem, September 30, 1885.)

Our situation here as Guardians of the Sanctuaries is unique in the religious world, and the special ceremonies of the Latins, the non-united Greeks, the Armenians and other Schismatics do not resemble anything like those in the western world.

The eve of the Epiphany for the Latins and Christmas for the non-united Greeks, the most Reverend Father Custodian on one hand, and the Greek Patriarch on the other, both leave in the morning at a convenient hour, the holy city (Jerusalem) to go to Bethlehem. An ancient custom and the Oriental requirements demand that the Most Reverend Father Custodian, as a true child of Saint Francis, travels on foot under ordinary circumstances, today mounts a horse and is accompanied by one or two of his religious is preceded by two Cawas (Turkish Janissaires) and the interpreter of the Holy Land.

They proceed slowly to the monastery of Saint Elijah, cited above (In the account of the Christmas ceremonies.) which is located midway between the two cities. It is the meeting point. A messenger announced the approaching of the Superior General of the Holy Land, and the notables of Bethlehem, led by Reverend Father Pastor, religious of our Order, comes to meet him on horseback.

The Greek Patriarch arrived before the Custodian with a more luxurious and noisier escort. His Beatitude, before making his solemn entrance after the arrival of the Custodian, will stay for a short time here at Saint Elias under a tent.

Meanwhile the Latin deputation of Bethlehem arrives and the Custodian continues his walk, escorted, all the way to the square facing the Basilica of Saint Helena. The Latins, according to their regulations, don't have a solemn entry to the Basilica for the Feasts of the Epiphany. They only have that right for the solemnities of Christmas. Consequently, Father Custodian, always preceded by the cawas who, with their superb silver canes, beat the pavement in cadence, and surrounded by a group of religious from our Bethlehem convent, enters without any other ceremony outside the cult, by the little, low door of the Basilica on the left hand side, he passes through another door equally low and narrow, and finds himself in the ancient cloister of Saint Jerome.

There his Most Reverend Paternity is solemnly received by all the other religious of the Community, with all the Ceremonial that accompanies a high dignitary of the Church. The procession develops in perfect order, in the ancient cloister and goes to our beautiful all new parish church, built to replace the old one, dedicated forever to Saint Catherine and attached to the large Basilica. There the first ceremony of the Latins is completed.

Meanwhile there is a great commotion outside. The great square, said to be Saint Helena, is filled with a large crowd. It is the Greeks who are awaiting their Patriarch. He finally arrives, with his entire escort and guarded by a detachment of Turkish soldiers of the regular army, who are there to honor him oriental style.

The patriarch descends from his superb steed and puts a foot on the ground. The soil is covered with rich carpeting. The prelate is surrounded by a large number of bishops and Archimandrites from his jurisdiction. The procession is organized, and with banners flying. It advances through the crowd, arrives at the door, which leads into the obscure vestibule, reaches the large doors that are open wide, and regroups in the immense nave of the grandiose monument of Saint Helena.

His Beatitude descends into the Stable, the venerated site of the Nativity and that of the holy Crib, and returns to the rich Greek choir built on top of the holy Grotto, to sit on his throne.

This is the first Greek ceremony which continues with much solemnity, will last at least six hours.

During this interval, the Custodian of the Holy Land is in the quiet of the cloister, in the midst of his Brothers and shares fraternal agapes with them.

At the hour of Vespers, the beautiful parish bells ring and the happy people of Bethlehem, dressed in fine holiday costumes, all gather to start the first solemnities of the Kings. The Custodian officiates pontifically. All the parish is present, with the happy but too rare pilgrims who happen to be in the Holy Land at this time.

The night of the Kings, like that of Christmas, Easter and others, is always as Westerners

would say, a sleepless night. The weather is favorable. It is not cold. The evening will be less painful. The thermometer at noon, was 66 degrees (sixty-six degrees Fahrenheit.)

The Pontifical office of the Greeks will start around ten o'clock at night. Mass is preceded by Matins.

Around the same time, all the other dissident Rites will start their ceremonies also. Only the Armenians are an exception. Fifteen days later, they will have the combined solemnity of Christmas and the Three Magi. Poor Schismatics!

The Copts officiate in the place of the Armenians, in the right arm of the vast transept of the Basilica. They don't have a bishop for their solemnity. It is a simple priest who officiates, and nothing separates them from the crowd. The curious surround them from all sides. A Cawas is on duty to scatter with respect the indiscreet who press to see from a closer vantage point these truly curious ceremonies which are not usually done in the Orient. It is an interminable series of sensing, bizarre, languishing and discordant chants, and bowing... in a word, the details are intelligible for strangers and sometimes perhaps also for the Copts themselves. The unfortunates, why do they remain obstinate in their ignorance and in their blindness?

At the back of the Armenians' choir there is a small altar leaning from the wall which joins the the holy Grotto, starting from the wall of the Basilica which touches the garden of Saint Jerome's orange tree, the Syrians in their proper Rite and in their tongue also celebrate the Feast of the Nativity. There are few of them, and leaving, they attract less attention.

The entire grand solemnity is concentrated with the Greeks. We will not stop to describe it. It will last as long as the night, until daybreak, and for the entire time, a group of assistants are there standing, following all the ceremonies, with no bench, no seat and no place to lean.

The faithful of the West have difficulty explaining this length, this excessive time for the ceremonies in the Orient. One day I assist at a pontifical Mass for the Catholic Copts in one of our churches in Egypt. It lasted the entire morning. I counted from fifteen to twenty Epistles! It was like the preparation to long ceremonies which were to follow.

Another time, during Lent I was in Jerusalem at Calvary. The Greek monks who live enclosed in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher started their night prayer. It lasted forty five minutes. The Monks then retired, to yield the place to a priest or Russian Pope who did his with a group of pilgrims from his own country. It finished the night at eleven o'clock. It had lasted five hours! These same pilgrims, always standing or making deep prostrations – extremely tiring ceremonies – stayed for matins which lasted two hours and the pontifical mass that ended at dawn, between four and five hours!. But let us return to Bethlehem.

Around dawn, the chanting stopped, and they retire. Christmas in Bethlehem has ended for them. The Latins are left alone.

Like the solemnities of the Nativity, the latter have the privilege of saying in the holy Crib at the altar of the Magi Kings, as many masses as there are priests who wish to celebrate.

On Christmas, we saw that the last mass usually finished around four or five o'clock in the evening. The Schismatic Armenians have been fasting and are waiting for the end of the Latin ceremonies, to take their turn celebrating at the altar of the Nativity. This is a privilege of the regulation. Tonight, the masses will be terminated earlier because of the ceremony which will follow. All the Latin Rite Offices of the day are celebrated in the parish church.

Every day, our Religious do the procession to the Sanctuaries as we described previously. Today this daily procession takes on a special solemn character. Christmas night, the Latin Patriarch, religious of our Order carries a ravishing little statue of the Infant Jesus in procession and lays it in the holy Crib. The image of the divine Child is left there since Christmas night to receive the homage of the Faithful. The first adorers were the shepherds, running joyfully from the field of Boaz, images of poor, pure souls, simple and humble.

The divine Child is now grown and today He gives audience to the great of the world, the wise of the Orient, to the Magi Kings. His little statue is no longer the same. It is a beautiful Child whom we contemplate standing at the back of the Manger.

When everything is ready, the secular clergy and regulars in choir habits, accompany the Prelate in pontifical robes toward the august Sanctuary. They start singing beautiful prayers of the sacred Liturgy recalling in inimitable accents, the great Mystery of the site itself and what was accomplished nineteen hundred years ago. The soul of the pilgrim, especially that of the priest, experiences I don't know what feelings of nobility and grandeur. It is happy to be Christian. It sees the Magi, beaming with joy, they arrive in all the oriental splendor. The stable has disappeared. An immense light floods this Site a thousand times blessed, where heaven came down to earth. The air echoes the hymn of the Angels! The Magi prostrate themselves and adore this new Child they recognize as the new King of the Jews, the Light that will illuminate the world, the immortal King of all ages who alone is due all honor and all glory, and they offer Him their rich gifts.

Thus is the vision of the Manger the moment the Prelate in turn prostrates himself with all the assistants, to adore the Savior of the world. They all rise. The procession continues to the large cloister of Saint Jerome where it takes on a new development and it arrives at the main altar of the parish church. Solemn Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament finishes the solemnity of the Epiphany in Bethlehem.

The crowd retreats and the divine Child remains exposed until the day that we will accompany Him with His divine Mother to the temple of God the Father, on mount Moriah in the Holy City!"

THE LATIN PARISH OF BETHLEHEM

(Cf. Annales du Tres Saint Rosaire, 1897. June p. 111 and following)

Throughout the solemnities which were just described, the parish of Bethlehem only appeared in the shadows. We think the pious readers of the Annales would be happy to see their physiognomy. The Religious of the Holy Land, author of the preceding account will give you this legitimate satisfaction. (This is the parish of Bethlehem as it existed in 1888).

Frequenting the Sacraments and other practices of piety

One of the best means we use to preserve the faith among the Latins of the Faith which they received from their ancestors, to help them advance rapidly along the road to Christian perfection, to open more effectively the way of converting the Schismatics and the infidels which surround us on every side; Greeks, Armenians, Copts, Syrians, Abyssinians, Jews and Muslims, is frequenting the Sacraments. Isn't the word of the priest more effective here, or aren't great Mysteries accomplished, if we can persuade the Christian souls that the Sacrament of Penance, which so frightens our poor Catholics, is a great gift from God, since this Sacrament reconciles the creature with his Creator. It obtains for him the peace and tranquility of a good conscience and which, if properly understood, is worth more than all the treasures of the world?

And the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist! Oh! Can they better understand that our good Jesus instituted this Sacrament here in their midst. He didn't want them to adore Him at a distance in our tabernacles, but that they would approach Him and receive Him frequently in their hearts! They would continue to rejoice of the benefits a good conscience always brings to a Christian soul. Nourished by the divine sustenance they possess an irresistible strength to combat all the difficulties in life!

The Holy Spirit spoke clearly to us at the Council of Trent when he said to the entire world: "Our Lord Jesus Christ before leaving the earth to return to God His Father instituted the Sacrament in which He spreads all the riches of His divine love for mankind; he made it the summary of all His wonders! He wants that all men receive Him like a spiritual food for their souls, which feeds them, fortifies them, and makes them live the proper life of the One who said "Who eats this Bread will live My proper life". The Eucharist is the antidote, the preservative against mortal faults and makes the imperfections of every day disappear, erases venial sins. It is the divine gage of our future glory and our eternal felicity.

While waiting for the ineffable joy, on earth the Eucharist remains the symbol of the union of our admirable society of which Jesus Christ is the chief and we are all members. United to this adorable Chief by the triple and indissoluble links of Faith, Hope and Charity so that we would be of one heart and one soul. There would never be dissention, division, or schism among us..."

So our dear Bethlehem people, and I thank the Father of Light who puts this clarity in their souls. The God of all consolation encourages them, the good people of Bethlehem understand great things. Almost unanimously the men approach the Communion table at every great feast of the Church without counting the ones who receive communion more frequently. As for the women who are free, they all come regularly to communion every fifteen days. If they miss, they never exceed four weeks. We understand very quickly, with such a population, how the law of God is observed and how the parish functions.

As for holy mass, they are not content to attend only on Sunday. They attend together for all the old Feasts which are not an obligation and a large number have the pleasure of attending daily.

The last Rites:

One of the most deplorable signs of the decline of the Faith among a people, is neglecting to call the priest for the sick in danger of death. Oh, how many Christians die without sacraments and present themselves before the formidable tribunal of the Sovereign Judge with their souls soiled with crimes! Here, such a danger is unknown. For all, without distinction, or age, or condition, at the first sign of illness, they call the priest. the presence of the priest is a certain consolation for the sick person and the family. His prayers give him great confidence. The Pastor should always visit the sick, the great Ritual in hand, so as to perform over them, following the circumstances, the beautiful liturgical prayers of our Holy Mother the Church!

*When an illness takes on a more serious tone, they themselves ask to go to confession and receive the Holy Viaticum with Extreme-Unction (Sacrament of the Sick). And it is the custom to bring them Communion and Viaticum several times during the same illness if it is prolonged. We see priests from the United States and other distant countries come here to the Holy Land wearing civilian clothes. Our Oriental Catholics don't understand that. They understand even less that not only in mixed countries where the Catholics live among heretics, but even in the great cities of Europe where all are catholic, we bring God to the sick in hiding, without light and without accompaniment. Here we carry the Most Holy Sacrament publicly, despite the presence of schismatics, unbelievers, Jews and Muslims! Isn't that enough to make degenerate Catholics blush with shame who, abusing their authority, deny God of showing Himself publicly when visiting His sick children! (One of the things that struck us the most and filled us with consolation was that here in Canada, seeing good catholic people kneel on the ground in front of their homes or along the public roads or if they are in vehicles, stop and kneel even in the mud to adore Jesus Christ their divine Master as He passes, carried by the priest, to bring the viaticum to their dear dying! (**Copyist's note:** That was written in 1897. Oh, our dear Father would no longer find this holy practice, even in Canada!))*

Here the priest is absolutely the man of God for these good people. It is he who presides, so to speak, over all the principal actions, even material ones. For example, it is always the priest who lays the first stone when we bless a new house.

Joyful people! Can this conserve this simple conduct and filial respect toward the one who is really and directly the representative of God for Him on earth!

As for their daily work, it is always sanctified by prayer. It renders their work easier, singing together hymns and songs, and preferably the evangelical hymns, the Magnificat and the Benedictus. Everybody sings: The father sings, the mother sings, and the children who work along with them sing. Their hymn is a prayer, a divine prayer, and they are happy. This pious practice fosters recollection and a spirit of piety at the heart of the family.

To this extent, persons especially come together in groups by sex. The young girls consider it a title of honor to be called Children of Mary. Their principal center of reunion is the touching Sanctuary of the Milk Grotto. It is also there that the married women gather. They all belong to the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception. Mothers of families especially group under the archconfraternity of Saint Agnes outside the walls of Rome. They meet regularly every

Sunday. The young girls in the morning. The married women in the afternoon. They all recite with a great devotion, the Office of the Blessed Virgin.

The people of Bethlehem celebrate with enthusiasm the month of Mary and the month of the Dead. The men who work at very hard tasks, such as carvers of stone, and they are numerous in Bethlehem, take their turn in the evening, exhausted, they never fail to attend the Parish ceremonies.

They are especially eager for the word of God, and they would dearly love for their pastor to come and give them a homily, even if only two or three times during the year, at these evening reunions.

Fast and Abstinence

In Judea, our Religious have the habit of fasting for the fifteen days preceding the Feast of the Assumption. The Catholics unite themselves to us to accomplish this act of penance. Those who have very heavy work, fast and do abstinence like everyone else. They see that as a duty of conscience and they accuse themselves of it to their confessor if they fail to do it. They also fast during the holy season of Advent, and they anticipate Lent. For Advent they begin on November 25th on the feast of Saint Catherine, Patroness of the parish, so as to end on the holy day of Christmas.

As for the Lent of the Church, His Excellency Monsignor Patriarch has the custom of granting dispensations for those who will not be able to fast. The parish consists of four thousand souls. There are hardly ten or twelve people who use this dispensation, and still it is only for two or three days of the week. With the elderly, mothers who are nursing, and the really ill, the Pastor has to rigorously command them in the name of obedience, to make them accept to take fat. he most pious only eat food cooked in water with a pinch of salt.

These holy practices of penance and Christian mortification which are traditional in the Orient, are at the forefront of condemnation at the Tribunal of God. The great majority of Christians in the Orient who aspire under the guise of pretexts, often in open contradiction with the holy Gospel to put aside all fast and all abstinence and all corporal mortification. What terrible but what irreparable deception awaits them at the time of death when Our Lord Jesus Christ will repeat for one last time and their eternal confusion, that Paradise is not for the soft and sensual souls, who didn't want to submit to any privations on earth!

Births

The great souvenir of the Crib remains vivid in the spirit and hearts of good Catholics in Bethlehem. The Divine Child in the Manger, sleeping on a bit of straw, especially impresses compassionate souls. They desire that their children have a certain resemblance to the Son of Mary when they come into the world. that is why at the birth, a newborn, after baptism, is wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid on straw in a sort of wooden cradle where he remains for eight days, in memory of the eight days Jesus spent laying in the real Crib.

Not content with this first act of faith and maternal piety, certain mothers consecrate their children to the Most Holy Virgin Mary, who with Jesus, form a special object of their devotion. Others offer them to Saint John the Baptist, to Saint Elijah, to Saint George, or to the great Franciscan miracle worker, Saint Anthony of Padua. All the Orientals have a great devotion to the martyr Saint George and to the prophet Saint Elijah. Our Bethlehem people share that devotion with them, and they add that of Saint Anthony as well as the Holy Forerunner of the Messiah.

Marriages

When a father wants his son to marry, he goes to the home of the fiancé, accompanied by his friends, and greets the father of the young lady with this formula: "We come to ask a special favor of you". The father of the young lady who understands the sense of this request, answers with a simple word: "Speak!" The latter generally accepts the proposition.

This first formality completed, the two fathers and their friends go to the Parish priest with the young man and young lady. The priest asks the latter if they give their mutual consent. If their response is affirmative, the Pastor completes the form in writing which the father and both parties sign. This new formality completed, the young man presents a handkerchief to the priest which has wrapped inside it a meddjiddi (a little less than a dollar) together with the wedding ring. The pastor blesses with holy water, the handkerchief with its contents, with holy water and gives it to the father of the fiancé. This is the sign that a future marriage is agreed upon by both parties.

They leave the church to go to the home of the young lady who must absolutely be absent. Upon entering, they offer the father of the young man a flask of liquor, with some fruit from the area, and together they have a small family meal. This meal will be renewed upon each solemn feast of the Church, until the day of the wedding celebration. At all subsequent meals, they add to the liquor and the fruit a large piece of lamb which they roast, which they eat immediately before they depart. Ordinarily at one of these reunions, at least at the last one, a pair of slippers and a scarf are offered for the fiancé. To be absent from one of these reunions is regarded as a certain signal that the absent party wishes to breach the contract.

As the marriage approaches, the father of the young man goes to the home of the father of the young lady, and with the same above-mentioned ceremony, he offers him a dowry containing money. In face of the grave inconvenience, the temptation to offer too much money on this occasion, our Fathers limited the sum to fifteen Napoleons (around sixty dollars). With our citizens who are well off, the dowry is taken with a great air of indifference and is tossed aside, without being concerned with the contents.

This act is regarded by the neighbors as an indication of a great generosity. This money will be used for the young lady's trousseau. Her father keeps only one or two Napoleons for himself. If he is generous, he will ultimately give them later to the young bride. If not, only one part if he is poor, on the occasion of his first visit to them after the marriage. This restitution is made at a general reunion of all the friends of the family. The money is counted in their presence and the

father of the newly married also adds something if he is in a position to do so, and if he wishes to give an indication of his generosity.

When the father of the fiancé has received all the testimonies which satisfy him, with the father of the young man he goes to the Pastor to request the publication of the bans.

In the West, a great cause of sadness in the heart of a priest is the horrible profanation that certain Christians make of the Sacrament of Marriage, the Sacrament that Saint Paul called great in Christ and in the Church. They receive it without preparation, the soul soiled by crime, without any regard that marriage is a sacrament of the living and it must be received in the state of grace.

This conduct is not known to the people of Bethlehem. Accustomed from their youth to listening to the voice of the priest, grown up they obey the voice of the priest. Catholics by baptism and by their unshakable attachment to the Roman Church, by their conduct they want to be worthy of so noble an origin. To attract the benedictions of heaven on their union, they prepare themselves seriously by the reception of the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, leaving aside vain and culpable frivolities which occupy worldly souls on this occasion.

The eve of their marriage, they make an examination of conscience and confess with piety. Also, being in grace with God, they will receive Holy Communion on the day of their marriage. That is at the nuptial Mass according to the wishes of the Church they will receive God in their hearts!

I believe here we have a particularity, unknown anywhere else and there is nothing contrary to the law of God. The day of the wedding, early in the morning, generally around the time of the Ave Maria (Angelus) persons of the same sex, friends of the young man's family, get together with those of the fiancé's family and they accompany the latter from her house to the church. There, the young lady is placed in an isolated, solitary area where she will stay recollected in silence until it is time for mass. The mass terminated, the newly married couple retire, accompanied by their friends and relatives.

But the new bride must enter the church again until noon. Generally a group of young girls keep her company. In the meantime, the new groom goes from house to house inviting his parents and friends to the feast.

Around noon, the men and women, always in separate groups, go to the church. The women enter alone, the men wait outside. A few minutes later, the women return, bringing the bride who is received with shouts of joy by those waiting outside. Formerly, the common practice was to place the bride on a fine horse, richly bridled and lead her to her home surrounded by the women, her friends while the men walked ahead in a military style brandishing their spears. Formerly our Fathers, judging the practice of keeping the bride at the church to take her later in this manner was not in harmony with Christian modesty, and they abolished this practice. Today, the bride still stays at the church, but she goes to her home on foot.

Along the way, a delegation of her friends offer her a handkerchief containing some Turkish dollars. Arriving at the home of her husband, the young bride retires for the rest of the day in her

private apartments. She remains there in the company of the women, her face turned facing the wall until nightfall. During this time, they secretly bring her some food. Only the men partake in the wedding feast. At night, they all withdraw.

The next day, the other couples, men and women, who didn't take part in the offering of the handkerchief with the dollars, go to the home of the newly married couple and bring them gifts, openly and they are counted. For the rest of the people of the city, those who wish to extend their congratulations to the young couple, visit them bringing with them, as a mark of friendship, a handful of green coffee gains. The coffee is turned over to a servant of the household who roasts it, grinds it, boils it and serves it to those who offered it as a gift.

As for the collection of money offered in the different handkerchiefs, they are given in exchange for the gold Venetian sequins. Some pieces of money, struck in antique coins will be added and the young bride will henceforth wear all this metal strung together in the form of a garland on her forehead until her death.

Such are the ceremonies and customs which precede, accompany and follow a marriage among our Latin Parishioners in Bethlehem. We see among these practices some are curious and are oddly original but nothing, let the reader observe well, - there is nothing that is not in harmony with the most rigorous Christian morality. To the contrary, these practices show a great respect that the people have toward women, because these practices were all established, calculated to put protect her from frivolity and worldliness. Hence, this pious woman, surrounded by so much solicitude from her friends and family from the beginning of her housekeeping, this young woman become mother of a family, will raise her children in the fear of the Lord. For their instruction, she will entrust her little girls to our good Religious of Saint Joseph, and the little boys will attend the school directed by our Fathers. These little children will attend Mass every day and they will be docile and listen to the instructions for Christian morality.

The mother, for her part, will not think of wasting her time on vain occupations and dangerous frivolity, but like the strong woman in Scripture, she will not let her lamp go out in the night. Long before dawn, you will hear the noise of the old grindstone which beats the grain, reducing it to flour. Bread and olives, prepared by her untiring work is placed on her modest table, inviting by their freshness the father of the family to take his frugal meal with joy before starting his difficult daily work which is about to begin.

Isn't that, pious reader, an exact painting of the old days of patriarchal simplicity and of which we are jealous to preserve among our Latin populations of the Orient. May the Lord continue to bless them and especially our Parishioners of Bethlehem, so they will always preserve their firm, naïve faith, their simple and austere ways, with an active intelligence which characterizes and honors them!

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ILLUSTRATIONS IN FRENCH EDITION (We present to you modern pictures, for a better quality.

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View on Jerusalem City



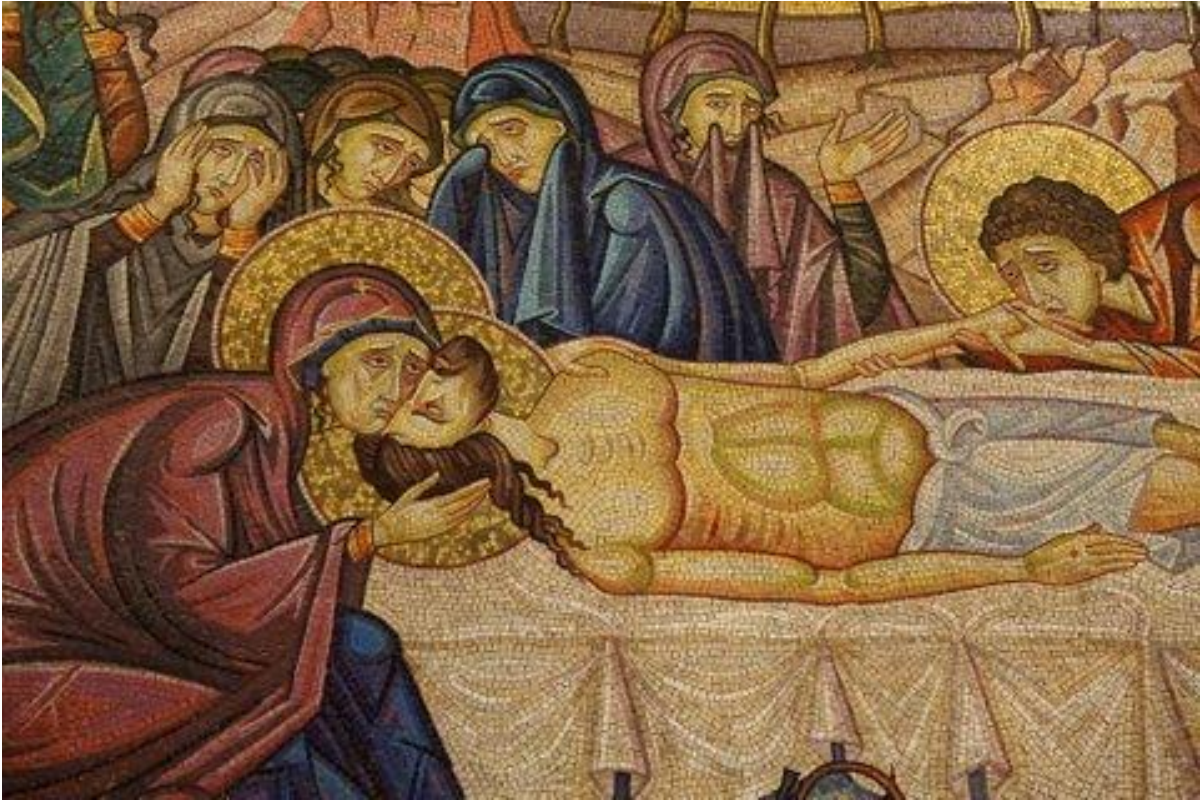
Jerusalem. Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher



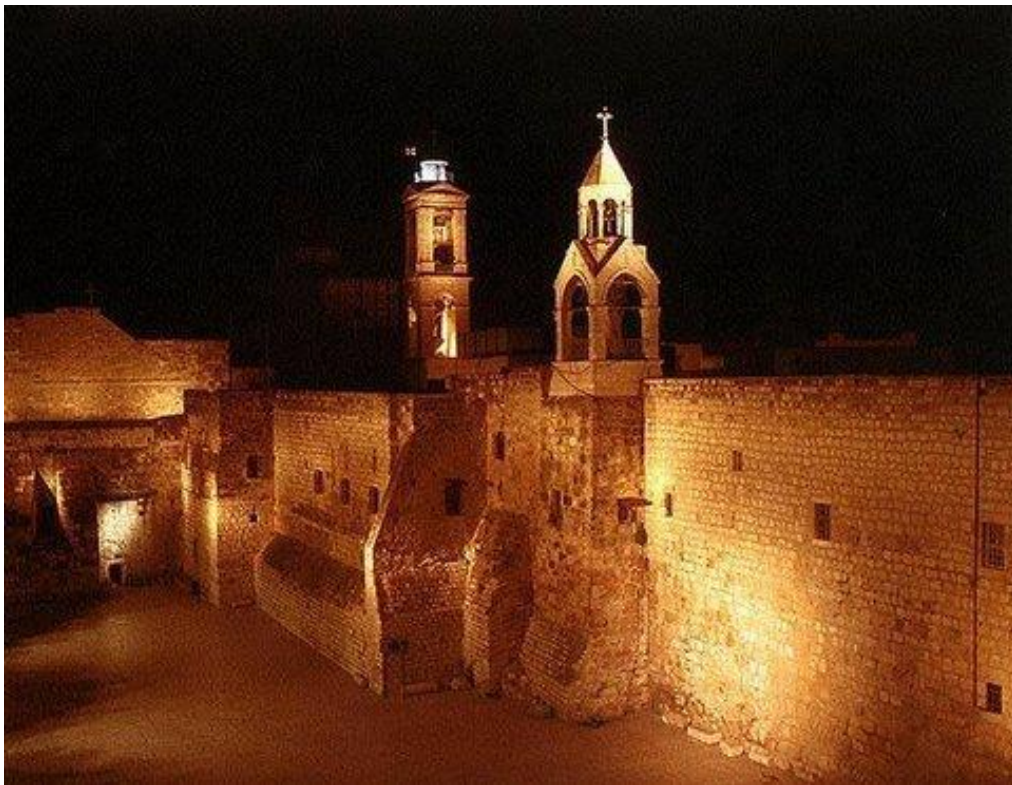
Jerusalem. Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher



Jerusalem. Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher, Latin Chapel



Jerusalem. Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher. Mosaic of Deposition



Bethlehem. Basilica of the Nativity



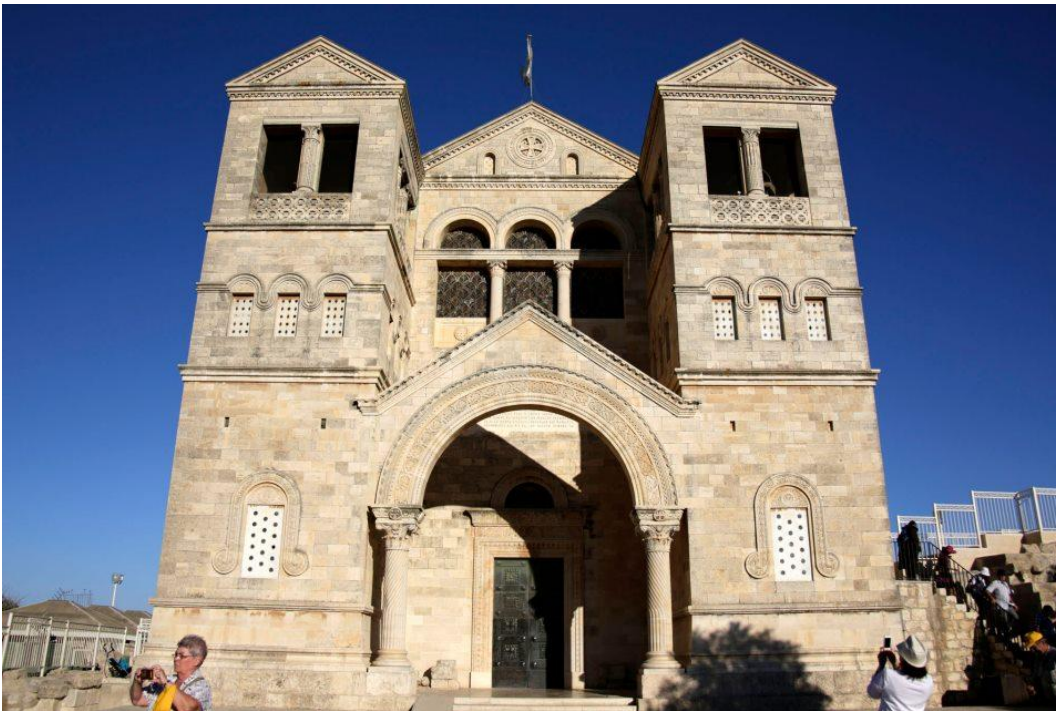
Bethlehem. Basilica of the Nativity



Jeerusalem. Basilica of the Nations. Gethsemani



Jeerusalem. Gethsemani



Mount Thabor. Basilica of Transfiguration



St. Peter Church, near Lake of Galilee



Mount of Beatitudes

THE ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE OF THE LATIN PARISH OF BETHLEHEM TO THE JORDAN

(Cf. **Annales du Tres Saint Rosaire**, 1897. October p.187 and following. **The Pilgrim in Palestine**, 1887 January 4th (Letter of October 1, 1886 dated from Jerusalem) **Revue du Tiers-Order et de la Terre-Sainte**, Montreal, 1882, pp. 372 and following... **Copyist note:** Since this account is only indirectly related to Bethlehem, we present it here because it followed in the very writings of father Frederic and it was difficult to place it in another series of his very writings.)

Our people of Bethlehem like other Christian groups of the Orient, were greatly attached to the memory of the Baptism of Our Lord, and around the Feast of the Epiphany, would make a pilgrimage in isolated groups, arriving at the river Jordan, they would be mixed in with the non-united Greeks. This mixture with the heterodox inevitably created problems which we can easily surmise. To put an end to this state of affairs, our Fathers resolved to organize a regular Pilgrimage and to do it at a time of the year that did not coincide with that of the Greeks.

We invite our pious readers to follow us on Pilgrimage across the solitudes formerly populated by legions of holy anchorites who made the desert bloom and embalmed it with the perfume of their virtues. Along our route, we will reflect here and there on the memories of these old saints, for the good of our souls. Our hearts will be better prepared to visit the sites sanctified by the presence and the miracles of our divine Master.

The Pilgrimage is never made up of less than three to four hundred people; men, women and children, which in the Orient constitutes a great pilgrimage because of the great challenges which accompany it as you will see in the course of this story.

We left the Latin convent of Bethlehem, led by our Father Pastor, with Benediction of the Holy Family, and after having prayed our Guardian Angel to watch over us, with so many narrow and difficult passages where we would be exposed at every step, to annoying accidents and dangerous falls.

The men walked on foot, carrying the provisions. The women with the very young children usually were transported by camel. Each animal, not without danger to the people who mounted them, carried up to six people together. During the journey and at the head of the pilgrimage, the men sang hymns and psalms in their native tongue. The women recited without interruption the rosary during the entire voyage.

A very ancient custom which is often mentioned in our Holy Books, consisted of bordering the already narrow roads, on each side with little murals of dried rocks on which brambles were often placed in crags of the mountain. These clumps of brambles narrowed the road to the point of rendering the passage difficult for two people who met along the way. That is what happened one day to a good hermit who lived in this region.

The holy man had made his home in a grotto at the far end of a little village called Socho. Having left the grotto, like the Patriarch Isaac, he was meditating in the middle of the countryside, contemplating the beauties of creation and the admirable providence of God, found himself in one of these narrow passages that the day workers had bordered with stones, crowned with brambles and thorns.

*Raising his eyes, he saw an enormously large lion coming toward him. Summoning his courage, the saint continued walking and meditating. The lion approached slowly from his side. What will happen when they meet? The king of beasts understood that the man of God wanted free passage. As king of all creation, he stood majestically on his hind claws, went to the left of the hermit, then placed his front ones against the wall, squeezing against it with the powerful effort of his muscles, just enough to let the solitary pass freely. The lion became humble and gentle like a lamb. He didn't dream of injuring the holy man. For his part, he didn't fear the beast would grind him underfoot as he had the power to do so as we read in the office of Compline *conculcabis leonem et draconem*. He was content to make him sense his superiority and continued on his way, praising God and always admiring more and more His eternal mercy toward those who fear Him.*

Such memories, these fine examples of the ancient desert Fathers of Palestine fortify the heart of the pilgrim, increases his faith in God and makes him count as nothing the perils of the voyage.

After about three hours of walking, we arrive at the famous site of Saint Sabbas. This unique monument left standing in Palestine, deserves a separate description. The pilgrims will spend the night at Saint Sabbas, outside the monastery, but close to its enclosure. The men retire to the grottoes, separate from the women and the children around whom a guard is formed by the more robust and courageous men. Here we are in full desert.

The next day, we leave for the Dead Sea. Despite a walk of five hours, all the pilgrims are fasting, not taking absolutely any nourishment nor refreshment during the long trek. After our departure from Saint Sabbas, a torrential rain falls without letup. This is unusual because summer is approaching when it never rains. It leaves the rocks on which the men and the camels must navigate extremely slippery. Consequently our walk becomes treacherous and even dangerous. Here is when the protection of the good Angels of our little children is really visible. Actually, despite the steep cliffs, the deep and narrow passages between the rocks where it seemed impossible for the camels to pass with their enormous loads of six people without hurling violently against the rock, we didn't have the slightest accident.

Finally arriving at the edge of the Dead Sea, we made a short yet fervent prayer to God, and our pilgrims took a little nourishment which was greatly needed. They put themselves in harmony with our Holy Books which tell us that a piece of bread taken with joy and in peace, is worth more than a house filled with treasures but troubled by quarrels and dissent. The Pastor of the Parish, with the Franciscan Religious who accompany him, and the Maronite Father from the Dom Belloni orphanage, wanted to practice to the letter the council of the Holy Gospel. They didn't bring any provisions with them for this long journey. All, in the capacity as true mendicants, begged in humble confidence, a bite of bread from their dear pilgrims. For their part, they did not refuse them.

Our stop in this place was not lengthy. The rain continued to fall heavily, but our pilgrims did not lose courage and retained their good humor.

In the interim, this desolate region brings us to profound reflections. This land still steaming under the blow of divine wrath, still does not frighten the good monks of the past, as we read in their history.

Do you see that mountain ahead of you? It was formerly inhabited by holy anchorites and they named it Mordes in their language. At the foot of the mountain, outside the land of malediction there is a fertile corner. It was their garden. If I am correct, it furnished vegetables and a bit of fruit for the convent. The faithful gardener had his house there and cultivated the little garden. The mountain path which led to the hermits' residence was long and tortuous. What did these good Religious do? With a spirit of simplicity that overcomes all obstacles, they had recourse to a very easy resource.

Besides the gardener, the community owned another faithful servant, a donkey, a very common domestic animal in the Orient. So when the Religious needed fruit or vegetables, they put the bucket on the back of the donkey, and the animal would set out for the garden. With a docility that lacked stubbornness, a rare quality for individuals of his species, the donkey would walk quietly under the obedience of his masters.

He went down the mountain alone, without a guide and without being preoccupied in the least about men, nor tiredness, nor the boredom of the long road, not the excessive heat that usually prevails in the basin of the Dead Sea, nor the thousand and one adventures he could have encountered in this vast solitude.

Arriving at the garden gate, he struck it hard with his head, which was very hard. The gardener responded to this well known noise, loaded the donkey and sent him back up the mountain.

The memory of the donkey of Mordes helped us a lot to carry, with courage, the great burden of this long, exhausting morning march.

Meanwhile the rain continues to fall in torrents. The plain is saturated. The march becomes more and more difficult. We see that it will be impossible to camp on the shore of the Jordan so we decide to ask for shelter at the Convent of Saint John the Baptist with the non-united Greeks. It is located near where Our Lord was baptized. But to reach it, we have to cross a brook that has become a torrent and we are in water up to our waists. The men with characteristic courage seize the reins of the camels to get them across, one by one with difficulty, for it is a known fact that these animals have a terrible fear of passing in water.

The Greeks received us with great charity and deserved our heartfelt thanks. Each can easily imagine however, that arriving in such an unexpected manner, the poor Monks couldn't treat us like princes, nor offer too great comforts to such a large group of pilgrims. We sorted ourselves out as best we could. The entire caravan found shelter under a very spacious hangar protecting us from the driving rain. A selected group of brave young men set about the night watch. Our

pilgrims had enough flour for the trip, and the fortunately the Greeks loaned them large kettles in which to prepare the dough, as well as an oven for baking. Our Bethlehem people made bread according to the local custom.

The Greeks offered the religious their own divan, their cells, and they themselves went to sleep in their refectory. The little community was comprised of the Superior and six other monks. The Superior ordered the Brothers to take care of them and offer them fresh fish from the Jordan, dried figs and even wine from Cyprus. In a word, they gave us the all the best hospitality.

The next day which was a Friday, the entire caravan broke camp, going back across the torrent like the night before. The plain is entirely saturated, and in some places the mud is up to our knees. But we wanted to reach the shore of the river at any price. After a thousand difficulties, we finally arrived. The tent and the portable altar were set up for the Holy Sacrifice, facing the place in the Jordan where the holy Precursor poured water on the head of our divine Savior. That is where the Heavens opened, the Spirit of God descended on Jesus in the form of a dove, and a voice was heard to say: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

The memorial of this great miracle, this mystery of love and humility accomplished at this site before our eyes, revives our faith and increases our hope. Also at the first Mass we pray with fervor and we recite aloud the prayers before Holy Communion. All the pilgrims receive communion, despite the rigors of the previous day, the night and the morning. After Mass we also did the thanksgiving singing aloud the Trisagion in Arabic, with real enthusiasm. This hymn has an incomparable beauty. The other priests celebrate in turn. When the last mass is finished, a large number of pilgrims go into the water as is the custom, to swim with modesty and great devotion.

While these true disciples of Christ are there in the waters of the Jordan in the example of their divine Master who, in humility descended himself in these very waters, let me tell you, pious readers, some other wonders that were formerly accomplished in this area.

Directly in front of us, on the other side of the river, is the desert where Mary the Egyptian, a great sinner from Alexandria submitted to all the rigors and the most austere penance for forty seven years. The faithful know her story.

(Translator's note: Here Father Frederic refers to the readers circa 1890s, yet gives a 'detailed summary' in this book. Since the story of Mary the Egyptian may not be common knowledge to the 21st century reader, and it was translated from **Le Ciel**; ...by Father Frederic Janssoone , 1907 p.230 and following... it has been inserted here in its entirety:)

Saint Mary the Egyptian

Zozimus a religious of eminent virtue, after having lived a long time in a monastery in Palestine, inspired by God, went to live in another built by the Jordan. It was the custom that every year, the first Sunday of Lent, after having participated in the divine mysteries and taken a bit of food, the religious would leave to retreat alone in the vast expanse of desert, to more perfectly apply themselves to penance, and meditation on the sufferings of Our Lord. They would return to the

monastery for Palm Sunday. From year to year, this holy man would make retreats, penetrating into the deepest solitude that time allowed him. One time, he had distanced himself for twenty days from all human habitation, and while he did his prayer of Sexte, that is at noon, he noticed in the distance a human body which was walking in front of him. He realized this was not a mirage, so he made the sign of the cross. But looking more attentively, he saw it was really a person whose body nonetheless was all black and sunburned.

This person was Mary the Egyptian who made herself known to the Saint in this way:

"I am a native of Egypt, and since the age of twelve, fleeing the discipline of my parents, I left their home and went to Alexandria where I abandoned myself to all sorts of liberties, without any fear of God or shame of myself. I lost my innocence that people of my sex wear on their foreheads, and that nature gave them to rein in their foolishness. I spent more than seven years in the disorders of impurity, without pretending there were any other rewards for my crimes other than the pleasures I found. Finally, I fell into such a great disorder that, one day in Alexandria seeing many people boarding a boat to go to Jerusalem for the solemnity of the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, that I fantasized boarding with them with the intention of drawing into my crime, those I could win, obliging them by this means, to pay for my passage. I did so well that many were lost to my wiles, so even now when I tell this, as I often think of it, I tremble with fear. I am astonished that the sea didn't pull me into its depths, or that the earth didn't open up at my feet and plunge me alive into hell. Arriving in Jerusalem, I multiplied my crimes and did more debauchery in that city that I had ever done in Alexandria.

Finally, when the day of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross arrived, everyone went to church to see and venerate the adorable wood, instrument of our salvation, I also wanted to slip in among the crowd and enter the church with the rest of the faithful. However when I approached the door, it was impossible for me to go inside because a secret force kept me from entering. After having made several attempts with all my strength, I started wondering what was happening that all these people were going in easily into the church, and I was the only one who couldn't go in. At this thought, my soul received a divine inspiration that, opening my eyes, I saw the abominable state to which I had been reduced. I didn't deserve to enter this temple of God. This sentiment caused a great regret for my sins, I started beating my breast and crying bitterly. Having noticed an image of the most glorious Virgin Mary, I turned to her, and sighed: "Glorious Virgin, you are the Mother of a God made man and you gave him to the world. I am not worthy to look at you and even less to be seen by you, for you were always most pure and most chaste, and I am but a sewer of impurity. But since God made himself man to save sinners, do not abandon me, o holy Virgin, I who am alone, without help, and without any other recourse or help but yours. Permit me to enter the church to see the salutary Tree of our redemption, so that I may promise to never soil my body in sensual pleasures. Seeing the Holy Cross, that I will renounce all the things of the world, and in the future follow the road of salvation which you will show me." After this prayer, I entered the church without difficulty, and I saw the Holy Cross which was publicly displayed. But I looked at it with much apprehension, considering the magnitude of my offenses. When I ended my devotions, I returned to the image of the holy Virgin before whom I had prayed and said to her: "It is time, o most holy Virgin, that I accomplish the promise that I made to you, show me the place where you want me to live and what I must do. I heard a voice say to me; 'If you pass the Jordan you will find rest.'

Believing that this word was addressed to me, I implored the Mother of God again to take me under her protection. I started out for the Jordan with three small loaves of bread. The same day I

arrived at the edge of the river, having watered the road with my tears. I washed my face and my hands in this water sanctified by our Lord's baptism and after confessing, I received the divine Mysteries which give life, at the monastery of Saint John the Baptist which wasn't far from there. Afterwards I went far into the desert firmly hoping in the mercy of the Lord who calls sinners and saves those who are perfectly converted to him. I stayed there until now to satisfy through penance, the wrongs of my first life."

After the holy Penitent had told her story to Zozimus, he asked her how many years she and been in this desert and what temptations she had experienced. She answered him that it had been forty seven years that she had been there. The battles the devil inflicted on her were so terrible, that just the thought of them still make me shudder. Zozimus let out a cry of admiration and asked her how she could have resisted, there alone, without help, without consolation, these atrocious temptations, the devil passing back and forth, day and night, without reprieve, the images of all her baseness, the Saint would have undoubtedly answered with this sublime cry: I HAD HOPE IN PARADISE! With this invincible hope, she opposed them with prayer, tears and continual moaning. She continually prostrated herself, her face on the ground to implore the help of heaven. She admit it was only by a particular assistance from the Holy Virgin, that was her caution before her Son, and toward the image of which she frequently turned in spirit, that she had persevered in the exercise of penance. After a superhuman struggle for seventeen years, victorious over hell, she had rejoiced during the last thirty years, of a profound peace. She received from God great graces, always through the intercession of the holy Virgin Mary, her divine Protectress.

Zozimus charmed by these marvels, could not thank God enough for this excessive mercy. But enlightened in all things, he asked her again how she had lived and with what she had clothed herself for so many years. She told him that after she ate the three loaves, during seventeen years she ate only herbs and wild roots. For clothing, she had no other but those she had brought to the desert and which were worn and ravaged by time, which caused her to suffer infinitely from the cold, heat and hunger. But after this long trial, God had sustained her so powerfully by His word. He restored her innocence, that she no longer had need for food "because man does not live by bread alone, but by every word from the mouth of God".

The holy elder was amazed that she quoted Holy Scripture. She swore she never read it, nor heard it, but that Our Lord had Himself given her the knowledge.

Then she immediately begged Zozimus not to reveal during her lifetime, what he had seen and heard. She told him that the next year he would not leave his monastery at the beginning of lent as was his custom, but the night of Holy Thursday to bring her the Holy Eucharist at the edge of the Jordan where she would be. Finally, after asking for his prayers, she left him, accepting to keep for awhile the mantle the holy religious carried and which he had the devotion to leave for her. After that, Zozimus returned to the road toward his monastery.

The following year, he did not fail to carry out what the holy Penitent had prescribed. He did not leave with the other religious at the beginning of Lent, but on Thursday of Holy Week, having secretly placed a Host in the chalice, in the evening he left for the Jordan. Not finding the one he sought, he was agitated by several fears. He was particularly worried how he or she could cross the river, but after a minute, he saw her on the other side. She made the sign of the cross, then she crossed with dry feet. This miracle surprised him so much that , beside himself, he wanted to

prostrate himself at her feet, but she told him not to do so, because he was a priest and he carried God in his hands. Upon her arrival, they prayed together, she took communion from his hands, with a devotion and an abundance of tears which cannot be described. Afterwards, raising her eyes and her voice to heaven, she said these words of the elder Simeon: "Now Lord, let your servant go in peace, following the promise you made her, because my eyes had the joy of seeing your salvation."

Zozimus had also brought a small basket of figs, dates and lentils, which he begged her to take. She took three lentils and brought them to her mouth, but she thanked him for the rest, telling him that the grace of the Holy Spirit was sufficient to prevent the death of the soul. Then she asked him for a new favor, to come back the next year to the place where he had seen her the first time, assuring him that he would have the consolation of seeing her. She had no difficulty obtaining that favor. They separated, mutually promising to pray for each other as well as for the Church, the empire and all the sinners. The Saint crossed back over the Jordan as she had come, walking lightly on the water as if on firm land, and the man of God returned to his monastery.

When the following Lent came, the Saint left his monastery as was the custom, and in twenty days arrived at the place of the first encounter. Not seeing any motion on either side, he began to worry. He spoke to God, his eyes bathed in tears: "Show me, I pray you, this incomparable treasure that you have hidden in the desert. Make me the model of penance that the world is not worthy of possessing." Saying that, he went a bit forward, and with the favor of a ray of light, saw her holy body, deprived of life, laying on the ground in a very modest position. He kissed her feet, chanted for her the psalms and the prayers that we ordinarily say for the dead, watering the earth with his tears. He was hard pressed to decide if he should bury her. But his concern was immediately dispelled by the words he found traced in the sand. "Father Zozimus, bury the body of this poor Mary. Render to the earth what belongs to it, and pray for me. I died the very night of Good Friday after having received the Divine sustenance of the holy Eucharist."

With this, the holy elder was instructed with regards three things: First, the name of this holy Penitent of whom he was extremely concerned and he had forgotten to ask her name; secondly the time of her death, which came six or seven hours after she had received Communion. Here we see two great miracles, the first is that in such a short time she had made a trip of twenty days. Second, that her body had remained entirely without corruption and the savage beasts had not touched it. Finally, he learned that God wanted him to bury this solitude.

A lion served as minister in this charitable task. It dug the earth with its claws and made a grave capable of containing a human corpse, and after Zozimus had put in the holy remains, the same lion came and covered the body and filled in the grave.

All the goods this incomparable woman left was the poor mantle the holy priest had loaned her. He inherited it like a great treasure and he took it back to his monastery like a very precious relic. Then he told the religious of the marvels he had seen and he blessed the Lord.

The Roman Martyrology on the second of April, mentions this saint in few words: "In Palestine, the death of Saint Mary, Egyptian, surnamed the Sinner, fifth century."

Are we not children of the Saints? And like them, children of God and heirs and co-heirs of Jesus Christ? Yes, if we know how to suffer with Him and for love of Him,

one day like Mary of Egypt we will be glorified with Him. What is forty seven years of penance in the desert compared to the eternal glory that awaits us in beautiful Paradise? Let us offer the little annoyances of the pilgrimage, with other of life's tribulations so as to attain with the greatest confidence this eternal reward with all the Saints!

Those who love God are pleased to hear about God. Since God is admirable in His Saints who are His friends, they also enjoy hearing stories about the wonders He performed through His Saints and by His Saints. So here is another wonder accomplished here, along these very shores, and which contains more than one lesson for us.

A holy abbot named Gerasimus lived here. The monastery where he was Superior was located about a mile from the shore of the river. One day as he was walking along the riverbank completely absorbed in meditation, just about at the place where the pilgrims are bathing at the moment, he heard the roaring of a lion. It was a painful roar. The poor animal walked with difficulty holding one paw up in the air. A large thorn from a rosebush was embedded in his paw causing him intense pain. Noticing the elderly monk, the lion presented him his sore paw with an expression of profound melancholy as if to ask for his help. The holy man was touched with compassion, he sat down on the ground, took the lion's paw, removed the thorn, nursed the wound, and sent him on his way. But the lion could not leave his benefactor. He followed him everywhere, like a faithful servant and the elderly monk admired the fine example of gratitude on the part of the animal so full of pride. He adopted him forever, taking care of his feeding. The monastery also had a donkey whose job was to go to the Jordan to get a supply of water necessary for the convent and for the Brothers.

From that moment on, every time the donkey went foraging for grass in the valley, it is the lion that was in charge of accompanying him and watching over him. One day the donkey was going quietly through the prairie and the lion allowed himself to wander for a bit, far enough from him to lose sight of him.

At that very moment an Arabian camel driver passed by, saw the donkey without a guardian and took him. When the lion came back, not finding his protégé, he went back toward the monastery, very sad and his gaze fixed on the ground.

Observing his attitude, the Abbot didn't want to pass temporal judgment, suspecting the lion had committed a crime. So, severely chastising him, he said: "The donkey... where is he?" The lion remained perplexed and gave no answer. So the elder told him clearly: "You devoured him, but may God be forever blessed! What the donkey habitually did, you will do in his place." And immediately, upon the Abbot's order, the lion let himself be charged with the jug which held a measure containing four amphores, and he carried water for the needs of the monastery.

A short time later, a soldier who came to the monastery to seek the Saint's benediction, noticed the lion in the act of water bearer, and asked an explanation of this surprising action. He was told the story, and he offered the good religious three pieces of gold to buy another donkey.

Some days later, here's our camel driver, the donkey's thief, coming back along the same road. He had a load of wheat which he was going to sell in Jerusalem. Just as he was passing, Jourdain came along.

That's the name they had given to the lion. He glanced at the little caravan, and noticed the donkey, his old protégé. He ran toward him, growling. Terrified, the camel driver fled, abandoning everything... grain, donkey and camels. The lion seized the donkey by the rope that attached him to the camels, and triumphantly brought him back to the monastery with three camels, the prize of the capture. At the sight of this, the elder understood that he had judged Jourdain prematurely and he gave the noble beast his full confidence.

However, the Lord called to Himself his faithful servant, Saint Gerasimus. The day of the funeral, Jourdain was absent, but when he returned to the monastery, he was looking for his benefactor. Celius the new Abbot, called him and said: "Jourdain, your master went to Heaven and left us orphans here on earth. As for you, console yourself and take some food. But Jourdain would not eat. He searched everywhere for his old master; and neither caresses, nor gentle words of the religious could soothe his grief. He was inconsolable. In the end, he went to lie near the tomb of the old saint. There, the poor animal lay sadly on the ground. An excess of grief overtook him, he raised his head one last time, and it struck the earth violently and he died on the tomb of his benefactor.

These ancient Monks lived a very austere life in Palestine. Some practicing the cenobitic life, lived in common in the monastery. Others, true anchorites lived in grottoes hewn here and there in the area. Every Saturday night, they reunited at the monastery. On Sunday they participated in our holy Mysteries with the cenobites. The same night, they returned to their solitude, carrying with them the food and their manual labor for the rest of the week; a bit of bread, a few dates and a jug of water to quench their thirst, and to dampen the palm leaves with which they fabricated mats. They were strictly forbidden to eat anything cooked, and not to light a fire in the cave.

These men who lead such a life had to be agreeable to God, and as His friends, God granted them a great power over all of nature.

Here our pilgrims are leaving the shadows of the river. We take a light lunch then we set out without delay for Jericho, where we will make a pilgrimage to the Mount of Quarantania (mount of the temptation); the pilgrims will recite prayers along the entire route, nearly three leagues long.

The ascent of the Mountain is long and tiring. We will visit the place where Our Lord made His great fast of forty days and forty nights. Our Lord's fast on this Mountain offers our pilgrims a subject of holy meditation and condemns in advance those Christians who in our day, pretend to go to heaven, without neither disciplining themselves nor practicing any form of mortification.

We spend the night outdoors. We leave Jericho the next day in the morning, so as to return to Bethlehem the same day by nightfall. In the midst of a universal joy, our pious pilgrims return to their families, thanking God for having granted them such a holy and happy pilgrimage!

PART THREE (French ed. P. 209)

This third part is the reason for publishing the first two other parts. Actually, our project was to edit all the manuscripts of the Servant of God. However, without the first two parts, this one would have been practically unintelligible for a reader who doesn't know the Holy Sites, or the difficult circumstances that the Sanctuary Guardians encountered.

These manuscripts will complete the first two parts and are a testimony to the heroic work done by Father Frederick.

At the beginning of each, we gave a certain description of the document, excusing ourselves for not using the technical terms. Part of the manuscripts are located at the Vice-Postulate. Copies of the CHURCH OF BETHLEHEM; LATIN / ORTHODOX COEXISTENCE MUTUAL AGREEMENT, one is located in Bethlehem, and the other is in Jerusalem. Before publishing this somewhat secret document, we requested permission of the Most Rev. Father Alberto Gori, actual Custodian of the Holy Land. In his kind response, he made known that due to changes which took place in the intervening years, and the current situation in Palestine Father Frederic's manuscript is no longer entirely current. Since 1930, there is no longer a Greek Patriarch in Jerusalem. Our present publication of this manuscript can no longer be considered actually official.

We call the reader's particular attention to the third manuscript entitled **CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHURCH OF BETHLEHEM** whose content is especially interesting.

TRAVEL JOURNAL FIRST VISIT OF FATHER FREDERIC TO BETHLEHEM

Arriving in Palestine on June 12th 1876, Good Father Frederic visited Bethlehem for the first time the 25-28 of the same month. In his notebook, he wrote a quantity of notes, giving detailed descriptions of the sites which he meticulously verified himself. We published his notebook in a brochure called JOURNAL OF THE VOYAGE FRANCE-ITALY-PALESTINE, 1876-1877 (Editions B.P.F. #1). We believe it's to the reader's advantage to include pages 80-90 because they contain information which are not found in other writings of the Servant of God about Bethlehem. We include the text herein.

BETHLEHEM

In the evening (June 25, 1876), left for Bethlehem with good Father Ange. Around 5:30 we saw the well of the Magi, the convent of Saint Elijah, and the Tower of Jacob at a distance. We didn't find the place of Habakkuk, the tomb of Rachael.

We arrived in Bethlelehem at nightfall, that is between 7:30 and 8:00. Upon approaching the city, I had an inexplicable impressions of gentle joy. I could have sung the Gloria... That

impression is generally experienced by everyone.

June 26 (Monday) – Offered the votive Mass at the altar of the Magi Kings for the Seraphic College, its directors, benefactors and with a particular intention for the Dames de Bordeaux Who take care of the children.

Visited all the Shrines of Bethlehem, Holy Innocents, Saint Joseph, Saint Eusebius, Saints Paula and Eustocius, Saint Jerome and his oratory.

Grotto of Bethlehem *The dimensions of the altar of the Nativity: The diameter of the periphery: circumference is 19 centimeters, depth: 03 cm. The size of the disk of the star is 04 ½; the length of the rays are 14 cm.; the depth of the apse is 1 m.08; the interior size of the 2 juxtaposed blocks that make up the stairs 1.70; the size of the two stones together: 0.68. The total diameter of the star: 0.55. The star has 15 rays. the inscription on the surface of the disc: “Hic de Virgina Maria Jesus-Christus natus est, 1717.” Lamps: 16 burn under the altar.*

Length of the stairway: 2m: height of the altar: 1m., plus the thickness of the table 0.04 cm.; the height of the apse on top of the altar stone: 1.70cm.

29 lamps burn in the nave of the Grotto; 2 above the stairway on the Epistle side, 1 at the altar of the Magi Kings; 5 above the Crib: total: 53 lamps.

Dimensions of the Manger: *Length 1.15; width 0.70. The front rock is 0.23 high; above, at the interior the back of the Manger slopes at 0.12c. At the back the rock is perpendicular, a table must make up the back. On the side, the rock goes up 0.35 c.*

The altar of the Magi; Size of the altar table 1.70. The back of the altar all the way to the Manger: 1.70. From the bottom step all the way to the back: 2.10. A large column makes the side angle of the altar of the Nativity and divides the stairway of three steps into two parts from which we descend. The Magi altar is on the left and the manger is on the right.

The size of the Grotto, somewhat uneven, varies between 3 and 4 m. The length, according to Father Lievain: 10m.55. Two stairs come down from the main church. The depth would be about the same with uneven steps. The stair on the right on the Epistle side has 13 steps, the one on the Gospel side from which we descend : 16 steps.

Inscription around the tapestry: “Et peperit Filium et pannis eum involvit et reclinavit in praesepio. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Gloria in Ecelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.”

And the panels:

“Et peperit Filium et pannis eum involvit et reclinavit in praesepio.

Et dixit Angelus: Ecce evangelize vobis gaudium magnum: Natus est vobis hodie Salvator, qui est Christus.

Ecce Magi ab Orienta venerunt dicentes: Ubi est qui natus est Rex Judaeorum. Venimus adorare eum.

Ecce Angelus Domini apparuit in somnis Joseph dicens: Surge et accipe Puerum et Matrem ejus et fuge in Aegyptum."

Plans and subterranean dimensions of Bethlehem. We descend in the Epistle corner toward the bottom of the church of Saint Catherine by a small, narrow stairway of 11 steps, then a small landing, turn left, then 10 more steps. We are now in the chapel of the Holy Innocents which is approximately 4m by 4m square. We go up to the right facing the entrance 4 or 5 steps, and we are in the chapel of Saint Joseph, 4m deep and 2 m wide. We always enter into a long narrow tunnel of about 15 to 20 steps, which bears left at the end, a little door which is always kept locked, leads to the back of the Grotto of the Nativity.

Let's backtrack. Facing the approximately the middle of the chapel of the Holy Innocents, go down two steps, and we are in a very narrow, 4 m long passageway. On the right, in the rock, the altar to Saint Eusebius, then we walk straight into the chapel of the tombs of Saint Paula and Saint Jerome. Upon entering, bear left and take three steps, and you have the altar of Saint Paula and Saint Eustosius, and to the right, that of Saint Jerome. Turn around from left to right and walk straight ahead, you leave this chapel which is 7m long and 4 m approximately wide. Go through the low door, go up 2 steps, and you will find St. Jerome's oratory which is 4m wide and 5 long.

See facing, the exact plan calculated on that of M. Laurent de St. Aignan. (This plan is actually missing in the manuscript of Father Frederic. (See above Fr. Text p. 160).

Only the Greeks say Mass at the altar of the Nativity; The Latins, only at the altar of the Magi Kings, with reservations which are not entirely free. 1. They say the first Mass around 4:00 o'clock, then the Greeks occupy the Grotto; 2. A second Mass around 6:00 o'clock after which the Armenians occupy it. They have ceremonies but they don't say Mass. That is finished by 8:30 o'clock. Starting at this time, we can celebrate ad libitum. (Explanation given by Father David).

In Bethlehem there are no relics of Saint Jerome or of the other Saints.

The underground beneath the altar of the Holy Innocents passes as the place where the bones of the innocents were buried. It extends way back and is a virtual labyrinth. It is closed at a certain distance to avoid accidents. It is opened once a year, on the Feast. So the Greeks must go in alone.

In the evening, I made the procession then visited again the convent and construction (a rotunda) of the Carmelites on an elevated plateau.

June 27 (Tuesday) Mass at the Holy Innocents. I prayed for the little children to be evangelized later. I visit, with an Arab guide, the Fons Signatus convent. Three Bouchibourouks guard a sort of fortress ruin in the valley between the bowl and the fountain. While guarding the entrance, one of them slept like a saint wrapped in his mantle at the door.

We had to speak loud and several times to wake him up. It was around 6:00 o'clock. He accompanied us begging "bacchiche" at the fountain. We went down 26 steps. Underground it was vast and uneven. I took a stone. Nice source. We were careful to take small candles which we lit at the entrance and which we then left with the soldier. – Saw the 2 bowls of Solomon, went down in the last one, the most beautiful. They are in ruins and have little water. Saw the Hortus Conclusus. We spent about 4 hours for our visit.

In the evening, we depart for the Village of the Shepherds. Good Father Ange doesn't know the house of the Greeks. They are the ones who have the key. We knocked at the door of the rectory which was under construction. A woman opened the door. We spoke using sign language. She seemed embarrassed and finally decided to take us. She said one word, probably the only one she knew: "Andiamo" (Let's go). We arrived. She asked right and left. We were something of a spectacle. We arrived. A Greek in somewhat neglected clothing signaled us to wait. A boy came carrying an enormous key. We followed him through the field of Boaz. Visited the Grotto. We went down 22 steps. It is in the form of a small church, about a length of 12 to 15 steps and 6 or 7 wide. The little boy was very embarrassed to close it. I helped him. His hand got stuck so I consoled him as best I could (Reflection: Was he hurt?) He asked for "bacchiche". I took a stone from the place.

June 28 (Wednesday) - Mass at the Milk Grotto. Uneven shape. 17 steps easy to go down, 50c large carved in the rock, they lead. 16 lamps burning. Took a rock. Saw the location of the House of Saint Joseph. Took a stone.

Note: The school of Saint Jerome is in the Armenian area. They advised me not to go there. The Monastery of Saint Paula is no longer open to visitors. Thiena is too far.

Today at the very tomb of Saint Jerome I read the legend of the lion. The image which is at the back of the altar where the tomb is located shows a lion laying next to the Saint. (Cf. Vita Divi Hieronimi incero auctore, Edition de Paris 1623, Tome 9, p. 266 et seq.)

Next saw the orange tree of Saint Jerome. It is badly deteriorated and leans against the wall. Saw and touched the trumpet which has naturally formed. We can see very well the orifice which seems sculpted in the trunk. The instrument seems to cross the trunk horizontally.

MISSION WITH THE YOUNG CHILDREN

We already mentioned in the 1st part, a few words about the retreats that Father Frederic preached to the children of Cairo in 1877-1878. We found his notes in a little notebook 5 ¼ inches long and 3 ¼ inches wide, bound in black fabric, containing 250 pages which was only partially filled.

Pages 20 to 37 contains the notes for twelve days' instructions. The title "Mission for the Little Children". The author who had not yet visited the Holy Land except in passing, cites the following sources: "La Terre-Sainte, by Father Eugene Roger, Recolet of Paris, 1674" which he indicates by (p.R) "Guide du Pelerin by Fr. Lievain (f.L); "La Terre Sainte, by Laurent de St. Aignan, Paris, 1864, (LdeStA.); and "La Cite Mystique, V. Marie d'Agreda" (M.d'A.).

The first day of the Retreat is dedicated to Jerusalem, the Immaculate Conception, the Presentation of Mary, Engagement; the 2nd : Nazareth and the Annunciation; 3rd. to Saint John of the Desert and the Visitation; 4th Bethlehem (pp. 26-27, in which is included a little sketch of the Basilica of the Nativity and the Holy Grottoes). This is the manuscript that we give here:

4TH DAY

BETHLEHEM: Grotto: Two entrances from the upper church and a third which leaves from around the middle of the church of Saint Catherine (at the convent). In the Grotto, to the East (see the plan) is the site of the Nativity. A white marble plaque covers the floor and the apse, leave by opening in the middle, notice a blue colored stone. This opening is encircled by a silver star, having around its wide border : *Hic de Virgina Maria Jesus-Christus natus est.* – This star disappeared in 1847 and was replaced in 1852 (L.deS.A. said 1853) by Turkey at the request of Napoleon III. At 3 meters South-West of this apse we descend by the steps into the oratory of the Crib which is 2 m.50 long, and 2 m.50 wide. The altar of the magi facing (see the plan) – The Grotto is 10m 55 long, and 3 or 4 m. wide (f.L) and 8 to 10 feet high (f.L.).

The place where the Crib is located is covered by white marble, and forms a cradle 4 feet long and 2 feet wide. The wooden Crib where the Infant Jesus lay, is conserved in Rome at St. Mary Major since 642. There are five boards, worn with time, kept bound together in a splendid crystal reliquary. (L. de St.A.).

The main Basilica: The nave is 57m.30 long; and 26M.30 wide. Four piers of the transept and 46 columns (in 4 rows) from a single block of red calcium, with white veins, 6 m. high. (De Vogue: *Les Eglises de la Terre Ste*).

This church is in carved stone: 48 columns 8 feet round and 18 feet high. All the paving and the walls are covered in marble. The Turks brought all to the temple of Jerusalem. In the lower part of the church there is a column which is broken at the foot. While they were removing the paving, an enormously long and large snake, said P. Goujon, Franciscan, “*Voyage en Terre-Sainte*” Lyon 1671, in. 4 – which attacked those doing the demolishing, and wounded three who died on the spot, because they also wanted to remove the columns. The Sultan advised the work be stopped. The Father wrote about this fact in their Archives (p.R.).

Joseph and Mary leave: Joseph searched for a long time before he finally found a small donkey. 10,000 angels accompanied them. Provisions for the voyage: bread, fruit, and a few fish (their ordinary food). The voyage lasted 5 days; they were generally poorly received, even sleeping in stables, arrived in Bethlehem on a Saturday at 4 o'clock in the evening. Knocked on over fifty doors, refused. It is 9 o'clock. Joseph tells Mary having once seen a grotto outside the city. Mary agrees to go. She is exhausted. Jesus is born. Saint Michael and Saint Gabriel receive him and show him to the Blessed Virgin. Saint Joseph was praying. The Virgin calls him, and he adores, and gives the swaddling clothes; two very fine pieces of wood, and very fine fabric made by the Virgin. (Here the Blessed Virgin suggests to V. Mary of Agreda to do all for cleanliness altar cloths). Mary puts a bit of straw and hay on the rock (the Crib was of wood,

see above). Soon the ox comes in haste, and the Virgin tells him and the donkey "Adore..." Thus the prophecy is realized (Isaiah 1-3) "The ox knew his owner and the donkey the Crib of his Master; Israel no..."

The little shepherds stayed in the grotto from the break of day until noon. The Virgin gives them dinner. They return several times. Name of Jesus... (M.d'A.).

The adoration of the Magi: The three heads are in the cathedral of Cologne, in a reliquary covered with gold and precious stones. (L. de St.A.).

CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHURCH IN BETHLEHEM

"Sunday, January 12, 1930, I was in Bethlehem. I asked Rev. Father Bonaventure Samson, guardian of the convent, if he had in the archives any manuscripts by Most Rev. Father Frederic of Ghyselde, former custodial vicar. Rev. Father Guardian who had read them recently, didn't hesitate to show me four booklets autographed by Most. Rev. Father Frederic. I very easily recognized the author's handwriting, since I had seen it, read it, and copied from it a number of times. These booklets have the title: 1. "Church of Bethlehem – Expansion – Accounting – (February 1880 to)" 2. "Sanctuary of Bethlehem – Rules 1887" (2 booklets) 3. "Epiphany of the Latins – Year 1888 – Modifications to do to – Rules of Bethlehem".

With the authorization of Rev. Father Guardian and promise to return them as soon as possible, I brought these precious manuscripts to the Convent of Holy Sepulcher, Jerusalem and hurried to make as scrupulously accurate a copy as possible, as follows".

This is what I wrote in Jerusalem in January 1930. I found here the copy I made and sent to Rev. Father Mathieu-Marie Daunais, O.F.M., Vis postulator of the Cause of Good Father Frederic. This is the manuscript I publish today without adding anything.

FIRST BOOKLET - DESCRIPTION

This is a little notebook made from common, yellow/cream colored paper, 8 ¼ inches long by 5 inches and 7 lines wide, without a special cover. It was made with ten, 11 ¾" by 8 ¼" sheets folded in half. These sheets are sewn together in the middle at 3 points with simple white thread, tied at the center on the exterior. The paper is not ruled. The first sheet serves as the cover. It carries the title that I recorded on the following page. The pages are not numbered. Aside from the cover, there are 19 pages filled, and 17 are blank.

The writing is very fine and compact, but very even, very well formed and perfectly readable. The margin is wide at 1" and there are 7 lines on the interior, at the center; the page on the left has the margin on the right instead of on the left. There are few penciled lines. The lines are very close, the first page written on 43 lines, the following 6 are each on 44, 2 others 42 lines, the 10th page has 40 lines and the last 9 have 30 lines.

Church of Bethlehem

Expansion

Accounting

February 1880 to The second page is blank. We now follow the text of the manuscript. However, we reconstitute the abbreviated words.

PROJECT OF RECONSTRUCTION OF CHURCH OF SAINT CATHERINE

Origin of the project – In 1869, on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, His Majesty, the Emperor of Austria offered 60,000 francs for the expansion of the church of Bethlehem, and 60,000 francs for that of Holy Savior in Jerusalem. After waiting 2 years, nothing is done. In the interim Cardinal Antonelli sent a note from the Vatican dated July 25, 1871 (See page 31 of the Austrian Consul's book at the Secretariat) where he says among other things... *non incontra (the Holy Father) difficoltà che il Signor Conte Caboga, Gerente l'Imperiale et Reale Consolato in Gerusalemme ne abbia l'ALTA DIREZIONE...* The Consul gave a copy to Father Custodian who made his humble observations on the word *alta direzione*. The consul explains (in September 1871) and declares that he does not anticipate interfering in the interior administration of the Custody (See the Father Custodian's Journal) and it would be sufficient for him to simply observe that the amount offered by his August Sovereign was conscientiously used. Things were left at that. In 1874 the expansion plan for the church and the restoration of the cloister of Saint Jerome is approved by the Embassy in Constantinople and the execution is approved by the Imperial Firman of 4 Rebi-elewel (April 19, 1874). The Ambassador in place (A carbon copy is retained in our archives) nothing is done for the 2nd time.

Negotiations resume – In the spring of 1879, M. Patrimonio, French Consul, at the insistence of Most Reverend Father Custodian, and Father Custodial Vicar, send a report to Paris, saying the expansion project consists simply of interior work, that the Latin Rights on the Basilica of Saint Helene would remain reserved, and that under these conditions, there would be no inconvenience for France to permit this work under the specific conditions, and Mr. Austrian Consul formally declared that he would not interfere in the direction of the work. After a few months, Mr. Consul received an affirmative answer, but since the clause regarding the Austrian Consul is very delicate, we would proceed slowly and prudently. Finally an amiable understanding is established. Reverend Father Custodian clearly expressed his complete confidence in a letter to Count Caboga, the difficulty that a direct interference could create in the future. The reply of December 29, 1879 (See the Consulate's notebook) doesn't leave much room for the least misunderstanding, and is courteously approved in the letter of December 31, 1879 (See letters, in the file of the Consulate). M. French Consul equally accepted without reservation, and it remained that the expansion would be done according to a provisional plan drawn up by Mr. Comte Amedee de Piellat, at the request of Father Vicar in the absence of Mr. Architect Guillemot, already chosen by Most Rev. Father Custodian, to be proposed for approval by the Venerable Discretionary. Immediately Father Custodian communicated with joy, this happy result of this long and difficult negotiation. All of the members of the Venerable Discretionary shared Father Custodian's joy, with the exception of one member, Rev. Father M.L. who expressed his displeasure, based on his fear, which according to himself was well founded,

that new construction would constitute a veritable renunciation of our rights in the Basilica... We approved it anyway.

M. Guillemot was designated as architect, Father Custodial Vicar was charged with overseeing the entire work, and Father Vicar of the Bethlehem Convent, his stand-in in his absence, and finally Brother John, director of the work.

The first job was to establish the temporary choir in the chapel of Saint Francis, facing that of the Blessed Virgin (which remains) near to what was started in February.

Destruction of the underground passage, in the garden of Saint Jerome ,

February 14, a Saturday morning. In January 1871, Brother John discovered the Grotto whose description is preserved in the letter from Most Rev. Father Antoine de Tivoli (See that letter). With the help of other religious and even some seculars (among others our actual foreman of the stone cutters - Liass) he started digging a subterranean passage, supported by a strong masonry arch around 16 meters long, 1 meter 60 wide, and 3 meters high, going from the East side of the chapel of the Blessed Virgin, going directly East-Southeast to the foot of St. Jerome's tree, where large roots were trimmed. (Likewise, I myself saw the trunk mutilated by the masonry, which was causing this tree to languish. We wanted to keep it a great mystery and keep the whole thing very secret. But what followed insensibly caused the entire Bethlehem community to more or less know about it.

Even the seculars knew about it. The poor brother who discovered it (the grotto, pointed out by a pilgrim) was absolutely certain that he had discovered the true sanctuary of the Nativity, and placed it under the actual Grotto, the center of the arch being immediately under the silver star... Most Rev. Father Custodian and I asked (in July 1880) a brother who had entered in secret how he found out that it was thus. He replied ingeniously that an observer had taken a position in the actual grotto with his ear at the place of the silver star, and when a religious in the newly discovered little grotto knocked on the wall of the arch, the echo resonated on the very spot.

The regrettable scorns of these good religious nearly threw into serious doubt the authenticity of the true Sanctuary. Fortunately, several months earlier Most Rev. Father Custodian and we (Rev. Father M.L., Brother Alph., sacristan who had worked there more than the others, and me) in January 1880 we penetrated it and examined the place or subterranean grotto at our leisure. We had carefully removed the imprint, a Greek inscription (already very exactly elevated before us and conserved in the letter of Most Rev. Father Antoine de Tivoli, cited above) and we had it translated by one of our religious from Cyprus who knew Greek very well. (Unaccustomed to the characters of the inscriptions, we did not attempt to discover the true meaning) and we found that it was simply an epitaph whose meaning is approximately as follows: "Lord, remember followed by three names (unknown in history) . This grotto had been a sepulcher. Originally, in our humble opinion, it must have had another use and conserved some precious souvenir for which until now we found no other trace in history. The entrance is in the wall under the North-East window of the Greek's Sancta Sanctorum. The total depth (circular form) is around 4 meters facing South, leaning a little to the West, entirely dug in rock, which puts it at several meters to the East side of the site of the Nativity in the real Sanctuary, and it is at the same level.

This level was measured very precisely. It was a very simple, very easy matter. We measured the height of the underground (whose arch comes to the surface of earth in the garden), plus 5 steps which go down on one side. On the other side the difference of the level of the pavement of the Basilica with the surface of the soil in the garden (elevated about 2 meters above said underground) and the 16 steps which go down to the true Grotto, we found that the pavement of these two grottoes were sensibly at the same level. Primarily, before verification, our simple common sense demonstrated as absurd the real sanctuary was placed on top of the recently discovered grotto. The Ven. Discrete was informed of everything, and we left nothing out to discredit the poor religious who in the indiscreet joy put the true Sanctuary in peril. A person in a high position (we recall) told us recently: "Father we can contest the authenticity of the actual Sanctuary, following a precious discovery..."

Brother John, mason, helped us wall off (to the height of the cement ditch which goes behind the St. Jerome tree) the underground passage. This separation took several nights of work (and we also worked in the daytime...) It consists of dry, but solid rocks, a dividing wall of 0.60 meters.

Friday night, February 13th, the work is completed. We closed the narrow opening of practical communication with cemented rocks in the east Wall of the chapel of the Blessed Virgin, and leveled the ground where we went down into the underground passageway (the level of the garden is much higher, as we indicated above), as well as an opening further down, at the bottom of the passage which gave access to the hiding place which is below the chapel of the Blessed Virgin, known to all the Latins in Bethlehem. It served our old Fathers in time of persecution. Actually it is full of damp soil, apparently thrown there as rubble when the passage was dug. I went inside by crawling, and it looks to us like an old cistern. We had the opening walled without further examination. Such an examination could always be made very easily. It would suffice to remove a tile of pavement from the mentioned chapel and we would immediately descend into the underground.

On Saturday, February 14th in the morning, while the Greeks were celebrating the Feast of the Purification and our religious were in full retreat (annual retreat), Brother John and I, with the help of two good workers who were working in the temporary choir under open sky, we started the demolition of the famous passage (which we always designated with the name underground channel). I was very reluctant to have these workers help us, but I was obliged by the brother who told me. It is impossible for us to do that alone. There are blocks that are too heavy to move etc., etc. (the rocks of the day well located in the middle of the garden, and usually concealed by undergrowth etc.) It had to be done.

They strongly reproached me this work. I have to believe it was a misunderstanding, since I was convinced it had to be done to expedite the work to be done on that side. Mr. de Piellat's plan drawn entirely according to our proper indications, brought the wall on the low side, at the foot of the St. Jerome tree the entire length of said ditch all the way to its level and return to the foot of the same tree. It had to be demolished, secretly and underground? Brother John formally declared that was impractical. We were in broad daylight. The day well and the 2 or 3 meters of the channel vault running from north to south all the way to the interior dividing wall which is located a bit to the north of the cement ditch for the channeling of water, were demolished without witnesses, either on the part of our religious or the Greeks. While

we had sufficiently covered the foot of the dividing wall with earth all the way to height of the vault, to leave invisible, the intact part, we continued the remaining work with less effort.

It is around 8 or 9 o'clock when 3 or 4 children aged 12 to 15 years went up on the terrace of the Basilica and saw us working. We didn't seem to notice them. These children probably alerted the others, and in a short time, the entire terrace was full of people, Greek monks, seculars, pilgrims, etc. Around 10:30 our interpreter came to tell me: Father we are disturbed, there are about 60 people with the Mudir who has already sent a soldier to suspend the work, I sent him away. The Mudir then asked to enter with the Greeks to settle this, to see what we are doing... response, negative.

Now they have telegraphed Jerusalem, we are accused of digging under the Basilica. We terminated the total demolition of the channel all the way to the North-East angle of the chapel of the Blessed Virgin, we picked up all our tools, and closed the door to the garden. It was around 11:30.

Later I addressed two words to the Reverend and the French Council. Word arrived in the evening to suspend the work momentarily. They did not understand very well. I went to Jerusalem and the same evening, I explained everything to M. Consul. It was decided that S.E. the Governor General (the Pasha) and M. Consul would go to Bethlehem to examine the site.

Essentially, the Greek accusation said: The Latins are digging under the Basilica. The Pasha told me that formally. I replied and made known that everything we did was not in secret, because we did it in broad daylight, the Greeks watched us at their leisure from the top of the terrace and saw us perfectly working at their feet, that the channel was not made but destroyed, finished in a sense by partial demolition starting from the center of the garden, at a North-East angle of the chapel of the Blessed Virgin, where it was connected (which is certainly true) to a hiding place known today by all, and which I had the opening cemented, having no further use...

Meanwhile, the most absurd, ridiculous racket went through Bethlehem; that we had discovered the true Grotto (an individual went so far as to kiss enthusiastically the arm of the mason, of Father John, saying: Beato voi che avete visto quell SS. Luogho!) We found a true treasure brought by the Magi King! the treasures reunited the Greeks and the Armenians hidden during the persecution, and that we reclaimed a fair share!!!...

The Pasha and the Consul came. The first, after discussion between us, met with the Greeks to listen to their complaints. Anthimos, the Bishop of Jerusalem, visibly confused, threw it back upon his monks. He had been absent on the 14th. They complained that this new construction came too close to the Basilica but not a word about the new grotto, cause of the real accusation which astounded the Pasha and the Consul, following that (M. Consul had had breakfast with us) on our terrace. One moment sufficed to account for the whole thing. The Pasha shrugged his shoulders, and henceforth there was no question of hidden searches (under the Basilica)...

The Pasha asked us our plan... in the interim the Greeks exhibited the Firman of 1852 (which was never recognized by France) and which put the two gardens at the head of the Basilica,

that of the Greeks and ours, under the STATUS QUO. Mr. Consul asked us "Fathers, do you want to file a complaint? ... the negotiations with the tribunal are long... we know...

We expressed the desire to continue without delay, and decided that we would not touch the garden of Saint Jerome, without compromising in any way the question of the Status Quo on the gardens, that is without declaring neither for nor against. So Mr. Consul told the Pasha's interpreter, M. Kreghir; in his presence that of Most Rev. Father Custodian, Rev. Father Leon Patrem (French Discreet) and I decided in specific terms: "Know and tell His Excellency that the Fathers will build at their place, and neither I, nor His Excellency, nor the Greeks, nor anyone will have the right to object, and I expect that no one will stir up in any manner the aggravations of any type whatsoever .

The question is settled. Without delay a new plan had to be worked out. Father Custodial Vicar suggested carrying out in one piece the plan of M. de Piellat, modified by Father Vicar in Bethlehem. (Already formerly, in a very humble letter, Father Custodial Vicar , in a reply from Mr. Guillemot who found that Mr. de Piellat's plan was not executable, had added that the Holy Land, only wanted to carry out an simple interior project inside, done by itself...that it nonetheless always counted on the dedication of Mr. Guillemot for the next reconstruction of the church of the Holy Savior, whose execution rested on good expectations.

The project of transport was not understood by the Venerable Discreet; further, we didn't accept the competence of the Vicar of Bethlehem as architect. The Most Reverend saw the plan appended to the firman of 1874, by the architect M. Mauss. This plan was preferred by the Most Rev. M.L. to that of Father Vicar of Bethlehem, but did not please everyone. It was examined for a long time, each added his thoughts and finally after a lengthy, tiring discussion nothing was concluded. Nonetheless we had to act. The Most Reverend resolved to return with Father Custodial Vicar to Mr. Guillomot, who was as amiable as possible, conveniently forgetting the letter from Father Custodial Vicar and offered to make with the least delay a new plan in proportion very approximate to that of 1879. It was made at the request of Most Rev. Father Custodian as indicated by Father Custodial Vicar, to be offered to His Majesty the Emperor of Austria, in case he requested it.

NOTE: Father Custodial Vicar was accused of an imprudent act by asking M. Consul of France to take up the negotiations again, related to the enlargement of the church of Bethlehem, declared and still declares here a need, and as such he sought nothing other than the glory of God and the salvation of souls. He didn't believe he acted lightly, he had several conferences with His Excellence the Patriarch, who always told him: "Father, I wish, I want you, and in conscience I require for the decency of the cult and the needs of the parish, etc. etc., to do the church of Bethlehem. Holy Savior can be done, for my part I see no difficulty. The Holy Land can deal directly with the Propagation..." Since there was only one cry with regards the Convent of Holy Savior and in the public of the Latin parish, Father Custodial Vicar believed doing a meritorious deed before God, acting as he did, always with the full authority of his first Superior, the Most Reverend Father Custodian.

The new plan (which is the plan we actually carry out) was done the same week. At the next meeting, Father Vicar communicated a short report on the new plan to the Discreet, who unanimously approved it minus one voice, in its entirety. The demolition work continued,

but the work was carried out according to the new plan.

***JOURNAL OR LEGEND EXPLAINING THE WORK OF RECONSTRUCTION OF
THE CHURCH OF SAINT CATHERINE OF BETHLEHEM***

For very little cost, the chapel of Saint Francis was transformed into a temporary choir, a partition of wood and stone divided the upper part of the church and the lower part to retain the first plan. This first choir and this first temporary church remained at the service of the Religious and of the parish until the first weeks of June, that is for more than three months. The cost of organization formed a very minimal sum, just a few hundred dollars, as we can see in the book of Accounts. Our carpenters took apart the choir, the organ, the sacristy (the large closets) and set up a new choir, a new sacristy, a partition out of wood, etc. in just eight days. A mason (filler that is at 7 or 8 dollars) worked 7 or 8 days to organize the choir (old wall to demolish etc.) and 3 to 4 days was all the mason needed to make the dividing wall.

NOTE: This work was a false maneuver following the difficulty caused by the Greeks, which caused us to change the plan (the first only took the upper part of the church). It was necessary to find another choir and another church.

TWO – The new choir and the new sacristy were built in the inner courtyard of the Saint Jerome cloister, and the Abab schools became the temporary church containing 2 to 3 (sic) people with a single altar. Sundays and on the Feasts, a mass (and several ad libitum) were offered at a temporary altar placed before the Joinville door of the Basilica (at the corner of the cloister) and allowed for 4 or 500 people to attend the Holy Sacrifice. The ordinary number of Masses amply sufficed to all the needs of the population. The Religious were comfortable in the new choir, spacious like the old one but better ventilated and lighted. The sacristy was also sufficiently large. Further, the Community and the faithful were farther from all noise in the new location.

NOTE: The new church completed, the schools were able to return to their original use, and the choir and sacristy serve the schools, the first Arab court, or the room for the pilgrims, etc.

The days of our carpenters as well as the framework of wood and the roof tiles were not factored in the general expenses of the new church construction. A line of demarcation is difficult to establish. It is true that all these new partial expenses are absorbed by the new church, when later, a new linen room is added, it is also true that the Community will benefit from it. We believed being able to sensibly establish an equal balance in figuring only in the general cost, the stone and tile materials and the days of all the workers other than the carpenters. Otherwise, the total cost of the choir and the sacristy were quite small. Strictly speaking, wood, tiles, paving, stones, labor etc. didn't exceed... (the number is missing).

STATUS OF THE WORK JULY 31, 1880

Total cubic meters of construction to be demolished: 3000 meters, detailed as follows:

Cubic meters of masonry, vaults and terraces of the old church, upper part, total length between the paintings: 14 meters.

NOTE: All the measures that follow are very approximate. Due to a rather long absence of the Most Reverend which kept me in Jerusalem, and other reasons which kept me from overseeing the work more closely, we could not, for certain details, have more rigorous mathematical calculations, but we believe the our calculations are below the true numbers.

South Side: Height above the ground of the garden (measured by us) approximately 10 meters under ground ; 4 meters: total 14m. Average thickness from 2.40 to 3m. average 2.50: total 14 X 14 X 2.50 : Cubic meters (490).

To entrench part of the wall which remains intact on the neighboring South-East angle of the Blessed Virgin chapel, left to shore up the pinion which is resting on top for the stability of the nave on the interior: to preserve the old constructions, etc. approximately 40m cubic meters: 490 – 40: 450.

North Side – Height, above ground at the South-East angle of the convent yard (measured by us): 14 meters: underground approximately 2m. (We didn't see these searches, since they were done during the absence or the voyage of the Most Reverend.) Total: 14 X 16 X 25:50: Cubic meters 560.

2 small rooms: Rooms #7 and 8, partitions, vaults, etc. constructed in 1872, adjacent the chevet of the church. Approximate total not including the terrace: Cubic meters 70.

Terrace and vault: total length, 17 meters, width (not including the thickness of the wall) 6m. average thickness 3m.

NOTE: There was a quantity of really bad soil. Total 17 X 6 X 3: Round figure: cubic meters 300.

Total cubic meters for the church, upper part: M.C. 1600.

NOTE: The work was long and difficult. Due to a lack of space, obliged to demolish piece by piece, and transporting the rock on the backs of men, and the soil and the mortar debris etc. with buckets or wicker baskets above the terrace to dump this debris in the passage of the convent which leads to the Beit-Saour road. The already high costs from the early work was multiplied by the difficulty of the new demolition. This soil was definitely transported on the above-mentioned Beit Saour road on the backs of donkeys, taken by forfeit. No one dared attempt this task, after three months of hesitating and real embarrassment, because the access to the convent was obstructed on that side. Francesco Morcos took charge and lost a napoleon on that job.

A Greek from Jerusalem worked on this transport with 72 man days and 137 id. donkeys. Note: Each donkey brought to the site cost 4 dollars a day. The Greek abandoned the project and only received 6 napoleon ½, or 130 francs (a really insufficient sum for a salary).

A Turk from Siloe continued and happily worked most approximately (the last week was by piece by piece) 65 man days and 100 id. of donkeys, and received 12 napoleon ½. or 250 francs. The total paid to Morcos: 18 Napoleon, or 380 francs.

CUBIC METERS FROM DEMOLITION OF ANNEX CONSTRUCTION –

That is the large sacristy built in 1846, chapel of Saint Francis, old sacristy, upper and lower, oil storage, room of said Maronite Father, linen closet, stairway, etc., etc.

Sacristy – East and north wall, entire length to total development including the chapel of Saint Francis: 18 meters high above the level of the courtyard approximately 8 m; thick 1m X 8 X 18. Total: 1X 8 X 18 : 144 cubic meters.

Terrace: 12 m long, 5 m. thick vault included 2 m. (A massive amount of earth) – Total 12 X 5 X 2 = cubic meters 120.

All the other old construction, side was is very thick 2 m. thick, 8 m. high and 14 m. long. Total 2 X 8 X 14: 220 cubic meters.

Terrace: 14m. long, 8 m. wide and 2 m. thick. Note: Considerable amount of earth. Total 2 X 8 X 14 = 220 cubic meters.

Interior vaults, dividing walls, wall and stairway west of the linen closet, etc. appx: 96 cubic meters.

Oil storage, old sacristy etc., etc. approx.: 100 cubic meters.

TOTAL CUBIC METERS FOR THE ANNEXES: 900

NOTE: All this demolition started in March were completed (except some excavation to be done in August) July 31, 1880.

Total: 1600 plus 900: 2,500

The lower part of the church, that is the terrace and the north wall, wall and terrace, a few annexes old pilings etc. of which we don't yet know the exact cubic meters: approximately 500.

TOTAL GENERAL: 3,000 CUBIC METERS.

EXCAVATIONS FOR THE FOUNDATIONS

NOTE: These numbers are not mathematically precise, but they are a close approximation and always within rather than outside of actual.

The first line of foundations, north side going from the wall of the cloister of Saint Jerome, going under the linen closet, all the way to the 3rd pillar at the back of the yard:

Average size of the trench: 2 meters.

Depth under the linen closet, the paving of the church taken for leveling, 10 meters (a veritable

abyss); all earth moved to a depth of around 7m. including soft rock in which we dug around 3m. About mid level bordering the trench on the north side, we found a wall, embossment, rocks, nice appointment representing a face of about 2m. and appearing to veer toward the north. Brother Lievin, to whom I showed it, thinks it is the base of an ancient tower. The architect would want to see the sub-basement of a column (extension of the north arm of the Basilica, which originally would have formed a cross of equal arms, later having a convent in each angle)!!!

An arc thrown over the large wall of the linen closet, 2m. thick, 5m. to 8m. deep, meets a grotto or natural cavity in the rock, seeming to take a direction toward the south; and a wall suddenly goes from north to south in a bad turn.

NOTE: The entire trench starting at the linen closet wall was dug in the convent yard, which is lower down from the paving of the church approximately 2 meters. It gives the trench a depth of 2 meters at least from that which passes under the linen closet. All the following is done on the inside, that is over ancient constructions, which are all at the level of the paving of the old church.

The ledge then rises and the trench has only one depth, all the way to the angle of the old sacristy, 4 m. deep and 10 m. long, including the return of the low side. B-3. There, the arch thrown on the angle of the old sacristy, and continuing toward the east; 10m. long (for the wall of the large nave, see the plan); 3m. deep; and more than 5m. of trench starting from the round point, apse on the low north side, at 5m. deep.

The sum total of cubic meters of earth removed for the first line of the foundations on the north side:

NOTE: This soil was brought in part by children in buckets at the back of the garden (long and tedious work required by the great narrowing or lack of space. The donkeys which usually transported the earth sensibly couldn't enter into this passage through the school's first floor in the new wing of the convent, east side). It was partially sifted to make the mortar. The architect wanted that all the mortar be of sand. That would have created an exorbitant expense. We would use the sand only for the cut stones which made up the exterior façade.

<i>8 X 2 X 10</i>	<i>160 cubic meters</i>
<i>5 X 2 X 6</i>	<i>60 cubic meters</i>
<i>10 X 2 X 4</i>	<i>80 cubic meters</i>
<i>10 X 2 X 3</i>	<i>60 cubic meters</i>
<i>6 X 2 X 5</i>	<i>60 cubic meters</i>
<i>Total length 39 meters Total 420 cubic meters</i>	
<i>The second line went over the entire length.</i>	

NOTE 1a: We dug it in order to be able to establish the base of the pilasters more easily and be able to overcome the extreme case, the difficulties caused by the encounter with the cistern of Saint Catherine.

NOTE 2a: July 2, we had to establish the 1st pilaster on the East side of said cistern whom no one yet knew the true form. The information which was regrettably so inaccurate which was formerly given us regarding the grotto discussed previously caused us to suspect those of the cistern. Good Father Sacristan had assured me he went down himself. "Father" he told me, "the cistern is divided into two compartments or two rooms and extends under the chapel of Saint Francis and also under the old sacristy." I wanted to see it myself, but they created difficulties... it isn't prudent, etc. However there was nothing easier. I went down by the seat of my pants on a simple wooden board fastened to a rope which two workers with a hoist gradually lowered. I saw a cistern completely dug in the rock, in a perfect state of conservation. What had led brother Sacristan in error, is the old chimney where we formerly primitively drew water and which is on the south side of the actual opening. What he took for the opening of a room, having only seen the opening of the cistern as he later admit to me.

The cistern is approximately 5 meters deep. It is elliptical in shape, 3m 70 by 4-30; the volume taken in cylindrical shape 4 X 4.

$V = B \times H$ base of the circle = $C \times \frac{1}{2}$ radius $T6 \times$ square of the radius. Approximately circ. 12 – diameter 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ radius 1st floor area of B 12 m 12 X 5 or H = 60. Volume of the cistern: 60 cubic meters.

We will keep it intact: the $\frac{1}{2}$ pilaster in the wall of the St. Jerome Cloister . It falls entirely outside and the first pilaster on the east side comes to rest on its base whose thickness surpasses 1 meter. However, for complete security, an arch was made with good stones for the entire width of the trench, on which the arch leans on rock, full and solid.

The total length of the line: 30 meters, instead of 33 m. (the cistern takes up approximately this space).

*15m X2 X4 (Note: the stone is found here at a short distance) 120
15m X2 X2 instead of 4, the basement of the sacristy is there 120
basement of the Sacristy is 10 X 6 X 4 cubic meters 240
otherwise: 1st line cubic meters 480.*

Remains to be dug July 31, 1880.

The base of 3 pilasters and $\frac{1}{2}$ pilaster going north being approximately 100m. Excavations: Total 1000 M.C. (cubic meters).

CUBIC METERS OF MASONRY IN THE FOUNDATIONS

All the proportions of the excavations are average approximately 1.50 thick with an increase to 2m. high in the yard, with a little difference of the 2 arches, etc. etc.

*1st Line 8 X 10 X 1-50 120 cubic meters
(at line 5) 7 X 10 X 1-50 105 cubic meters
20 10 X 1-50 180 cubic meters*

TOTAL rounded off 400 cubic meters

*2nd line – Average thickness all the way to the first pilaster: 4 meters ; 15 m. long.
apse development, 8 m south wall on the side of the garden of St. Jerome was made
new all the way to the foundations, height: 12 meters.*

NOTE: During the course of July, with the authorization of Most Rev. Father Custodian, Father Custodial Vicar paid a private visit to the Anthimos, the Greek Bishop of Bethlehem, and alerted him that they were going to demolish all the way to the foundation of the old wall the length of the garden of St. Jerome, leaving only a portion of the wall close to the chapel of the Blessed Virgin. The Bishop asked him to see it from the top of the terrace. The Vicar replied that it would be better not to be seen in public, and he understood. He only commented: "I am obliged to alert Jerusalem". On his part, Father Vicar, to avoid all misunderstanding, went (always privately) to the Greek patriarchate and talked with the charge d'affairs, who was gathered at the divan with his interpreter and all the members of the Council. Father Vicar explained the matter simply. It was understood. The charge d'affairs (Photios) with a lot of consideration, asked if he would be permitted to go himself see the work or to send a member of his council. He was told there that was no problem as long as it would be a private visit.

A member of the council, accompanied by a Cawas who spoke Italian, indeed went on a Sunday afternoon accompanied by Brother Alphonse, Sacristan of Bethlehem, present at the time.

Everything went well without fuss. The delegate, (the new interpreter) took the initiative to declare clearly that they, the Greeks, had no reason (motive) to intervene in our constructions, that it could not in any way whatsoever affect them, and after perfectly establishing after an observation "de visu" that we observed the STATU QUO established by the firman of 1852 (not recognized by us), that is, we would not touch the garden of Saint Jerome. Further, he declared that there would be no difficulty harmonizing the vault of the part of the old church still standing, leaning against the Basilica under the condition (which had already been established) that the original height would be maintained.

NOTE: At the time we redrew these notes, the work on the garden side progresses with calmness, shaded by one objection on the part of our neighbors.

Foundations of the Campanile – side East and North 8 cubic meters

total: 15 X 4 X 1-50 90

8 X 4 X 1-50 48

12 X 4 X 1-50 62

8 X 4 X 1-50 48

TOTAL rounded off 250

250 plus 400: Cubic meters of the foundations 650 cubic meters.

Left to do July 31st – the bases of the 3 pilasters and 2 ½ pilasters 100 cubic meters.

GENERAL TOTAL OF THE FOUNDATIONS: 750 cubic meters

pilaster bases known as of July 31:

South side: going from East to West – 1st deep pilaster 4 m.

2nd pilaster (at a cavity in the rock) 5 1/2m.

3rd pilaster (dug into soft rock) 6 1/2m.

4th pilaster (with an arch on the wall of the cistern outside the void) 4m.

5th 1/2 pilaster on the west side of the cistern

NOTE: All these pilasters are set on a bed of new stone plates (20 to 25 cm. thick) so that they come out of the quarry having at the base around 1-50 surface and getting imperceptively narrower.

LAYING THE FIRST STONE

The first stone was laied by Most Rev. Father Custodian, surrounded only by the religious of the Community, without chanting, and prayers recited aloud, around 8 o'clock the morning of May 11, 1880. It is a very simple, rectangular form; approximately 0.30 centimeters long, 0.20 centimeters wide and 0.20 centimeters thick with the only carving +A.D. 1880 – and forming the North-East corner of the low side north, which is circular and at a right angle to the base of the foundations and the strong masonry, because of the very visible incline of the rock on that side.

OLD MATERIALS – *All the old materials, taken from the demolition until July 31st, are practically all enclosed in the foundations which did not get any new stone, except for the pilaster bases which were exclusively selected and new materials.*

The stones of the façade of the old construction were almost totally Nari stone (soft stone). They were touched up and will serve to make the new façade on the north side. On July 31, 1880, 8 rows of these stones were already in place forming a total of 400. A thousand other were already cut, and with the few hundred which remain to be removed from the wall of the lower part of the old church still standing, they will suffice for the entire façade.

NEW MATERIALS – 1. *The new, common and small stones cost 6 dollars, the cost of thee camel (current rate, we pay 1/2 dollar more v.g. than Dom Belloni, because we are further from the quarries than he is.) The 2nd category, larger and selected, 8 dollars; finally the 3rd category, 10 dollars. It takes 12 to 15 of these charges for one cubic meter of masonry, which brings the cost of the pilasters to 25 to 30 francs per cubic meter.*

The large stones for the pilasters and arches: 1st series: blocks of approximately 0.80 centimeters long; 0.40 wide and 25, 30, 35 high delivered to the site: 14, 18 and 20 dollars. 2nd series: blocks of 0.80 – 0.40 and 0.38 to 0.40 centimeters high, 24 dollars; that is the cost of one good camel. The stone is called white ? (all to the good and is... (word missing)...) of Father Vicar). 3rd Series: blocks (36, 4 per pilaster) – for cornices and origin of the arches. 1.05 to 1.10 long – 0.60 wide – 0.35 to 0.40 high taken to the quarry, 50 dollars for one; plus exit from the quarry and transportation at our expense. Our carriers took them out of the quarry; Father Morcos and a good mule (his) and our harness, our cart, and a driver paid by him, lodged and fed by us; the mule also lodged, but not fed, and two men paid by us accompanied the cart and transported at 4 trips a day and one block per trip (after trial and error for approximately one

week) the quarry about one league away from the convent – they asked (it is not yet time to pay) 25 dollars for each trip. 8 stone cutters worked on these pilasters since the month of April; it took an average of 2 to 3 days to carve stones for the bases . Also it took 3 to 4 days for each block of stone for the arches and 5 to 6 days for each ½ cornice (which is very expensive).

ANECDOTE OF AUGUST 1st.

I was in Bethlehem with the Superior of a religious house, a man knowledgeable in affairs, and knowledgeable regarding construction in this country. I showed him our work, and explained to him the difficulty we had as we carried out the demolition of 3,000 cubic meters and dug 1,000 cubic meters of foundation, built 650 cubic meters underground, how the materials were expensive (for the pilasters which everyone admit were beautiful), especially the 40 blocks for the cornices and on top of the cornices, showing him all the materials already cut for the pilasters, and just about every stone for the façade (around 2,000) of the old materials etc.,etc. He examined them, calculated, and told me “Father, your church will not cost you less than 150,000 francs, and you should have already paid to date at least 30 to 40,000 francs!” We are happy to leave here as a reminder to justify the administration of the Holy Land, too long and too severely accused of mismanagement, not to say wasteful, the result of the accounting of the general expenses on July 31, 1880.

NOTE: This year, the materials are expensive, transportation is expensive (and we have a lot, being obliged to have all the materials brought from Jerusalem to the Convent of Bethlehem being anticipated, from the simplest debris of planks to make the partitions whose intrinsic value often seemed not even equal to the cost of transportation !!!) the day workers, expensive and very expensive...

TOTAL EXPENSES AS OF JULY 31, 1880: Francs: 15,361 !!!...and that sum includes a thousand dollars for loss of the value of the Beschlik (Turkish money) – and the robbery (act of unimaginable ingratitude) committed in the Father Vicar’s room and which came out to around 2,000 dollars !!!

WORK CARRIED OUT STARTING AUGUST 1, 1880

Copyist’s note: This end the resume. There are 19 pages left blank in the notebook, with that of the cover. One copy made January 12 and 13 at Holy Sepulcher, Jerusalem (signed) Father Paul Eugene Trudel, o.f.m.

CHURCH OF BETHLEHEM

LATIN/ORTHODOX COEXISTENCE MUTUAL AGREEMENT

NOTICE

There exists two autographed copies of the famous MUTUAL AGREEMENT. One is in the Archives of the Convent of Bethlehem, and I myself made copy of the authentic manuscript in January 1930, as will be shown below. No doubt it is the draft. The other is conserved in the Archives of the Convent of Holy Savior in Jerusalem, where the Secretariat of the Holy Custody is located. Brother Noel Gosselin, Canadian Franciscan, for Palestine copied it in September 1937. (I had never seen the 2nd manuscript of Father Frederic during my stay in Jerusalem). The original was made by Father Frederic in Bethlehem in January 1887, and the copy proper

to Jerusalem, in August of the same year, which he reports several times in the text itself. Father Frederic spent almost the entire month of October, 1886 in Bethlehem, and almost the entire month of January 1887, no doubt working on the MUTUAL AGREEMENT.

We include here the descriptive notes of the two copyists mentioned above. The notes explain mutually, for the two Manuscripts autographed by Father Frederic are obviously the same format.

We follow here the text of the copy of Bethlehem, and we will indicate, by notations, the few little changes that apply to the Manuscript of Jerusalem.

The two authenticated copies are conserved in the file of the Vice-postulation of the Cause of Father Frederic in Trois-Rivieres.

MANUSCRIPT OF BETHLEHEM

Description

These are two similar notebooks of 40 pages, destined to be bound together, the second continuing the first. Their format is 7 inches and 7 lines long by 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ wide. They are made up of 10 sheets folded in the middle and sewn in two places; the 1st with a strong thread of white hemp, the 2nd with a small black thread. The paper is cream/white, thin but strong enough. It does not have a cover. The first page has a small Holy Land cross and the title "SANCTUARY OF BETHLEHEM – REGULATIONS 1887". The 2nd page is left blank.

The paper is not ruled. The writing (molded italic) is more careful than in the preceding notebook:

"CHURCH OF BETHLEHEM – EXPANSION". The margin is disposed the same way on the inside. It is traced in pencil and generally one inch to 17 lines. It generally has 28 lines per page.

The text contains a lot of corrections, crossing out, and notes in the margin. Except for the first two pages serving as the cover/title page, the manuscript is 60 pages. The 1st notebook end with page numbered 38 and the 2nd begins with page 39. There are 18 blank pages, not numbered, which completed the number of 80 pages in all.

COPYIST'S NOTICE REGARDING THE MANUSCRIPT

I permit myself a word of explanation on the corrections, additions, notations, which are found in the manuscript.

Most Rev. Father Frederic composed the Regulation, he did not do the final editing. This editing completed on his manuscript, is in a large register bound in red leather and conserved by Most Rev. Father Custodial Vicar in Jerusalem. That register contains "REGULATION OF THE MOST HOLY SEPULCHER"; and that of BETHLEHEM, both written in a very beautiful calligraphy, (which we believe to be the work of Father Leonard of Montilly), and the chapters, articles, paragraphs are more in evidence than in the manuscript of Father Frederic. In addition to the mentioned indications (like: "Put here the note from page... etc.) which

perfectly executed in the Regulation bound in red, we found in the manuscript we were copying, a single detached sheet, very precious in establishing that the following bound Regulation was copied from the manuscript of Rev. Father Frederic during his time in Jerusalem and said copy was revised by him. This sheet, written by Father Frederic has the title: "*Manuscript – Omissions*" followed by the line, page and indication of the addition to be made. I will transcribe this page at the end of the Regulation. So, in the Regulation manuscript bound in red, we find precisely ,underlined, the mentioned additions.

Jerusalem, Most Holy Sepulcher, January 13, 1930
(Signed) Father Paul-Eugene Trudel, o.f.m.

MANUSCRIPT OF JERUSALEM

Copyist's notes

Manuscript of Father Frederic

Archives of the Holy Savior

Jerusalem

B.II - R.III – 17

BETHLEHEM REGULATION

Four notebooks of 227/178 mm. each sewn with a white thread, but not bound together I notebook – Title page 1 – 18

II notebook (marked II) – 19 – 38

III notebook (marked III) – 39 – 58

IV notebook (marked IV) – 59 – 70 pp.

4 sheets (8 pages) blank

White paper, very strong, ruled for the text by the author, as well as the margins drawn from top to bottom, to reserve a column of 100mm. Interior margins: 20mm Exterior margins: 55 mm.

Top and bottom: approximately 18mm.

Calligraphy is very precise and the presentation even with the lines, single and double, which adorn the different titles. The attached copy reproduces scrupulously each line of the text and the exact number of lines per page. (signed) Brother Noel, o.f.m.

At the bottom of the title page, the copyist adds:

Copied from the Original in Jerusalem (Archives of the Custody of Holy Sepulcher)
September, 1937. Father Noel Gosselin, o.f.m.

Notes of the actual editor

I will follow the text of MSS of Bethlehem.

I will include in the text the notes in the margins, putting in place the additional references and complete the abbreviated words.

Because of that, I do not believe it necessary to indicate the pagination from neither one MSS or the other.

I will give our numbers the translations of Latin and Italian words as they appear in the text, especially the first part.

Lettered references to the Manuscript of Jerusalem will be marked by M. Jeru.

While the CHURCH OF BETHLEHEM; LATIN/ORTHODOX COEXISTENCE MUTUAL AGREEMENT serves as the norm for the diverse religious celebrations in Bethlehem, it is certain that time, the English mandate, and other usages have required notable modifications of this first work done in 1887, 60 years ago. Thus our actual publication of this MUTUAL AGREEMENT can only be a *documentary* and has no official character. No one can thus use it for any claims whatsoever. Our only goal, and we repeat, is to show the immense work that the Servant of God, Father Frederic of Ghyselde imposed on himself to maintain the rights of the Latin and Roman Rites in peace and harmony with the dissident Rites who share the use of the Holy Grotto of the Nativity of the Savior of the World, the Price of Peace.

Text of the Manuscript:

**SANCTUARY OF BETHLEHEM
RULES – (1887)**

The door called Joinville: The Latins have the right to keep this door open ad arbitrio loro (day and night).

*For good harmony, the Sacristan opens it only for the first Mass in the Sanctuary and leaves it open until the Religious' dinner time. Then it is closed because we also close the church.
(2) Then we open it for Vespers (not at a specific time, but comodo suo (at convenience) and
(3) closed at night at a suitable hour al giudizio del Sagrestano (at the Sacristan's discretion).*

*NOTE: January 17 (Vigil of the Armenians' Christmas and Epiphany), Some days, or immediately (ad libitum) before the Feast, the Armenian Sacristan and the first Latin Sacristan go to Father Latin Guardian to request permission to close the Joinville door immediately after our procession (which is done on January 17th after Sexte and None).
Note: This usage is ancient and always practiced.*

OPENING THE LARGE WINDOW – *When it rains, the French Chancellor and the Pasha's interpreter (the Armenians ask the Pasha who in turn asks the French Consul who can accept or not accept – Inquire about this most recent usage -) on the eve, the two of them come up on our terraces, specific workers selected by them, take cloth (not hemmed) and belonging to the Armenians, and nail it in front of the broken window on the exterior.*

(M. Jeru. The first part is replaced by: high and broken window facing West in the Choir of the Armenians. When the weather is stormy or threatens to become so, the Armenians ask the Pasha to permit them to close this high window to the West though which the wind blows the rain or snow all the way to the foot of their altar. The Pasha in turn, communicates this request to the French Consul, who is free to accept or refuse.

The consul never refuses without a grave reason, to make this purely free and simple concession to the Armenians. Here is how it is done. The vigil of the Feast (January 17-18) the Chancellor of the French Consulate and the Pasha's interpreter go together to Bethlehem. Together they climb up to our terraces, their selected workers bring a roll of strong fabric, not bound, and nail it in front of the broken window of the exterior..." No Armenian monks accompany the workers.

The next day, as soon as the Armenian ceremony is terminated (around 8 o'clock in the morning more or less), again, in the presence of the French Chancellor and the Pasha's interpreter, the workers remove the cloth. This is done only once on the mentioned feast (this concession is recent).

SWEEPING AND DUSTING:

Along the thickness of the wall where the Joinville Door opens (See drawing (the word 'drawing' is always replaced by the word 'plan') only the Latins have the right to sweep (and dust) and if from time to time the Armenians attempt to do it, our Sacristan must oppose it.

The Latins also have the right to sweep ad libitum, toties quoties (at will as often as they want) the passage through the choir of the Armenians (see on the drawing the direction and the size of this passage) from the Joinville door all the way to the top step exclusively of the stair that goes down to the Sanctuary ("to the Sanctuary is replaced by "to the Holy Grotto"...))

Note: While sweeping their choir, the Armenians must by necessity, push their brooms across this passage. This inevitable act in no way lessens the rights of the Latins.

The Latins have the right to sweep alternately with the Armenians, the five top steps (see the drawing) of the stair leading to the Sanctuary ("the Sanctuary" is replaced with "to the Holy Grotto")

They each have their day. (determined). verbi gratia (For Example), if the Latins sweep on Monday, the Armenians will sweep on Tuesday; and if one of the two parties doesn't want to sweep on that day, they are perfectly free (they fully use their freedom..." and they don't lose their right: however, they cannot sweep the next day. Their turn went by as we say, and they will find their day in two days.)

From the first semi-circular landing at the bottom of the five top stairs (see the drawing) sweeping belongs exclusively to the Latins.

Note: From time to time the Armenians attempt to take this right from the Latins. Our Sacristan must never make a concession (in this regard).

The entire door (marble door) with its small columns, its lintel, its tympanum and its archivault (not the united façade in which it is pierced) and the entire stair, all the way to the floor of the Holy Grotto is exclusively the Latins; consequently the Armenians have no right neither to sweep, to clean this stair nor to dust the frame etc. of this door.

NOTE: The Armenians attempt from time to time to dust the little edge of the shelf (dust the top of this little shelf...) of the archivault 8 to 10 centimeters wide. Our Sacristan must always oppose this. ('always oppose this' changed to 'must never permit it').

Note: No one has the right to touch the bronze door (The bronze door which opens in this marble enclosure.)

Sweeping the floor of the Holy Grotto (not including the site of the Nativity, nor the Manger) is reserved to the Latins and to the Greeks, excluding the Armenians. Each of them (as mentioned above for the five steps of the stairway) sweep on alternating days, one yes, one no. It is permitted to each (it is permitted to one of the two Rites to let...) their day go by without sweeping, and that happens often enough a turn goes by without inconvenience, and without compromising either right: v.g. today, Monday, is the day for the Greeks and they don't sweep. The Holy Grotto will remain without being swept this day, and the next day, Tuesday, the Latins will sweep as usual, but by Greek default, they cannot themselves sweep on Monday. They have to wait for their day, and vice-versa for the Greeks.

Note: The Armenians have no right to sweep here and if at this point, by accident one of their lamps is knocked over, it is up to the Greeks and the Latins (whoever notices it first) to clean up, but not up to the Armenians.

Only the Greeks will sweep their entire stairway (see the drawing) as well as the site of the Nativity.

Only the Latins will sweep the interior of the Holy Manger, the front of the Altar of the Magi Kings and the steps which lead to it.

NOTE: The top step conforming with the rest of the floor is included in the common sweeping of the rest of the floor of the entire Grotto.

NOTE: Only the Latins dust the large, lateral tapestry and the arch (These 4 words are missing in M. Jeru.) of the Holy Grotto when they wish to do so, a comodo loro (at their convenience) as well as the vault where (attached is replaced by suspended) the lamps are suspended, that is the entire vault area. This operation is not done formally, but simply when our Sacristans see ("our Sacristan sees that... he removes... our Sacristan must object...") cobwebs or similar things they remove them with a feather duster; and neither the Greeks nor the Armenians can protest against this act; neither the Greeks on their side are ever inclined to do it themselves. If they attempted to do it, our Sacristans must oppose it.

The great cleaning (dusting) of the woodwork of the Basilica; all the presbytery of the Armenians and the Greeks (the entire transept) (In M. Jeru. is the note preceding "The Latins"..

*Here is a new title: **MAJOR CLEANING AND DUSTING of the WOODWORK and the walls of the entire transept of the Basilica:***

Each year, before...) Before the Greek Christmas, they have the soldiers come (a hundred more or less) who stand at arms, and workers climb on the woodwork (these are workers, not the

Greek monks who do this job) to bring down the spiders and the dust. They take this measure because each year the Armenians protest against the Greeks about this job. The three sacrisans; the Greeks, the Armenians and the Latins are present for this cleaning which lasts about three hours. They ("they" is replaced by "the workers") also clean the walls of the murals, and the entire choir of the Armenians all the way to the floor.

Note: On the side of the Joinville door, the arch of the door in (Note: At the Joinville Door, the cleaning of all) the entire thickness of the wall in which the door opens (see the drawing) the cleaning is reserved exclusively to the Latins. that is why the Latin Sacristan must be there. Until now, the Greeks, that is their workers who clean the neighboring wall must never attempt to upstage our right.

Note: The Greeks alone, sweep the front of the front of the Basilica from the first opening of the cistern (see p. 57) and no one ever protested. But from time to time the Greeks try to go past this limit, so the Latins must protest to the Modir. The Latins alone protest against this act of the Greeks. The Armenians keep silence. (See p. (sic) the more detailed explanations of this question (This note is missing in M. Jeru. It is included in the text of the last chapter of the REGULATION "Square of Saint Helena).

Note: The Latins also sweep the front of their convent in the space of 10 feet (Study this question and act with prudence during the cleaning of this space). (This notation is missing in M. Jeru.)

WASHING –

The entire choir of the Armenians (see drawing) – About once a year, the choir is washed. (We wash the entire choir at least once a year...) This right is reserved to the Latins and the Armenians together . (The Greeks are entirely excluded.)

The Holy Grotto – Several times a year (3,4,6 or 7 times more or less) we wash all ("We wash up to six or seven times a year, more or less, all the ...) floor of the Holy Grotto. This is done by the Greeks and the Latins together (the Armenians are excluded).

STAIRS – *The stairs are washed at the same time. This is done as follows: The Greeks wash only their stairway and the washing naturally begins at their end. The Latins for their part, start by washing their stairway starting from the first landing (see the drawing), the entire door, that is the small columns and their capitals, the archivault etc., in a word, the entire doorframe and the rest of the steps of the stairway all the way to the floor where the Latins and Greeks come together to continue together the washing of the entire floor of the Holy Grotto.*

THE MANGER – *While we have the right to was this area comodo nostro (ad libitum), usually it isn't washed unless the entire Holy Grotto is being washed. It is understood that while the Latins wash and rinse this area with water, it is without any interference from the Greeks.*

THE STAR – *When the area of the Nativity is washed, that is the silver star and the marble plaque that covers (These last three words are missing in M. Jeru.) or forms the floor under the*

altar of the Greeks, the question is actually still in litigation (January 20 1887). (Date is replaced by August 1887' which is that of the transcription of the M. of Bethlehem in the M. of Jerusalem.)

See Father Custodian's journal and the consul correspondence. (This reference is missing in M. Jeru.) But in fact ("But actually our ancient right is suspended and the Greeks...") the Greeks and the Armenians only wash it a comodo loro (wash it publicly). The Latins are excluded to their great humiliation, for now (they are forbidden doing this public washing.) (The sentence ends at "humiliation".)

FURNISHING (or APPOINTMENTS) FOR THE HOLY GROTTO

NOTE: The orientation of the Holy Grotto (M. Jeru. has only "Orientation"): To avoid any confusion, we call the right side the part of the Grotto where a person entering from the door at the back, would have on their right (thus the Holy Manger will be on the right, etc.), and the left side, the of the Grotto, they would have at their left (our stairway, the side of the Armenians is at the left, etc.).

TAPISTRIES: *All the tapestries which cover the vault and the two lateral sides of the left stairway (side of the Armenians) all the way to the junction of the band of tapestry that encloses the Nativity site (see the drawing) belongs exclusively to the Latins: They have the right to remove them, change them, and renew them when they wish, and that is without alerting neither the Greeks nor the Armenians. (I recall when I was in Jerusalem around 1930, one night the Greeks removed a nail which secured a tapestry of the Latins, right at the junction with theirs, and placed it above the step where they were at the foot. It was a diplomatic incident in which the religious and civil authorities were involved and had to go to Bethlehem three times.*

The Greeks were blamed, and the nail was put back in its place. (The copyist.)

NOTE: They (the Greeks and the Armenians) do their best to assume the right to inspect, seeking to oblige us to alert them every time we touch this tapestry, either to change it or to mend it, etc. The Latin Sacristan must absolutely relinquish nothing to the Greeks and the Armenians in this respect, otherwise he will find himself compromised himself, since v.g. it happens at one time or another (from time to time) that it is necessary to adjust the nail which suspends the tapestry, strengthen these old nails, adjust the small wooden lath which holds them, etc. How would that be done, if he had to do this in the presence of the Greeks and the Armenians?

Actually, he must also equally use prudence when having to do one of these jobs. It must be done in a manner as to not be noticed by anyone. (Actually it must be done with equal prudence, when doing such a job. It must be approached in a way..."

The piece of tapestry which is located at the vault of the Holy Grotto, near the right stairway (side of the Greeks) color red with the coat of arms (red aux arms) of France (see the drawing) above the first inferior steps of the stairway, touching on one side the site of the Nativity and on the other the site of the Manger, belong exclusively to the Latins, but we cannot and have no

right to touch this tapestry in any way for the moment. (but until we never touch it, it remains fixed...) It remains fixed. It was placed there in the year (The year is not given with any MMS.)

NOTE: In the present year 1887, when we placed a new tapestry, given by the parish of Saint Augustin of Lyon, our brother Sacristan placed it on a piece of the old tapestry (which he left in place) the new tapestry (the piece of new...) which accompanies the rest, and neither the Greeks nor the Armenians, no one protested (and no one, neither the Greeks nor the Armenians protested.).

The tapestry which covers the entire are of the Holy Manger and the altar of the Magi Kings, attached to the vault, the lateral wall, and covering one part of the columns (see the drawing) again belongs exclusively to the Latins. (The word 'again' is missing in the M. Jeru.) They have the right to change, renew, etc. which they deem it feasible. They need only take precautions to conserve the current form which it actually has (see the drawing) especially for the part that surrounds the columns, to avoid attracting attention.

The large tapestry which covers the lateral wall of the entire Holy Grotto belongs to the Latins, as everyone knows. Put there by France after the events of April 25, 1873, no one touches it. The Latins alone have the right to dust it, maintain it in a tidy state, as we said above in the paragraph on sweeping.

The band of tapestry which enclosed the site of the Nativity (see the drawing) belongs exclusively to the Greeks. They change it and renew it as they please. The Latins are naturally attentive, so that they (attentive that they..." do not take more room that the one actually in place and which for the most part, would be of little use, so that it appears clearly by inspection... alone of the locals.

The entire tapestry which covers the vault (starting from the portion of tapestry belonging to the Latins and mentioned above and the lateral wall of the stairway on the right side (the Greek side) also (the word "also" is missing from M. Jeru.) belongs exclusively to the Greeks. They change it, renew it etc. when it pleases them. (when it pleases them is replaced by "ad libitum").
NOTE: In practice, they rarely change it.

PAINTINGS

All the paintings (not including those inside the site of the Nativity nor the Manger) (which adorn the Holy Grotto, numbering...) 16 (sixteen) belong exclusively to the Greeks and the Armenians, who have 8 each in the following order: (the sentence ends with Armenians.)

NOTE: The Latins have one very small painting: The Virgin holding the Infant Jesus at the back of the Grotto, above the shelf, on the left side. (NOTE: The Latins have by decision, a very small painting, hardly visible. It represents the Virgin holding the Infant Jesus, and is located on the left side, at the back of the Holy Grotto, a bit above the shelf. The sixteen Greek and Armenian paintings, of which each has eight, are distributed in the following order.)

On the left side (Armenian side) of the façade of the site of the Nativity (see drawing) #1 – Armenian; #2 – Greek.

Right side: #3 - Armenian; #4 - Greek (This line is missing in M. Jeru, at least on our copy.)

Left side of the Holy Grotto, starting at the stairway and going toward the back: #5 – Armenian, #6 – Armenian; #7 – Greek; # 8 Armenian, #9 – Greek.

At the back of the Grotto: #10 – Greek; #11 – Armenian; #12 – Greek. (It is here, above the shelf that the Latins' little painting is located.)

Right side of the Holy Grotto: #13 – Armenian; #14 – Greek; #15 – Armenian; #16 – Greek.

In addition there are two small paintings, on the left side, Armenian; and the other on the right side, Greek, immediately (they are placed immediately) above the abse of the Nativity (see the drawing). They are gold, (these two little paintings are gilded...) in the Byzantine style, and they are removed and put back each time the tapestry which encloses the site of the Nativity is changed. These two little paintings are there under the same conditions as the 16 others: that is they cannot be changed, etc.

NOTE: All these paintings must remain unmovable, suspended in their place. Neither the Greeks nor the Armenians have the right to neither move them, nor refresh, varnish, etc., only to dust them on the outside (In M. Jeru. after an amiable arrangement with the Greeks and with the intervention of the Pasha and the French Consul."

In 1885, (see Father Custodian's journal) the Greeks were content to clean and wash their paintings; the Armenians came in unexpectedly into the amiable agreement (accepted and directed by the Pasha and the French Consul) between the Greeks and the Latins, renewed the 6 paintings; Nos. 5,6,8,13 and 15 and made the old ones disappear. (This sentence is missing in M. Jeru.)

PAINTINGS THAT ADORN THE INTERIOR of the Nativity and the Manger.

In 1885, the Latins renewed (In M. Jeru. after an amiable arrangement with the Greeks, and with the intervention of the Pasha and the French Consul) the 3 paintings inside the site of the Holy Manger. 1. The one above the Manger, 2. The one inside the Manger itself, and 3. The one at the altar of the Magi Kings.

In 1885, by virtue of the same amiable agreement, the Greeks (whose entire story is found in the Journal of Father Custodian), placed inside the site of the Nativity a new step adorned with pictures (see the drawing) which forms the table of their altar (above the star). It is divided into six panels which show six small paintings juxtaposed.

NOTE: These three Latin paintings, and the new Greek step, considered equally as paintings, must like all the others, remain in place, fixed and unmovable. Naturally, we can dust them and maintain them exteriorly in a clean manner. (This sentence is missing in M. Jeru.)

SPECIAL EXCEPTION: *The painting alone of the Manger (the one below) (and at the back) is removed once a year. The eve of our Epiphany after the Armenians' Mass in the Sanctuary*

(celebrated at the site of the Nativity.) the Latin Sacristan removes the painting and takes it away discretely by going through the door at the back of the Sanctuary. He does this, not because the Latins don't have the right to displace it for this occasion, but not to attract the attention of the already numerous pilgrims at this hour, by ostensibly passing with his painting through the upper Basilica.

The Latins remove the painting, to enable them to place (the little statue of) the Infant Jesus, (called the Infant Jesus of the Epiphany), which is standing under His little baldacan, leaning against the rock at the back of the Manger. That is the motive for temporarily removing this painting.

Actually, this operation is not necessary for the little Infant Jesus of Christmas which is placed between the painting at the back and the ironwork grille which forms the rest of the Manger. It is Brother Sacristan who placed there, without ceremony, the Infant Jesus of the Epiphany, at the back of the true Manger. However he brings the Cawas with him to scatter the crowd, so as to arrive without accident to the precious relic to the place where it is destined. Only the painting is removed. The lamps remain suspended in their places.

NOTE: The Latins also have the right to remove this painting (with five lamps) temporarily each time they offer the bare Rock of the Manger for the pilgrims' veneration. ("This painting below and at the back represents the Infant Jesus sleeping in the Manger. The painting above shows the angels singing the "Gloria in Excelsis... inscribed on the banner etc.)

All the lamps which adorn the entire Sanctuary are a predetermined number (The lamps which adorn the Holy Grotto in its entirety are...) and this number can neither be increased nor diminished.

Their total number is 53 (fifty three). The Latins own 19 (nineteen); The Greeks own 17 (seventeen) and the Armenians own 17 (seventeen). They are distributed in the following order:

In the hemicycle around the silver Star (Sixteen in a semicircle around the silver star, of which..."
4 belong to the Latins (four)
6 belong to the Greeks (six)
6 belong to the Armenians (six)

These 16 (sixteen) lamps each have their own suspensions, a small iron arm, attached to the rock which forms the little apse. Those of the Latins have on their suspensions the coat of arms of Saint Francis on their little metal plaque, soldered to the arm of the suspension's main part.

NOTE: At night, the Armenians remove the glasses of their first two lamps which burn before the silver Star (they are the first of all), and place them lighted, standing on the floor at the back of the semicircle, behind the star. They leave them there until after their mass (which is the last one in the Sanctuary). (last one at the Holy Grotto.). They take this precaution to prevent them from being knocked over by the pilgrims etc., who go to kiss the site of the star. After their Mass, they put them back in their respective place.

In the interior of the site of the Holy Manger, 5 (five) lamps burn before the painting below the Manger (this painting represents the Infant Jesus laying in the Manger, the painting which is found on the front of the cave of the Manger represents the angels singing the Gloria in Excelsis Deo, with a banner, etc.) (this descriptive phrase is missing).

Another lamp is suspended in the vault, between the Manger and the altar of the Magi Kings. (These six lamps belong exclusively to the Latins: neither the Greeks nor the Armenians have any right to place or maintain any lamps in this venerable place,.)

The entire length of the rest of the Holy Grotto, the lamps of the Latins, the Greeks and the Armenians are suspended from the vault, mixed together. Each rite knows their own and they maintain them without the least bit of confusion.

All these lamps, either those which are suspended from the great vault of the Holy Grotto, or those burning before the Holy Manger, the altar of the Magi Kings and around the silver star, must remain in their respective places; but each Rite can change theirs when they deem it feasible, without advising the others. The dimensions of the lamps are not specified. We can use large ones or smaller ones at will.

THE THREE LARGE CANDELABRA

All three have their set places (see drawing) before the isolated column at an angle to the Manger facing the site of the Nativity. The first one, starting from the side of the right stairway, belongs to the Latins; the second one (in the middle) belongs to the Greeks, and the third one to the Armenians. These three flame carriers cannot be replaced nor changed in form. Like the paintings, they must remain in their actual form, but each Rite can remove it from its place and carry it even outside the Holy Grotto to clean it and repair it, but not to update it, changing the form.

NOTE: The Latins also own (see the drawing) a little wooden cupboard in the thickness of the rock which forms the wall of the left stairway. It is on the right side, going down, and at the foot of the stairs, touching the stone bench where a soldier stands at attention, that this little cupboard is located. (The Greeks also have one, of a slightly different form in the rock which touches the little abse of the Nativity site at the foot of the stair, on the right side.)

IMPORTANT OBSERVATION: *The military sentinel which keeps watch day and night in the Sanctuary (The Holy Grotto keeps on an inventory of all its furnishings.) keeps an inventory of all the furnishings of the Grotto. That is why we must alert him (but not ask his permission) each time we wish to renew a tapestry, or the lamps, or we want to clean the flame-carriers by taking them out of the sanctuary.*

It stands to reason that we don't alert the sentinel with regards the small candelabra, or other small objects of this nature which form the ornamentation of the Holy Manger or the altar of the Magi Kings, as well as for the rug that we spread on the floor at the Holy Manger, etc.

SANCTUARY SERVICE**ORDINARY CEREMONIES** – weekdays, Sundays and ordinary Feastdays.**CELEBRATION OF MASSES outside the SCHEDULE** (established for the three Rites).

When the Latins have pilgrim priests who want to say Mass, before the hour of our first Mass set by the schedule, our first Sacristan, accompanied by our 2nd Sacristan or another Religious, goes to the Greek Bishop of Bethlehem in person, let him know the approximate number of pilgrim priests who want to celebrate (brother Sacristan indicates this number as a simple courtesy) and asks permission for them to celebrate.

The Bishop sees this process as a simple act of courtesy. He replies accordingly, and permission is always given.. I don't ever recall an instance when it was not given, even under the most critical circumstances. Once this formality toward the Greek Bishop is accomplished, the pilgrims can start to say their masses when they please, starting at midnight.

When the Latins have priests (Religious or secular, foreign or not) who wish to celebrate after the Mass of the Armenians, it is no longer necessary in this case, to ask the Greek Bishop. Our Sacristan courteously alerts (he does not ask) the Greek Sacristan, and he also does not create problems. It is an established custom. If he does, our Sacristan then goes directly to the Greek Bishop. This happened last year, the Greek Sacristan wanted to exercise a little vengeance (personal vengeance) against ours.

NOTE: Father Tomaso, actually the 1st Sacristan (in January 1887) alerted the new Greek Bishop of this practice and explained it clearly to him.

GREEK AND ARMENIAN MATINS

Matins are said in their respective choirs, never in the Sanctuary.

NOTE: When we use the word Sanctuary, we always mean the Holy Grotto, and the Holy Grotto in its entirety, and not this part of the church called the Presbiterium which in France we call the Sanctuary.

The Greeks do not have a very fixed hour to start their Matins. It is any time between midnight and two o'clock. For their part, the Armenians, can't start their matins until the Greeks have completely finished theirs; which also explains why the Armenians finish their proper matins at varied times. If it happens that they haven't finished theirs when we go to say our first Mass in the Sanctuary, it does not keep us in any way from saying our first Mass according to the schedule.

NOTE: As everyone knows, this schedule is posted in our Sacristy. The hours vary with the seasons. The Greeks and the Armenians are fully aware of this.

INCENSING BY THE GREEKS AND ARMENIANS DURING THEIR MATINS

The Greeks go down twice at irregular intervals to incense the Sanctuary, during their Matins. The Armenians go down more frequently to incense. The Sacristan could not tell me the exact number of times of their incensing of the Sanctuary during their Matins. So, if our pilgrims are saying Mass before (before the scheduled hour) schedule, the Greeks, the moment of their incensing, descend into the Sanctuary and do their incensing. If we have at that moment, a lot of pilgrims attending Mass, our Sacristan gives them a sign to make way for the Greek who comes to incense, and he incenses as usual.

The Latin priest who is at the altar of the Magi Kings pays no attention, and without moving or interruption, he quietly continues the Holy Sacrifice. The Greek can, if it pleases him, go down into the Manger to incense, but generally, he abstains, although he has the right to do so. The Greeks thus do their first and second incensing.

NOTE; It is done, even when we have a lot of Pilgrims, religiously and without problems or confusion, as I was witness myself at one of the large Pilgrimages of Penance.

As for the Armenians, they don't have the right, like the Greeks to incense during our Mass. Our Sacristan must be firm on this point, for the Armenians are always trying to have the same rights as the Greeks. So our Sacristan warns them, when their time to incense arrives, to wait a little bit, and as soon as our Mass is finished, he has them come down himself to incense. The same ceremony repeats itself after each mass, because the Armenians, as we noted above, do more frequent incensing than the Greeks at their Matins.

GENERAL METHOD OF THE GREEK INCENSING

(It is not necessary to indicate here the mode of incensing of the Armenians, because they never incense the Sanctuary when it is occupied by the Latins. Otherwise their method is the same as that of the Greeks.)

Here is how the Greeks incense: 1. They incense the site of the Nativity where they are located, to incense with the rest of the Sanctuary (except for the site of the Holy Manger) and where the Greeks have the right to incense in the Sanctuary 2. The site of the Nativity, they do descend into the site of the Holy Manger, 3. All the rest of the Sanctuary, going down toward the back all the way to the door that leads to our particular Grottoes.

OBSERVATION: *Only the Greeks have the right to incense the Sanctuary even if it is occupied by the Latins, but only under certain circumstances determined by the present Rule (V.G. on their Feast of Saint George...) and outside this particular circumstance, the Masses our Pilgrims say before the Scheduled hour. The Armenians don't have this right under any circumstance. Thus, when a Latin priest says Mass at the altar of the Magi Kings (at the site of the Manger) and the Greeks have the right to the incensing of the Sanctuary after having incensed the site of the Nativity, they don't go down to the site of the Holy Manger, but they incense it standing outside, above on the floor which is level with the rest of the Sanctuary, and without inconveniencing the*

Latin priest who quietly continues the Holy Sacrifice.

They continue incensing all the way to the back of the Sanctuary. They always do the incensing of the site of the Nativity, and of the Manger, even if Latin attendance at Mass is numerous. Therefore our Sacristan modestly and quietly, has people stand who are in front of the Nativity and along the Passage going to the site of the Manger, so the Greek thurifer can conveniently do his incensing, but he generally refuses in this case, to continue his incensing all the way to the back of the Sanctuary, for he can, if he wishes, incense all the way to the back.

FIRST LATIN MASS IN THE SANCTUARY

GENERAL RULE determined for now, is when the Greek have the right to prepare their altar at the site of the Nativity, for their Mass and other ceremonies:

At night, in the Sanctuary the Greeks (who had mass after us), do not have the right to place any Ornamentation nor do any preparation work at the altar of the Nativity: They only have the right to place a painting on the step before which they say their Mass. This painting is placed there invariably at the time of their Matins; otherwise they must wait until the end of our first Mass.

NOTE: Except the night of the Greek Christmas, the night of the Armenian Christmas (see these two Ceremonies further), the night of the Greek Easter with the Armenian Easter (see also this ceremony).

During the rest of the year, and regardless of Feast, they don't have the right to prepare the altar, except for the painting they place there at midnight. The Armenians place their painting at the altar of the Nativity immediately before our second mass in the Sanctuary.

These paintings vary according to the Feasts, for the Greeks as well as the Armenians. They have a semi-circular shape to cover the back of the abse of the Nativity.

The Latins always say their first mass, a low Mass at the exact time listed on the Schedule. This is an ordinary low mass and without any particular significance. It is the custom, as everyone has observed, that the priest who offers the Mass, after the 3 Ave Maria etc. required by the Holy Father (after the prayers required by the Holy Father (the 3 Ave Maria, Salve Regina, etc.) they recite the Angelus with the congregation. As soon as this prayer is finished, the people retreat. Our Sacristan closes the ferriata (the wire grill held together by a forged iron frame) which encases the altar table of the Magi Kings, removes the small rug (not by obligation, but by convenience) and the Greeks begin or can begin the preparations for their Mass.

NOTE: The signal for our first mass is given by a few strong rings of the small bell that is attached to the wall of our church, near the door to the Sacristy. This especially serves to alert the Armenians on the days where they are still at Matins, to do their incensing if they have any left to do at the Sanctuary, before the arrival of the Latin priest to celebrate the first Mass.

THE GREEKS' MASS

Every day of the week, the Greeks invariably say Mass in the Sanctuary. On Sundays and ordinary Feasts, (which are more numerous than among the Latins, i.e., they have as feasts all the Feasts of the apostles. They don't say Mass in the Sanctuary; they say it only in their Choir upstairs. Nonetheless it happens while they say it upstairs and at the same time in the Sanctuary, on Sundays and their Feast days, when they have Pilgrims and they want to satisfy their devotion. When the Greeks only say the mass in their upstairs Choir (the Presbyterium of the large Basilica immediately above the Holy Grotto, they also adorn the altar below in the Sanctuary like the days when they effectively say Mass and they do not strip this altar until the Mass upstairs is completely terminated. The Latin Sacristan must wait until the Mass upstairs is terminated to prepare the altar of the Magi Kings once more for our second Mass. The days when the Greeks say two masses together, one upstairs and one downstairs, if the one downstairs (in the Sanctuary) is finished before the one in the choir upstairs, they do not strip the downstairs altar until the upstairs Mass is finished.

NOTE; Our Pilgrims who ignore these rights of the Greeks are astounded to find the Holy Grotto free (see the Sanctuary left unattended between...) our first and our second mass. It is up to our Sacristan to briefly explain the situation, to avoid misunderstandings and grumbling.

The Greeks who can only say each day one Mass in the Sanctuary, like the Armenians (as everyone knows have the right to start their mass whenever it pleases them, for both their mass downstairs in the Sanctuary, or upstairs in their choir. They are not obligated to start immediately after our Mass. They have always enjoyed this privilege, and the Latins have no right to complain, and neither do the Armenians. Further, the Greeks generally do not abuse the it, and they don't leave an interval between our mass and theirs, and if sometimes they are delayed, the delay is usually no more than fifteen or at most twenty minutes.

When the Greeks finish and they start to strip their altar downstairs in the Sanctuary, for his part, our sacristan prepares our altar, and when the Greeks have removed everything, they call the Priest who is going to celebrate our second mass. This second low mass is always said absolutely under the same conditions as the first one.

THE SECOND LATIN MASS, SUNG IN THE SANCTUARY

The Latins have the right to sing their second mass in the Sanctuary, (never their first one) once a week, and on the day of their choice, but they can only sing it a single time.

At this second sung mass, the Latins have the right to: Place a rug on the stone bench where the sentinel is located. He retreats a little to make way for the Ministers for whom this bench serves as a seat, and another rug under the feet of these same ministers.

The little harmonium, the benches, seats etc., for the singers and other religious assisting in the Choir: the large candelabra to enlighten (the song books,) etc.

The tapestries of our choice, the benches, the chairs for our pilgrims, in a word, the useful objects or the simple ornamentation which suits us, and all without being obligated to alert anyone.

NOTE: At their first mass, the Latins have the same right to place the rugs, door mats, benches, chairs, etc. for the convenience of the assistants.

The Armenians, who invariably throughout the year, celebrate their unique mass in the Sanctuary, at the altar of the Greeks (at the site of the Nativity) immediately after our second Mass, must wait until the Latins have stripped their altar and removed everything that served for the divine office, either the low mass or the sung mass, to begin their preparation of the Sanctuary. As soon as the Greeks have stripped their altar before our second mass, the Armenians place their painting, nothing else. It must be in place before our second Mass begins.

INCENSING BY THE LATINS AT THEIR VESPERS, THEIR MATINS, AND AT THEIR DAILY PROCESSION

Each time the Latins sing, with incensing in the Sanctuary, at Vespers and equally at Matins, they must sing them exactly at the hours marked on the Schedule. They have the right to sing these two offices with incensing when it pleases them, even every day. At the Magnificat like at the Benedictus, they must (following the Daily Procession) (this paragraph is not in M. Jeru).

Incensing the Sanctuary. *This incensing is done in the following manner.*

The celebrant incenses three times at the site of the Nativity; also three times at The Holy Manger; and the altar of the Magi Kings in its entirety like at the Holy Mass. (These five words are missing in M. Jeru).

They pass, coming and going, through the upper part of the Basilica, across the choir of the Armenians.

NOTE: If at the moment of the incensing by the Latins, there are Greek, Armenian or other Pilgrims in the Sanctuary, it is not necessary to make them leave. It is sufficient that they leave sufficient access to the Nativity, to the Manger and to the altar of the Magi, that they remain in such a way as to not interfere with this religious ceremony.

The Greeks who, like the Armenians, incense each day at their Vespers, like they do at their Matins, have their Vespers after ours in all seasons. Consequently, it never happens that they arrive at the same time as the Latins to incense the Sanctuary. But frequently enough, the Armenians present themselves at the same time as the Latins. Our Sacristan must be attentive and avoid the least confusion, whoever arrives first (Latins or Armenians) are the first to incense and the others wait a bit. The incensing only lasts a minute or two.

DAILY PROCESSION OF THE LATINS

The Latins have the right to do this procession every day of the year. Actually, they do it very regularly, (except for Sundays and Feasts, and Thursday; the day of the walk for the young clerics, etc.) each night after Matins. (Regularly, each day after Matins, except on Sunday and the

special Feasts, and a day during the week selected for the walk of the young clerics and the other Religious of the Convent 'ad libitum.'"

As everyone knows, the procession goes through the upper part of the Basilica, across the Armenian's choir and comes through the Grottoes of Saint Joseph, the Holy Innocents, the Oratory of Saint Jerome, the tomb of Saint Jerome, the Tomb of Saint Paula and of Saint Eustasia and of Saint Eusebius of Cremona (all these sanctuaries belong exclusively to the Latins). (The phrase ends at Saints Innocents, etc., etc.)

At the time of our Procession, the Sanctuary must be entirely free. This right of the Latins is undeniable. The Greeks sometimes tried to make us wait, by detaining their Pilgrims, when they had large groups to whom they explained the mysteries of the site, like our Religious when we accompany our own Pilgrims. The Greeks and the Armenians have all the latitude, like the Latins, to visit the Sanctuary with their Pilgrims, but the Latin Sacristan must be attentive, and never tolerate that this visit take place at the moment of our procession.

If accidentally, and through some unforeseen circumstance, at the start of the Procession of the Latins, there is a group of Greek or Armenian Pilgrims in the Sanctuary, our Sacristan must rigorously make them all leave, and never use any condescendence in this regard, because of the grave inconveniences which will unreasonably result.

NOTE: After the Procession of the Latins, the Sanctuary remains free for everyone, and anyone can go satisfy their devotions privately and in silence.

OPENING AND CLOSING THE BASILICA

The triple Key,

The Greeks alone open and close the little door of the Basilica which is at Saint Helena square.

NOTE; The Latins also have, as well as the Armenians, a key similar to that of the Greeks which opens this door. (Similar to that of the Greeks (That is the Triple Key which opens.)

In these more recent years, (see the archives of Holy Savior). (This paragraph is missing in M. Jeru.) the Greeks attempted to change the lock, and they actually did it. The French Consul involved in this affair, reserves to the Latins the ability to open by giving them a key that opened the modified lock.

The Greeks must open the door to the Basilica in the morning at the sound of the Latins' Angelus, and also close it at night at the sound of the Angelus.

NOTE: While the Latins have a ceremony in the parish Church, which is prolonged beyond the time of the Angelus, the Latin Sacristan must alert the Greeks who then wait until this ceremony is finished and the participants have left our church, to lock the door. They never made any difficulties in this regard, even if the ceremony of the Latins extended beyond the hour of the Angelus in a significant way, such as happens on Good Friday and which happened last year during the preached Mission in the Parish. (The Latin population never left the church until

around eight o'clock.) For this unexpected reason, and urgent necessity, the Latins could use their key to open the outside door of the Basilica. Such a case however, has not yet happened at least that we know of. It is proof that the Greeks are attentive to keeping the practice which is established by use, relative to the opening and closing of the Basilica door.

As for the little lateral door which is at the back of the Basilica leading to our Cloister, said Saint Jerome, the Latins only have the key, and they open and close this door absolutely when they wish. Their exclusive right to this door is incontestable and by the same token, was never contested. The Greeks have an equal right over the little door facing ours, which leads from the other side of the Basilica to the interior of their Convent.

PARTICULAR CEREMONIES AT THE SANCTUARY DURING THE YEAR

JANUARY 6 – THE LATIN EPIPHANY

It coincides with Christmas for the Greeks, the Copts and the Syrians. The Armenians have no Solemnity on that day.

January 5 – Vigil of the Epiphany (These three words are missing in M. Jeru.) ARRIVAL OF FATHER CUSTODIAN CEREMONY - Custom required that Father Custodian arrives on horseback from Jerusalem. The ceremony of his arrival this year (1887) was done in the following manner: January 5th around 8 o'clock in the morning, Father Custodian left Holy Savior accompanied by his Brother Secretary, his secretary and one or two other religious. They mounted the horses at the Jaffa Door, the 2 Cawas and the interpreter for the Holy Land lead the way. The first Pastor of Bethlehem and the interpreter went all the way to St. Elijah to meet with a dozen of the principal chiefs of the Latin Nation, also on horseback. From St. Elijah they went together all the way to Bethlehem.

Arriving at the cistern in the square of Saint Helena near the Basilica, they dismounted from the horses. A group of Religious from the Convent were waiting there for them. Then, Father Custodian, accompanied by this group of Religious, having at his right the first Pastor of the Parish and preceded by the interpreter for the Holy Land of Jerusalem and his two Cawas, beat their canes, enter the Basilica and go to the cloister of Saint Jerome through the small lateral door, where the Latin population enters and exits. There, in the Cloister, Father Custodian receives the ecclesiastical honors etc. (see the Ceremonial...)

NOTE: *This entrance, as we saw, doesn't have the characteristics of a religious (ecclesiastical) ceremony, and it is always carried out as such. However, in the last few years, the former custodian didn't do it, and this morning (January 5, 1887) the Greeks tried to stop the passage of the new Custodian and his entourage. There was confusion, but Father Custodian and the Religious passed, only the soldiers who were already in two rows before the entrance of the Basilica, waiting the arrival of the Greek Patriarch did not present arms. This must be seen (as) an insult to the Superior, for everyone knows that the sentinels at the doors of the city (Jerusalem), the sentries before the caves, the armed soldiers at the entrance of a sanctuary, present arms each time a Secular, Ecclesiastical or Religious Superior passes, preceded by one or more Janissaires. This incident once again invites the Latins to observe exactly the established*

customs, if they do not want to expose themselves to relinquishing to the Schismatics and later have to contest their rights.

SOLEMN ENTRY OF THE GREEK PATRIARCH

The Greek Patriarch usually arrives in Bethlehem between noon and one o'clock. He solemnly enter the Basilica (the soldiers present arms) and he goes to the Choir, above the Sanctuary.

FIRST LATIN VESPERS –

The Latins do not incense the Sanctuary at their First Vespers due to the large number of Schismatics who are there at the moment. As of the morning, (January 5), the Sanctuary fills up with Greek Pilgrims and other Schismatics, and doesn't empty out for the rest of the day.

COPT AND SYRIAN MASSES

The Armenians don't have any solemnity either in the evening nor the day of our Epiphany, the Copts and the Syrians occupy their choir.

The Copts said the Mass between two and three o'clock in afternoon at the Armenians' main altar, and the Syrians at the same time, also say Mass at the small altar of the Armenians. They go one after the other, to sing the Gospel at the site of the Nativity, the Sanctuary.

GREEK PONTIFICAL VESPERS

At the same time, the Greeks have their Pontifical Vespers in their choir; and the Sanctuary is left entirely at the disposal of the Greeks, the Copts, and the Syrians until our incensing during Matins; but their altar of the Nativity remains, by exception adorned since their 1st Vespers and through the entire night, until our 1st mass exclusively. The Greeks don't have any other function except the incensing at their vespers in the Sanctuary in the afternoon.

The Copts and the Syrians have no ornamentation in the Sanctuary, nor at the exterior door, at the top of the stairway to the Sanctuary (such as placing the candelabra, etc., etc.).

LATIN MATINS

The Latins incense the Sanctuary at the Benedictus; our Sacristan calls our cawas to open a passage through the crowd and facilitate access to the Sanctuary for them to accomplish their ordinary incensing.

THE GREEK MASS

The Greeks begin their Matins in their Choir around midnight, and their Pastor of Bethlehem Starts a solemn Mass in the Sanctuary. The Patriarch, in pontifical robes with all his attendants, all descend to the Sanctuary and all assist standing, at this mass until after the Gospel. After the Gospel, the Patriarch incenses the grotto of the Nativity and the Manger. Having finished the incensing, he bows and kisses the Manger, the bishops who attend him (the bishops only who are around 5 or 6 more or less) also kiss it. (After the Patriarch.)

NOTE: Through courtesy, our Sacristan spreads one of our rugs on the pavement (which is bare)

before the Manger because the Patriarch and the bishops are all in pontifical robes; he does this courtesy to prevent the Greeks from putting down themselves a rug for this circumstance, which the Greeks desire and the Latins must not allow them in any way. This ceremony terminated, the Greek Pastor continues his solemn Mass in the Sanctuary; the Patriarch goes back up to the choir with his entourage and starts in turn the Pontifical Mass. Each year, this mass usually ends between four o'clock and four fifteen.

COPTES: *The Copts celebrate only one Mass, which they say at the main altar of the Armenians, at the time of the 1st Vespers. They do not do any other Ceremony, either in the evening, or in the night. They do not reappear.*

THE SYRIANS' MASS: *The Syrians begin their Matins around 1:20 o'clock followed by their Mass, always at the Armenians' small altar.*

When the Greek Patriarch's mass is completed, the Greeks strip the altar of the Nativity; the Syrians (without a break) go down to the Sanctuary (immediately after the stripping of the altar of the Nativity by the Greeks) to sing the Gospel at the site of the Nativity. This function lasts about ¼ hour; this ceremony ends at the altar of the Nativity which is already stripped, then Latins start their Masses.

THE LATINS' LOW MASSES IN THE SANCTUARY

The low masses of the Latins which begin immediately after this last function of the Syrians at the Sanctuary, follow each other without interruption until the last.

NOTE; The Greek Pilgrims and all the other pilgrims indiscriminately have the right (and they use it) to come kiss the site of the Nativity (never the Manger); they kiss it and must then pass in front without stopping, to give place to the others and to prevent noise and confusion. That goes on until around 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning and later. Starting at this time, the Sanctuary is left free for the Latins alone. The Greeks and the other Schismatics have all withdrawn.

Already, as on the eve of the morning of our Epiphany (January 5), the Greek Pilgrims and others are numerous in the Sanctuary. Like in the morning, we permit them to kiss the site of the Nativity, during our first and our second Mass.

NOTE: The Armenians always attempt to go down to the Sanctuary to do their incensing during our last Mass, without waiting until it is finished. Forewarned, our Sacristan, stay attentively there to push them back as needed and never permit them to do so. They make the same attempt at our last mass on our Christmas.

LAST LATIN MASSES IN THE SANCTUARY AND THE ORDINARY GREEK VESPERS, JANUARY 6TH.

The afternoon of the feast of our Epiphany, the Greeks have their ordinary Vespers, They do their habitual incensing in the Sanctuary despite the Latin Mass (if there are still Masses at this time). The Latin priest, for his part, continues the Holy Mass without stopping and does not preoccupy himself with the Greek incensing, which for the most part should not trouble him in any way. The

Armenians don't have the right to incense during our masses, as we have indicated above (It reads as follows: Note: We recall again that the Armenians never have the right to incense during our masses in the Sanctuary.)

NOTE: The Latins are asked to finish the last Mass at one thirty at the latest. The Armenians have to say their mass (Actually, the Armenians also have to say...) immediately after the last Latin Mass. So their mass lasts around one and a half hours, and it moves the solemn Latin procession which can only be done after this mass (following this mass...) to an already advanced hour of the evening.

LATIN SOLEMN PROCESSION

The Latins sing Compline in their Choir, at a time regulated so as not to end before the Armenians' Mass. After Complines, the Latins process to the Sanctuary to take the Infant Jesus exposed in the Manger (see the Ceremonial). The Sanctuary must naturally be free when the procession arrives. Our Religious do their ceremony religiously and return...

JANUARY 18. THE ARMENIANS' EPIPHANY

The Epiphany of the Greeks is not solemn; they don't have any particular ceremony in the Sanctuary on this occasion. It corresponds with that of the Armenians.

On the eve – January 17, the Latins start the morning in the choir, Sexte and None at 10 o'clock they immediately do their ordinary daily Procession. As soon as the Procession passed the Joinville Door, our Sacristan closes this door which will not be opened before the next morning (See above: Joinville Door) (This parenthesis is missing in M. Jeru.)

SOLEMN ENTRANCE OF THE ARMENIAN PARTIARCH

Always on the eve, January 17th, around 11 o'clock in the morning, the Patriarch, preceded by the Armenian Monks in simple monastic habits, without Crosses, or incense, or torches, but singing and walking two by two, enter the Basilica by the door which is at of St. Helena Square (It is at this place that the Procession begins), turns immediately in the vestibule the little door on the right which leads to the Armenian Convent and stays until noon, the time of the beginning of their functions.

FIRST PONTIFICAL VESPERS OF THE ARMENIANS –

After dinner, between twelve thirty and one o'clock, the Armenian monks are already dressed in their choir. The Patriarch leaves their convent and goes before the great wooden door at the interior of the Basilica and there, standing with all his attendants, vests with the pontifical vestments. It is there the Armenian Monks come out of their choir through the lateral door (the door which from their choir, comes out in the lateral nave on that side of the Basilica), to process to their choir. The Procession turns right, crossing the entire length of the large nave of the Basilica.

NOTE: Formerly when the Armenians had their Procession pass through the large nave; they formerly passed by the lateral naves (there are two, as we know) on the side of their choir. As a result there was violent opposition on the part of the Greeks. Now, each year, the Armenians

have a large group come from Jerusalem, numerous enough to form a double row of soldiers from top to bottom of the large nave.

The procession arrives at the top of the large nave, between this double row of soldiers, turns to the left, passes the lateral door and goes directly to the Sanctuary. There, it stops and they sing before the site of the Nativity., The Armenians have pread their rugs, like at all their other functions, and they can, like us if they wish, cover all the paving of the rest of the Sanctuary with mats and rugs (always with the exception of the Manger). The Three Rites: Latin, Greek and Armenian have this same right in all circumstances.

Then the Patriarch incenses and also goes to incense the Manger. Here our Sacristan must be attentive, because the Armenians tend to slide one of their rugs under the feet of their Patriarch, who is standing in front of the Manger on our bare floor. He must never permit it is. Then they go back up and continue their ceremony (in their choir) which lasts up to four or four and a half hours. During this interval, they descend again at different times to incense the Sanctuary.

THE NIGHT OFFICE OF THE ARMENIANS: ORNAMENTATION OF THE ALTAR OF THE NATIVITY.

The Armenians decorate the altar of the Nativity, before their 1st Vespers; it is already, when the Patriarch, at the back of the Basilica, arrives directly in procession to the Sanctuary; and it remains decorated the entire evening, throughout the entire night until morning, until the incensing by the Greeks inclusively. Around midnight, they start Matines in their choir and the Patriarch attends pontifically. During this time, they only descend to the Sanctuary for their diverse incensing. After Matins they always begin their Pontifical Mass in the choir. At the Gospel, they descend to sing it at the site of the Nativity, and they go back up to the choir.

Around a quarter hour later, they descend again, to carry out a hymn which lasts a few minutes, and they go back up again bringing the Chalice for their Mass. Their Sacristan strips the altar of the Nativity, removes the rugs, and brings everything outside the Sanctuary.

Around ten minutes after this stripping, the Greeks come to incense the Sanctuary, and the Latins immediately begin their first Mass. It is usually around two thirty in the morning. Since the Joinville door is closed, we pass through our Grottoes to go celebrate these two Masses at the altar of the Magi. After our first Mass, begins the Greek's Mass in the Sanctuary. The Mass of the Greeks which is always short under this circumstance, ending around 4:30 (between 4 and 4:15).

The Latins then start their second Mass. During this time, the Armenians continue their Pontifical Mass in their choir. When the second Latin Mass is finished, the Armenians decorate the altar of the Nativity again. They return to do their incensing and their ceremony finishes around 7:30. They finally strip the altar of the Nativity, their choir, bringing all their ornamentation and they retreat. When all their choir is free and unencumbered, we open the Joinville Door.

CEREMONIES OF THE GREEKS AND THE ARMENIANS DURING THEIR LENT (This paragraph is missing in the M. of Bethlehem, where there is only one notation in the margin "Put here a note

from the loose sheet page 1. Ceremony of the Greeks..." Since this loose sheet was probably lost, we borrowed from the text of the M. Jeru.)

The Greeks and the Armenians don't have any special functions in the Sanctuary. The first mass of the Latins takes place at the ordinary time.

The Greeks have the Benediction of the Palms and sing the mass in their choir, then they process to the Sanctuary. There, before the altar of the Nativity, they sing a hymn which lasts from 15 to 20 minutes, and the Procession returns, going around the entire main Basilica three times, passing by the door to the choir of the Armenians, and again passing (upon returning) the lateral door to their own choir on their way to the bottom of the Basilica. This Greek ceremony ends around 8:30. They strip the altar of the Nativity, and the Latins begin their second Mass. When the Latin Mass is finished, the Armenians prepare the altar of the Nativity and occupy the Sanctuary. Their ceremony of the mass and the Palms lasts around two hours, after which the Sanctuary remains free.

THE GREEK AND ARMENIAN EASTER

NOTE: During the entire Holy Week, from the time of the Procession with the Palms until the arrival of the Sacred Fire, sent from Jerusalem on Holy Saturday afternoon, neither the Greeks nor the Armenians have any special ceremony in the Sanctuary.

As soon as the Greeks' Sacred Fire arrives, the Armenians say mass in the Sanctuary. This first mass of the Armenians (because tomorrow morning, they will say another after the second mass of the Latins) is always short in this circumstance. It lasts an hour at best.

The Latins' Sacristan can thus regulate:

To ring sung Matins, when the two Easters of the Greeks and Latins occur at the same time:

To ring low Matins when the two Easters do not occur at the same time. In the first case, the Latins will incense the Sanctuary (at the Benedictus)... and the Armenians should have evacuated the site of the Nativity after finishing their mass, so that the Latins can do their incensing under ordinary conditions, that is, to arrange the Pilgrims so the Officiating Priest has free access for the incensing.

In the second case the Latins (who say low Matins of the feast and which are longer than those of Easter) (The Sacristan observes this difference to consequently ring"...), do the ordinary Daily Procession after their sung Matins.

NOTE: The Daily Procession that night, should never be omitted for any reason.

After our incensing at the Benedictus (1st case)"... or after our Daily Procession (2nd case)... the altar of the Nativity (of the Greeks) remains stripped and the Sanctuary is free until Midnight.

At midnight the Greeks prepare their altar of the Nativity and they start (with the Bishop officiating) their Ceremony with the new fire which they will bless at the bottom of the great Basilica (ceremony which the Latins also do at the door of their church on Holy Saturday, when they start the long ceremony of that day). They return to their choir where they continue the

ceremony and where they celebrate their Mass (not in the Sanctuary). The Greeks' mass (in their choir) ends around 4 o'clock. Their mass finished, their altar of the Nativity stripped, the Latins say their first mass; and when this one is finished, they say their second Mass without interruption.

NOTE: The Armenians wish to say in this instance, their second mass after the first Latin mass, two years ago, they essentially formally asked our sacristan (Fra Tomaso) to let them do so. Naturally, Brother refused (since it was his duty), This concession has no motive(which has no motive) so the Latins should never permit it. Immediately after our second mass, the Armenians prepare the altar of the Nativity and say their mass in the Sanctuary (and not in their choir). It ends around 7:30. When everything is finished in the Sanctuary, the rest of the day there are no other particular functions on the part of the Greeks or the Armenians.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER OF THE GREEKS AND ARMENIANS

The night preceding the Sunday, there is nothing special in the Sanctuary. Our first mass is said at the usual time. After our first mass, the Greeks say their pontifical mass (since it is the Bishop who officiates) upstairs in their choir. The Mass finished, they process to the Sanctuary and start the procession of the Icons. The monks carry the icons and the entire population, even the small children, carry the icons. This procession is done the same way as that of Palm Sunday. They sing before the Nativity, go back upstairs and go around the great Basilica three times.

After they leave the Sanctuary to continue their Procession in the Basilica, the Greeks leave an interval of 10 to 15 minutes, then strip the altar of the Nativity, and the Latins say their second mass. When the second mass of the Latins is finished, the Armenians prepare the altar of the Nativity and they celebrate Mass. When that Mass is finished, like the Greeks, (these three words are missing) they start their procession which they will continue and finish in their own choir. The rest of the day goes by as usual.

NOTE: Neither the Greeks nor the Armenians ever have the right to do a significant procession with religious emblems, candles, (censors), ornaments of the cult, copes, dalmatics etc., etc., which go out to the square of Saint Helena. The Latins, for their part, lost the right they formerly had. They can't for process in the square which will be discussed further.

GREEK AND ARMENIAN INVENTION OF THE HOLY CROSS (May 15)

The evening of and the night which precedes the Feast, there is nothing special in the Sanctuary. The Latins say the first mass at the usual time. After the Latins' first mass, the Greeks adorn the altar of the Nativity and say Mass in their choir (not in the Sanctuary). The bishop officiates. When the mass is finished, the solemn Procession begins, and it goes down to the Sanctuary. Arriving in the Sanctuary, they sing during twenty to thirty minutes, then the procession leaves to continue in the Basilica. Ten or fifteen minutes more or less, after leaving the Sanctuary, the Greeks strip their altar and the Latins say their second mass while the Procession of the Greeks continues in the Basilica absolutely like the first Sunday after Easter. When the second Mass of the Latins is finished, the Armenians prepare the altar of the Nativity and say their mass; after which, they do their procession absolutely like the first Sunday after Easter. The rest of the day is like an ordinary day, and there are no more special functions in the Sanctuary.

NOTE: GENERAL RULE: All the solemn Processions of the Greeks leave from their choir, go directly to the Sanctuary, then leave there to do the three turns around the Basilica. The Greeks always very precisely observe this rite with the arrival of the Bishop, which starts the procession in their choir, makes one round of the Basilica, descends to the Sanctuary, goes back up and completes the 2nd and 3rd rounds around the Basilica. The Armenians however, always start their procession in the Sanctuary. (This not is missing in M. Jeru.)

EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS OF THE GREEKS AND ARMENIANS (September 26)

This feast is celebrated absolutely exactly like that of the Invention of the Holy Cross (May 15).

THE DOUBLE FEAST OF THE GREEKS' SAINT GEORGE

The Greeks celebrate the Feast of Saint George twice a year. (May 5 and November 15).

The morning of the day of each of the feasts, they say Mass in an interior chapel outside their choir, and during this first mass (our Sacristan must note this peculiarity) they come to incense the Sanctuary in the following manner: 1) the site of the Nativity and 2) the Holy Manger, but without going down to it. The Greek thurifer stays upstairs on the edge of the paving of the Sanctuary and from there he incenses without inconveniencing the Latin Priest who slowly continues the Holy Sacrifice, and he retires without incensing the rest of the Sanctuary. After our first Mass, the Greeks adorn the altar of the Nativity as usual, but they say mass upstairs, not in the Sanctuary.

NOTE: *On this double feast of Saint George after this peculiarity of incensing, the rest is done as usual in the Sanctuary, that is after the Latins' first mass, the Greeks say theirs (upstairs, not in the Sanctuary), then the Latins' second mass, then the Armenians.*

LATINS' CHRISTMAS

On Christmas eve, around two o'clock in the afternoon the Latin Patriarch arrives in Bethlehem. He dismounts the horse facing the stair which leads to the Modir, at the Turkish cave. There if the weather is dry, our Sacristan spreads a rug on the ground. If the weather is humid, he puts a mat instead of a rug. The Patriarch is wearing the Cappa Magna and is preceded by all the secular and regular clergy. He proceeds in procession crossing the entire large square of Saint Helena (for its entire length). Arriving at the exterior entrance door to the Basilica, he is received by Father Guardian, there in the exterior, with the same ceremony that we use for the rock of anointing with regards the Patriarch, for the solemn entrances to the Most Holy Sepulcher, that is kissing a small Cross, holy water, incense. A small rug and a cushion is in place, as for the rock of the anointing. Then the procession continues, entering the Basilica, turning left, going through the small lateral door which goes to the cloister of Saint Jerome and which leads directly to the pontifical throne in the Presbyterium of our church of Saint Catherine (three words changed to "parish") and we start the First Pontifical Vespers. At the Magnificat, we do not go incense the Sanctuary. When Vespers are finished, the Patriarch retreats.

At three thirty, our Religious sing Compline (the Patriarch does not attend). And we bring the Patriarch to the apartments of Father Custodian (After Compline we bring the Patriarch to the

room of Father Custodian...) and we start the solemn Daily Procession which the Patriarch attends, exactly like the solemn Processions of Lent at Most Holy Sepulcher.

At Midnight, at the altar of the Three Magi (in the Sanctuary) the Latin Masses begin. First the Pastor says his three masses without interruption. It is immediately followed by the second curate who also says his three masses if he has time before the arrival of the large procession. It is up to the brother Sacristan to alert him of the time. The Pontifical Mass is finished in the church of Saint Catherine (our parish church), and the Procession begins. Arriving at the Sanctuary, the Patriarch who is carrying the Infant Jesus prepared in a small crib, places it immediately on top of the Silver Star at the site of the Nativity. The entire area of the star is entirely stripped, just as the altar of the Nativity which is above is stripped, according to the General Rule. However, the Latin Sacristan spreads a rug before the site of the Nativity, which will cover at least half of the remaining Sanctuary. Brother Sacristan spreads this rug only for the arrival of the Procession.

NOTE: The Latins have every right to place this (the large rug) rug earlier, even before midnight, in other words at a time which suits them, but they don't do it because of the very large attendance at the first two masses, which would disturb it and it would lose its freshness etc. by the time the Patriarch arrives.

The Infant Jesus in his little crib, set on the Star, a hymn is sung etc., then the Deacon takes (the same Child) the Infant Jesus and places him in the true Manger. The ceremony finished, we retreat (see the ceremonial) (This parenthesis is missing). And the Masses of the Latins which are stopped during this ceremony start again (continue) according to the inscriptions on the official List. They continue (succeed each other) without interruption until five thirty, more or less, if the mass which started before this hour is finished.

Then the Greeks generally prepare their altar without delay at the Nativity and say their mass. In case the Greeks delay their preparation, the Latins should suffer in patience. They have no right to force the Greeks to act faster. The Greeks have the right to say even one Pontifical Mass, to make their ceremony longer than usual, and they do so if they receive pilgrims that morning.

The Greek mass finished and the altar of the Nativity stripped, the Latins take up again the celebration of their masses, stopped during the Greek mass, without interruption until the end. The Priest who celebrates this last one has the privilege of saying his three masses, one after the other, at the altar of the Magi, and inscribing himself on the official List, he takes this engagement to which he must remain faithful.

NOTE: The Latins now have the incontestable right to celebrate as many Masses as they have priests who wish to celebrate, without time limit for the rest of their total celebration. However, prudence and charity seems to suggest being neither too brief nor excessively long. When the last mass is finished around three o'clock, we generally regard this time as a just and reasonable time.

When the last Latin Mass is finished, the Armenians prepare the altar of the Nativity to say their Mass, after which the Sanctuary is free.

THE LATINS' FEAST OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST (December 27th)

The very night of the Feast, immediately after Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, Father Guardian goes in silence with the Religious and the accompanying Community group, to the Sanctuary to venerate the Rock of the Holy Manger which was left unadorned. Actually, brother sacristan removed the lamps and the paintings, and Father Guardian enters first and alone in the Manger. He devoutly kisses the holy Rock and retreats through the little door at the back of the Sanctuary which leads to our particular Grottoes. The Religious imitate Father Guardian, kissing one by one the rock of the Manger and retreat the same way. Then the Latin population which followed the group of Religious, first the men, then the women. They also retreat through the small door at the back of the Sanctuary.

NOTE: The Latins, with a great number of Pilgrims, have entirely the right to renew this ceremony as many times as they deem feasible, without the Greeks or Armenians finding reasonable reason to complain. Actually, this ceremony repeats itself every year with the approval of Father Custodian, with the arrival of a large Pilgrimage of Penance.

PILGRIMS' HYMNS IN THE SANCTUARY

The Greeks authorize their Pilgrims to sing in the Sanctuary, day or night, at any hour (free). They accompany them themselves when they have a large group, placing before the site of the Nativity, a pulpit with a large hymnal and they sing the holy Gospel with a certain solemnity. The Armenians do likewise.

There is nothing that says the Latins on their side, can't do likewise. That's why, they also allow their Pilgrims to sing whenever they wish. Actually, our Pilgrims of the Pilgrimage of Penance sing during the Mass they have at midnight at the Manger, and again during the subsequent Masses. There is no reason why until now we did not let them sing in the Sanctuary during the time their supper until the celebration of the first Mass at midnight at the altar of the Magi. In the future, they and all the other Pilgrims should be entirely free to sing during their pilgrimage, for as long as they please, each time they visit the Sanctuary.

EXCEPTIONAL CEREMONIES OF THE LATINS TO THE SANCTUARY

In the last few years, two types of ceremonies took place in the Sanctuary. Msgr. the Patriarch baptized the newborn of the Consul of France, Mr. Patrimonio on (), and last year in 1886, the baptism of the child of the current French Consul, Mr. Ledoulx. This Baptismal ceremony was done as simply as possible. It cannot take place without certain ceremony, and certain preparations. It was necessary to place a small table in the Sanctuary, etc., etc. The Greeks complained, but we didn't pursue their complaint.

FIRST VISIT OF THE NEW FRENCH COUNCIL, THE VISIT OF A PRINCE OR OTHER PERSON OF DISTINCTION

A recent decision of Father Custodian, with the Latin Patriarch's knowledge permitted (established) the ringing of the bells, when the new French Consul came to make his first visit to Bethlehem. Arriving with the ringing of the bells, he received the ecclesiastical honors indicated in the Ceremonial for his reception, but this ceremony has no connection to the Sanctuary. It is held in the church (parish). From there, the new Consul, depending upon his devotion, goes to the Sanctuary in silence, where we put out for him a small rug and a cushion.

This is what we do for the visit of a Prince or some other person of high distinction, civil, ecclesiastical or religious. It is that that we did at the visit of the crown Prince, Rodolph, Archduke of Austria, in the year 1881. The Prince was accompanied by the Grand Duke of Tuscany. We didn't do any special preparations. We simply put a rug (that the Latins under all circumstances have the right to do) with two cushions.

NOTE: At their first and second masses, the Latins have full right to put one or more prie-Dieus, with sofa, etc., chairs, etc. such as we do for the first solemn mass of a Priest etc. (parish). Finally during their masses, the Latins can adorn and outfit the Sanctuary as they see fit, as we already mentioned above.

PLACEMENT OF THE CANDELABRA, ON CERTAIN FEASTS ON THE EXTERIOR STEPS OF THE STAIRWAY TO THE SANCTUARY, ON THE ARMENIAN SIDE

This stairway, as everyone can observe, counts, starting from (but not including) the little red stone step on the outside of the bronze door (always open) of the Sanctuary, five red stone steps, including the top and last steps, which confuse at its level (but not because of its color) to the rest of the floor tile of Carrara marble in the choir of the Armenians.

Greeks: *The first landing or the first step at the bottom is reserved for the Greeks for the particularity which we occupy (see the drawing).*

Latins: *The second step is to the Latins.*

Armenians: *The third step is to the Armenians.*

A single time during the year, on their Christmas, the Greeks have the right to place on this first step two candelabra, one here and one past the opening of the door. They place these two candelabra there on the morning of the eve of the Feast. They don't light them until the time of their ceremonies. They remain there for three entire days after the Feast. The night of the third day, the candelabra must be removed. Thus, if the Greek Christmas is a Sunday, the candelabra remain there until Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday until evening.

The Armenians equally one single time during the year, on their Christmas (January 18) have the right to place on the third step (counting from the bottom) two candelabra, one here and one there, like the Greeks, and they place them the morning of the eve of the Feast, and they remain there eight days (two entire days) after the Feast.

The Latins have the right to place on the second step (counting from the bottom, between the step of the Greeks and that of the Armenians), equally two chandeliers, one here and one there – the morning of the eve of the Feast (these 7 words are missing in the M. Jeru) for all the following Feasts:

At Epiphany – one entire day after the Feast.

At Easter – three entire days after the Feast.

At Pentecost – three entire days after the Feast.

At Christmas - three entire days after the Feast

At St. Catherine (November 25), the eve and the day of the Feast, nonetheless the candelabra remain until the next day, but the Latin Sacristan, on that day (the day after the Feast) removes them either in the morning or in the evening.

At the Assumption – like at St. Catherine

At the Immaculate Conception – like at St. Catherine.

NOTE: During these last years, our Sacristans neglected to put the candelabra regularly on the feasts of the Assumption and the Immaculate Conception. Current brother Sacristan (Brother Tomaso) rekindled this practice not to abandon it in the future. He had understood that a fault had been committed (our right had been compromised.) The conduct of the Greeks on our last Feasts of the Epiphany (current year 1887) and on the occasion of the entrance of Father Custodian from the Basilica, proved it with evidence.

NOTE: The candelabra that the Three Rites place on their steps of the stairway have no determined form. We can change them at will. We can use large ones one time, and smaller ones another time, at will.

THE BASILICA OF SAINT HELENA

The inferior part of the basilica, separate from the Transept, and left without cult

NOTE: All the lamps which are actually suspended in this part of the Basilica so regrettably abandoned to public profanation belong exclusively to the Greeks. They can change them at will, but they cannot add to the number. The little icons which are above the center door are also exclusively Greek. Changing them, also increasing or decreasing their number seems of so little importance. It does not appear that either the Latins or the Armenians were ever preoccupied with them.

Only the Greeks alone sweep and wash this part of the Basilica when it suits them. They remove the dust from the attic and the lateral walls. In summary, they alone are charged with maintaining the cleanliness. Most recently they put a coat of oil on all the columns, and neither the Latins nor the Armenians believed they should protest. But it is absolutely forbidden for the Greeks to do the least restoration in this part of the Basilica, such as whitewashing the walls, renewing the rough casting, replacing the glass that is missing in the windows etc., etc. Our Sacristan must always watch in this regard, and if he notices the least innovation on the part of

the Greeks, he must warn who must be informed. (While I was in Palestine the Greeks tried to destroy the paintings of the Crusades which adorn the columns of the Basilica, either by scraping them or by washing them with strong water. Fortunately, the next morning, their mischief was discovered. These paintings are precious and I learned from "The Crusaders Almanac" January 1947, p. 14 that the Palestinian Department of Antiquities had them cleaned and they have been able to recover several personages. (The copyist)).

This innovation is recent. The Latins and the Armenians should have been opposed from the outset. (Oppose in principle: actually, isn't it for the Greeks the equivalent to an acquired right?" In the same manner, at the very end there is on the same subject the following article.

NOTE: This is an innovation of the current Bishop

A. SOLEMN PROCESSIONS OF THE GREEKS. *The general rule, all the solemn Processions of the Greeks, leaving their Choir, go directly to the Sanctuary, then leaving there to subsequently make the three walks around the Basilica (see page) (sic). The Greeks always very specifically observed this rite until the arrival of the current Bishop, who started the Procession in the choir, and completed a first round of the Basilica, the Procession descends to the Sanctuary, then goes back up and completes the second and third rounds of the Basilica. This innovation offends the right of the Latins regarding the entire time of their second mass the time that the Greeks spend doing the first round of their Procession in the Basilica. Brother Tomaso, our present Sacristan should have objected in principle, at the introduction of this abuse. Warned of this transgression, he replies today (August 29, 1887) that he will attempt to remedy it, adding that he hopes to succeed without difficulty. NOTE: The Armenians invariably start all their Processions in the Sanctuary." (This parenthesis is missing.))*

JUBILEE PROCESSIONS AND LATIN PENITENCE

These Latin Processions are done as follows: a Religious, with surplice (without acolytes) carrying a Cross, starts the walk. He is followed by the Religious of the Community, walking in procession, but with their simple religious habits, without surplice, and the priest who presides over the procession with surplice and stole (never with the cope). The Latin population follows behind. They leave the church singing, crossing the length of the St. Jerome cloister, the little lateral door of the Basilica, the inferior part of the Basilica (the little door of the vestibule) (this paragraph is missing), the vestibule, and arrive by the exterior door of the Basilica at the Saint Helena square, and always process either to the Milk Grotto or elsewhere.

NOTE; Doing the procession in this manner, the Latins can, it seems, do it each time they have a reason. It is thus that last year (the Jubilee year), the Latin Parish did the Jubilee Procession, going from the church of Saint Catherine, and following the itinerary (Itinerary replaced by course) indicated below, to the Milk Grotto and from there to the chapel of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. Likewise, three years ago each evening, for three consecutive days, the Parish went from the church of Saint Catherine to the Milk Grotto, a Procession of Penance, with a very simple ceremony explained above, to obtain rain. And that was without alerting either the Greeks or the Armenians.

Thus was born the following little incident: the day after the third day, the Greek Bishop sent his domestic to our brother Sacristan to complain, saying we didn't have the right to do such Processions. The Brother sent his reply by the same domestic that the Latins have perfect right. So the domestic replied: "It would be better my Brother, if you went to find the Bishop in person and you explained the whole thing yourself." Our Brother Sacristan presented himself resolutely on several occasions, and the Bishop avoided meeting him, for one reason, then for another, and the matter has been left until now.

LATIN FUNERAL CONVOYS

All the Latins funeral Convoys enter and leave by the inferior part of the Basilica. That is a right, for the most part, that was never contested.

SQUARE OF SAINT HELENA *(This title is missing in M. Jeru.)*

SWEEPING IN FRONT OF THE BASILICA: *(The author notes: "Put here the two notes from page 5 and see the note on the loose sheet of August 12, 1887; The Greeks no longer sweep in front of the Basilica, etc., etc. (These two notes are in front of the chapter entitled: WASHING.)*

The Local Government has reserved the sole exclusive right to sweep and maintain a state of cleanliness of the large square of Saint Helena in front of the Basilica. (This decision was made in Constantinople, the year (blank) and was officially communicated to the three respective Communities: Latin, Greek and Armenian. (see the consular correspondence in the archives of Holy Savior). (This parenthesis which I indicate double (...) is not in M. Jeru. And the following sentence starts, "however the Greeks insensibly.) Despite this formal decision, the Greeks claim the right to sweep themselves, excluding the Latins and the Armenians, the part of the place which touches the Basilica, all the way to the first opening of the cistern (Which is located at a distance of 8 or 9 meters from the door of the Basilica).

When the Greeks kept within this limit, neither the Latins nor the Armenians took upon themselves to protest. But from time to time, the Greeks attempted to go beyond, by sweeping this first opening of the cistern (which is located first when leaving the Basilica on the right hand side, at a distance of 8 or 9 meters from the door of the Basilica.) (This parenthesis no longer exists being reported above.) So the Latins went to complain to the Modir, when they noticed or when they were warned by the Armenians, who until now never wanted to bring directly to the Modir, a complaint by themselves.

It was always that way until last January, for the changing of a painting made by the Armenians in their choir, near the Joinville door, the Greeks complained to the Pasha. A commission was named with great solemnity. The painting was left in place! Nonetheless the Armenians from that moment on, protested against the Greeks sweeping before the entrance to the Basilica. The Latins for their part, alerted the French Consul, and at the present hour (August 1887) neither the Greeks nor anyone else sweep before the Basilica.

CISTERN *(The numbers 2 and 3 are not in the M. of Bethlehem; but only in that of Jerusalem, p. 65)*

The water from the cistern in the Square of Saint Helena specifically serves for the camels and other animals who come to Bethlehem to drink. Nonetheless, the three Convents, Latin, Greek, and Armenian, and only they, have the right to draw water at their discretion. It is thus that the Latins did for the construction of their new church, and that they actually do so for the construction going on in their new cemetery.

FACADE

The entire façade of the Armenians' convent which is on the Saint Helena square, like the façade of the Basilica itself is under STATUS QUO. The Armenians tried several times to add new openings, but we always prevented them, and we must never tolerate any innovation of this nature.

END OF REGULATION (August 29, 1887) (This final title and the following note are only in the M. of Jerusalem.)

NOTE: The present Regulation was drawn up by Most Reverend Father Custodial Vicar according to the desire and with the express approval of Most Reverend Father Custodian.

APPENDIX (This "appendix" does not appear in the Manuscript of Jerusalem. Since it is in Father Frederic's handwriting, we believe that it belongs here. (The copyist.)

INVENTORY *done to the best of his ability by Brother Benedict in January 1887, the paintings and lamps which adorn the Armenians' choir, as well as part of the transept of the Basilica occupied by the Greeks.*

The Armenian Side:

Altar, cistern of the magi, on each side a small painting 2 paintings

Left wall of this altar, one small painting, and one large torn 2 paintings

Right wall (choir side), 1 small painting, 1 large painting of the Grotto, and

(Here there is a little sketch in the form of a semi-circle). 4 paintings

Left angle, before the altar, East wall, a large painting (and a chest) 1 painting

North wall, two paintings of the Grotto

(Here there is a little sketch in the form of a semi-circle)

2 paintings

On this side, 4 lamps, 2 chandeliers above each from which is suspended 2 lamp 6 lamps

In the two "intercolumniations 12 lamps

In front of one column, a long painting 1 painting

Before the painting, a candelabra in the form of arms, two lamps and 1 chandelier

with 1 lamp above it 3 lamps

On the pilaster (gospel side) 1 small painting 1 painting

Underneath, on the ground, a triangular cupboard, on the other side of the pilaster

1 small painting with a small square cupboard beneath it 1 painting

ABSE: *Altar in front of which are suspended two lamps 2 lamps*

Starting from the Joinville Door, there are 5 large and 8 small paintings 13 paintings

<i>Before each large painting, 1 lamp</i>	<i>5 lamp</i>		
<i>To the left of the Door, 3 paintings</i>	<i>3 paintings</i>		
<i>Before the center painting, 1 lamp</i>	<i>1 lamp</i>		
<i>Above the large cupboard, one large painting in the wall</i>	<i>1 painting</i>		
<i>To the left of this cupboard, 1 large painting</i>	<i>1 painting</i>		
<i>At the door which opens into the Basilica, 1 small painting</i>	<i>1 painting</i>		
<i>Bay above this door, 1 Saint George</i>	<i>1 painting</i>		
<i>In front of this painting, 1 lamp</i>	<i>1 lamp</i>		
<i>At the Sanctuary entrance, 1 lamp, 1 painting</i>	<i>1 painting</i>	<i>1 lamp</i>	

TOTAL:	35 paintings, 31 lamps	35	31
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ON THE GREEK SIDE:

<i>Above the Sanctuary entrance (the Holy Grotto) 1 lamp, 1 painting</i>			
<i>Of the Blessed Virgin</i>	<i>1 painting</i>	<i>1 lamp</i>	
<i>Behind this painting there is an opening where there used to be a painting;</i>			
<i>on each side of this opening there are 4 paintings:</i>	<i>8 paintings</i>		
<i>Next to their Altar, in the abse:</i>			
<i>To the left and above the little door</i>	<i>4 paintings</i>		
<i>This side has six stars and one cross.</i>			
<i>Left of these paintings 1 suspension nail: Above 2 (old) paintings</i>			
<i>of the grotto. 2 paintings</i>			
<i>And higher, 2 banners.</i>			
<i>At the left of the altar, 1 painting, large – Virgin; and in front</i>			
<i>a painting – small Virgin with a candelabra next to it.</i>	<i>2 paintings</i>		
<i>In front are two lamps and one loose cord</i>	<i>2 lamps</i>		
<i>To the right of the altar, facing it</i>	<i>1 painting</i>		
<i>Next, facing the Grotto, 2 paintings</i>	<i>2 paintings</i>		
<i>and in the middle of these two paintings, one (old) painting of the Grotto</i>	<i>1 painting</i>		
<i>Between the two entercolumniations, 6 lamps and there is also</i>			
<i>a trunk and a sofa</i>	<i>6 lamps</i>		
<i>In front of the column, a pedestal with an image</i>	<i>1 painting</i>		
<i>1 white chandelier, 2 lamps and a candelabra</i>	<i>2 lamps</i>		
<i>One cupboard before the pilaster</i>			
<i>Above the entrance to their convent, 1 painting and a lantern</i>	<i>1 painting</i>		
<i>Above the large cupboard, in the wall an (old) painting of the Grotto and a table</i>	<i>1 painting</i>		
<i>Above the door, in the dividing wall, 1 small painting</i>	<i>1 painting</i>		
<i>Further, the Greeks have, on the Armenian side, above the entrance to the Grotto</i>	<i>1 painting</i>	<i>1 lamp</i>	

TOTAL:	26 paintings; 12 lamps	26	12
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Copyist's note:

This is the copy of a loose sheet which we found in the REGULATIONS OF BETHLEHEM and which I glued to the 2nd page of the manuscript. It also has the autograph of Most Rev. Father Frederic.

It contains additions to be made to the copy of Father Leonard of Montilly, a large volume bound in red and which was left with Most Reverend Father Custodial Vicar. The lines and pages indicated here are those of the register and not those of Father Frederic's notes. In the indicated places, we find the additions underlined. This is proof that Most Rev. Father Frederic, outside his second copy of the MUTUAL AGREEMENT, also meticulously reviewed the work of Father Leonard. (Mustn't we also admire here the extreme delicacy of the author who, instead of making the corrections himself, imposes on himself to indicate them on a separate sheet, so that the copyist can fine tune his text himself. What gracious charity!)

MANUSCRIPT – OMISSIONS

LINE/ PAGE

22	19	<i>this is as used</i>	<i>add: established</i>
12	23	<i>in full</i>	<i>add: foot</i>
6	26	<i>v.g. all</i>	<i>add: the (feasts of the Ap.)</i>
16	29	<i>our second</i>	<i>add: mass</i>
2	31	<i>who present themselves first</i>	<i>add: who incenses first</i>
8	40	<i>starting from this</i>	<i>add: hour</i>
17	41	<i>already at an hour</i>	<i>add: enough</i>
6	44	<i>one of their carpets</i>	<i>add: under their feet</i>
10	57	<i>acquired to celebrate</i>	<i>add: as many masses as they have priests</i>
		<i>who wish to celebrate</i>	
23	67	<i>similar</i>	<i>add: processions</i>
	68	<i>take upon them</i>	<i>add: do</i>

EPIPHANY OF THE LATINS – YEAR 1888

This is a fourth booklet, which goes with the REGULATIONS for BETHLEHEM, and which we also copied in January 1930. We therefore give a description of this booklet as we write about it, with the text of the Manuscript itself.

Description

This is a little white paper notebook which is thin but quite strong, measuring 7 inches and 7 lines long by 5 and three quarters inches wide. It has a cover and 8 pages stitched together in two places with ordinary white thread.

The cover is of a very common yellow straw paper. It has the title that we will try to reproduce in the following booklet. The width of this cover is narrower by a line than the other pages. It has no other writing than the mentioned title.

The white pages of the booklet are not lined. The first two pages are left blank. The following page reads: "Modifications to the Regulations of Bethlehem – Ceremonies of the Different Rites for the Feast of the Epiphany of the Latins, year 1888... following".

There are six pages filled, forming the first half of the booklet, and for the second half, page 7 (which is not numbered) has only 6 lines written. The rest of the booklet (7 pages) are blank.

The margin which is ruled with pencil, like the preceding notebooks or folders, is also in the interior and only 7 lines wide. There is only one little reference in the marge of the first page: "(1 The Patriarch)".

Except for the last page (6th), the writing is small, fine but perfectly readable. There are 28 lines per page. The lines are more numerous than in the "REGULATIONS" and the paragraphs are more widely spaced.

Convent of the Holy Sepulcher, Jerusalem, January 17, 1930 (signed) *Fr. Paul-Eugene, o.f.m.*"

Text of the Manuscript

(Title on the cover):

**EPIPHANY OF THE LATINS
Year 1888**

MODIFICATIONS TO BE MADE TO THE REGULATIONS OF BETHLEHEM
(pages 3 and following)

**MODIFICATIONS OF THE REGULATIONS OF BETHLEHEM – CEREMONIES OF THE
DIFFERENT RITES AT THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LATINS – YEAR 1888...DE VISU
THE EVE, JANUARY 5: ARRIVAL OF FATHER CUSTODIAN:**

Around ten fifteen in the morning, the first Pastor went to meet him on horseback, with the principals of the Latin Nation, all the way to Saint Elijah.

Father Custodian dismounted from the horse very close to the Basilica and entered, preceded by two Cawas and the interpreter of the Holy Land in Jerusalem and accompanied by a group of Religious.

The reception in the cloister of Saint Jerome, according to the ceremonial.

Note: There are no soldiers with arms at the Door of the Basilica, nor any Greek monks, nor anyone waiting inside. The bottom of the Basilica was deserted upon the entrance of Father Custodian.

ARRIVAL OF THE GREEK PATRIARCH: *Around 11 o'clock he arrived on horseback, escorted by a picket of soldiers on horseback. He was solemnly received at the cavern and entered solemnly, banners fluttering at the Basilica. No soldiers with arms either at the door of the Basilica. Our interpreter from Jerusalem, with the one from Bethlehem, the interpreter for the Armenian religious, our two Cawas (without their canes) were standing at the entrance, outside, to the right. The Procession crossed the entire large nave, then went through the lateral door at Epistle corner and went directly down to the Grotto of the Nativity. The Patriarch incensed the site of*

the Nativity, removed his hat and prostrated himself on the rug to kiss the Star, from there (the Patriarch) went down to the Manger, incensed it, removed his hat and kneeling on a small rug that our Sacristan (Brother Tomaso) had spread on the ground in my presence for this ceremony, prostrated himself to kiss the Manger. The Bishops in pontifical garb who accompanied the Patriarch, and some other monks also kissed the Manger and the procession which had entered from the south stair, went back up by the north stair and went directly to the choir. A Bishop celebrated the Pontifical Mass, the Patriarch assisted from the throne and the ceremony was finished at 3 o'clock. An Archimandrite went up in the pulpit and preached in the presence of the Patriarch always assisting from the throne, the Russian Chancellor in uniform (in the absence of the Consul) arrived at 1:30 and took his place next to the throne. The sermon was in Russian and Arabic and everything was done by 3:30. They all retired and the Greeks didn't have any more ceremonies until at night for the office of Matins.

INCENSING BY THE GREEKS AT THE FIRST PONTIFICAL MASS UPON THE ARRIVAL OF THE PATRIARCH: *The Pontifical Mass started at 11:30. Around 12 o'clock the Patriarch descended to the Grotto with two Deacons, incensed the Site of the Nativity and the Manger, standing, without removing the covering and without kissing. They did not put the small rug at the Manger. Around 12:30 there was a 3rd incensing by a Bishop in pontifical robes with two deacons. Like the Patriarch, the Bishop incensed while remaining standing. Around 1 o'clock a 4th incensing by a Bishop similar to the preceding one. Around 1:20 a 5th incensing by a Deacon in clerical garb accompanied by a simple clerk in religious habit.*

COPTS: *The Copts occupied the large altar of the Armenians. Early in the morning, they celebrated Mass. The Armenians then prepared for their Mass which they sang in the Sanctuary, as usual, after the 2nd Mass of the Latins which was finished around 10 o'clock.*

NOTE: *Therefore it is our Sacristain who removes the painting from the Manger and places the Infant Jesus of the Epiphany. He needs one of the Cawas to carry this Infant Jesus, and he complained not having him. Father Custodian had not yet arrived.*

Correction to be made here to the Regulation . The Copts occupy once again the large altar of The Armenians around noon. They were not saying mass, but singing long prayers (first vespers, I think) . After the 5th incensing of the Sanctuary by the Greeks, the Copts went down to the Sanctuary for a brief interval, stood in front of the Site of the Nativity and sang. The Hymn ended with a reading that was done aloud by one of the assistants, a young man of between 15 and 18 years old in secular clothes. The chant and the Reading lasted from 15 to 18 minutes.

They retreated by the north stair without going down to the Manger, and without incensing. Returning to their altar, they removed their vestments and there were no more ceremonies until at night.

SYRIANS: *The Syrians officiated at the Armenians' small altar. The Syrian Bishop arrived in Bethlehem by wagon around 9 o'clock and went directly, privately, without Cawas nor anyone accompanying him, to the Armenian convent. Around noon (somewhat before) a Syrian priest celebrated the Mass which ended around 1 o'clock, so the Bishop with all his attendants recited*

and chanted prayers, always at the Armenians' small altar. As soon as the Copts had left the Sanctuary, the Syrians took their place in front of the Site of the Nativity and did a similar ceremony which also lasted from 15 to 18 minutes, then they descended in silence and in no particular order and kissed the Manger. The Bishop mingling with the simple clerics, our Sacristan didn't put down the little rug, and they left singing, returning to their altar. They removed their vestments and there were no more ceremonies until at night (their office of the day ends right at 2:12.)

LATINS: *There is nothing to modify in the Regulation for the Vespers and Matins of the Latins,*

NIGHT OFFICE

COPTS: *The Copts once again occupied the large altar of the Armenians around 8:30 at night with chants followed by a mass. The mass finished around 11 o'clock. Then the Copts collected on the spot all their liturgical adornments, took them with them and did not reappear either in the Basilica nor in the Sanctuary.*

NOTE: *At this last office from 8:30 to 11 o'clock, the Copts didn't do any incensing nor any other significant ceremony in the Sanctuary.*

SYRIANS: *The Syrian Bishop officiates at night, always at the Armenians' small altar. The Syrians must wait until the Copts have completely finished their Mass before they can begin. It is the Armenian Sacristan who controls this particularity. Hence, the Syrians begin their Mass after that of the Copts. I believe it is preceded by other chant s and prayers. Their office finished, the Syrians wait until the Site of the Nativity which is occupied by the Greeks for their Mass, is free in order to do their ceremony which will be described later.*

GREEKS: *The Greeks start their Matins around 10:15. The Bishop rather than the Patriarch presides and he makes his solemn entry into the choir from the small door at the bottom of the Basilica.*

Around Midnight, the Patriarch in pontifical robes processes down to the Sanctuary, like in the morning upon his arrival, by way of the south stair, then stops with the procession for 15 to 20 minutes for the singing of the Gospel, then like in the morning, he incenses and kisses the two Sites of the Nativity and the Manger along with the Bishops who accompany him. Also as in the morning, our Sacristan spreads the small carpet. The procession then leaves by the south stairway and goes all the way down to the bottom of the Basilica, etc. When the procession is finished, the Patriarch who was presiding (carrying a rich, silver crown in the shape of a miter...) starts the Pontifical Mass which will finish between 4 and 4:15 without any other particularities, incensing or processions.

NOTE: *Here it is necessary to completely modify the Regulation.*

THE GREEK PONTIFICAL MASS IN THE SANCTUARY

After the midnight Procession of the Patriarch has left the Sanctuary, the Site of the Nativity is

prepared with the necessary objects for the pontifical Greek Mass celebrated by a Bishop. That mass finishes around 3 o'clock.

SYRIANS: *This is the time when the Syrians descend to the Site of the Nativity to sing the Gospel which lasts around 10 to 12 minutes. They return to their altar and remove their vestments. They have no other ceremony and retreat.*

NOTE: *Neither the Syrians nor the Copts go to the Sanctuary to incense during either of their ceremonies.*

STRIPPING OF THE GREEK ALTAR AT THE SITE OF THE NATIVITY

After the Greeks' pontifical mass at the Site of the Nativity and the Syrians' singing of the Gospel, the Sanctuary remains free until the end of the Patriarch's pontifical Mass celebrated upstairs.

As soon as the pontifical Mass (upstairs) is finished, the Greeks strip the altar of the Nativity, but they leave at the back their beautiful semi-circular painting, in front of which the Armenians immediately place their painting for the Mass they will say after the last Mass of the Latins at the altar of the Magi Kings.

NOTE: *The Greeks also leave the beautiful embroidered crimson tapestry which encloses the little abse of the Site of the Nativity above the altar.*

NOTE: *After their night mass, the Syrians don't have a fixed time to sing the Gospel at the Site of the Nativity. They do this ceremony at will, in the remaining interval between the Greeks' Mass at the Site of the Nativity (which always finishes before the Pontifical Mass upstairs), and the Pontifical Mass upstairs.*

As soon as the Greeks' altar is stripped, the Latins start their low masses in the Sanctuary and continue them without interruption until the end.

NOTE: *The first Latins mass in the Sanctuary, attended by a large group with many communions was finished this year, at 5 o'clock; and the last one was finished at 1 o'clock. There were 19 priests scheduled. There were only three foreign priests. All the others were Franciscans.*

ORIENTAL COSTUMES

Editor's notes:

The present manuscript is made up of two double sheets, forming 8, 8 ¾ x 5 ½ pages, in a very neat script.

From the end of the article, it is evident it was destined for the New York review "The Pilgrim of Palestine". Was it published? Not having this collection, I can neither affirm nor deny it. At the end of the same article we further discover a number of subjects Father Frederic considered, the special care with which he learned about them, consulting with a specialist on the topics he would subsequently use.

Let us finally admire his proposition of bringing together in one volume some of the articles for the edification of the faithful. We were profoundly moved when we came upon this vow of our dear and zealous Servant of God. Now after 60 years, we are happy to partially realize it. May he deem our modest work agreeable and bring it to fruition!

HOLIDAY COSTUME OR CLOTHING OF A LATIN BETHLEHEMITE

(insert photo p.,308 French edition – “Woman of Bethlehem in holiday costume”)

*The **Mendil-Malass**: is a long, white veil which goes down the back from the shoulders to the heels. This long veil is made of silk fabric and is embroidered on the bottom with a fringe enhanced with different colored hoops which gives it a very gracious appearance.*

*White is the most frequently used color for the long veil, but black can also be used. When the veil is in color, it is called **Chambar**.*

***The Chatoue**: is a head dress under the long veil, in the form of a toque to which are attached in the front, and going from one ear to the other:*

1st Two rows or equal strings of silver pieces. These pieces are always antique Turkish money.

*2nd a third row or string of small, non-monetary pieces of silver. They serve as a simple adornment and are all struck from the same die, round, being one centimeter and 3 millimeters in diameter. This is called **Achari**.*

3rd A fourth row or string of antique Gold Turkish money; all the pieces of gold which make up this fourth row are placed side by side as are also those of the previous rows, and form without intersecting, a ribbon or a uniform zone of a most agreeable appearance.

*4th The fifth row or string of gold money is similar to the money in the previous row. This fifth row's gold pieces are fastened to cylindrically shaped small coral pearls. This gold money is called **Gheri**.*

5th The sixth and last row or string of antique Turkish money is also gold. The pieces in this last row are of a smaller dimension than the previous two rows and their value is less than half. The gold money is all uniformly from the same period, dating to the empire of Sultan Makmoud.

The head-dress itself, or toque is a drape, embroidered with many colors. The background is red. The surface is ornamented with yellow bands intermingled with embroidery in four colors... white, yellow, green and red.

A double silver chain, attached to the two pendants of the toque and which correspond to the ears, fall to the chest. This chain is a uniform length of thirty centimeters. The first exterior chain is adorned from place to place with antique silver money, money similar to the first and second rows of the toque but of a lesser value. This little chain ends with a little ball, also in

carved silver upon which is finally suspended a large diameter (four centimeters) piece of silver money, struck with the effigy of Marie Therese of Austria.

The Muslim women who live in the poor villages of the countryside distinguish themselves from the ordinary Bedouins who also take pride in adornments when they find this Austrian money. This double chain with all its ornamentation is called **Snack**.

3rd The Aba. This is a type of mantle of red fabric with green rays made in Bethlehem . This exterior garment is entirely visible except for the part which is covered by the long veil. It has no fullness. It is really fitted to the body and similar to the coat, goes down to the knees. The sleeves of the Aba only go to the elbow. They are narrow and are snug at the upper arm. Between the shoulders, in the back on the collar, the Aba has a front of approximately a square palm, and has a multicolored border.

4th The Taxire. This is a sort of nightgown in the form of a sweater which is worn under the Aba. The Taxire which is red or green fabric, only goes down to the waist. The sleeves are equally narrow, but are longer than those of the Aba. They go all the way down to the fist. The border of the Taxire is bordered entirely of silk thread which gives it a very elegant appearance.

5th The Tob: The Tob, garment unique to the Bethlehemite, is a silk dress in three colors, red, yellow and green. The Tob had a beautiful embroidery in many colors on the part that corresponds to the chest. The sleeves are of a regular width, and they end at their inside extremity with a singular point, fairly similar to a pear, and which goes all the way down the the knees when she extends her arms in the form of a cross.

There are three types of qualities of Tob:

1st The Tob-Gharir: it is of pure silk in three colors, red, yellow and green. That is the one we just described.

2nd The Tob Aghmar: which is red and is fashioned from cotton and silk:

3rd The Tob-Aghdar: cotton and silk, but green in color

6th The "Ghesamm: The Ghesamm is a beautiful piece of silk or wool fabric the width of two palms, folded several times over itself, and long enough to go around the body twice. That is the Bethlehemite's belt.

Bracelets: Clad in Holiday garb, the Latin women of Bethlehem wear on each arm three silver bracelets. These bracelets are etched to create a specific form which only photography or drawings can reproduce the exact look.

Rings: Like all the other Orientals, the women of Bethlehem use this type of adornment in profusion. The rings are all silver. Some women wear them on all the fingers. There are even some who were up to two rings on the same finger.

Shoes: *The shoes are extremely simple. They are of red leather and in the language of the country, are called **Surmaieh**.*

Such is the ensemble of the Latin woman of Bethlehem's Costume when she dresses for a holiday.

COSTUME OF A (MALE) BETHLEHEMITE OF THE LATIN NATION

HEAD DRESS: The Tarbouche: *a red hat which is in use throughout the Ottoman Empire. It has a conical shape flattened across the top and crowned with a long and tufted hoop which falls back and creates a latch to raise the tarbouche and put it back on. It is the ordinary tarbouche and which is worn alone and is removed; it is the official head dress throughout the entire Turkish empire, in the army from the simple soldier up to the general in chief and in the civil administration from the most humble subaltern to the highest ranking official. Such a significant individual never removes it, even when he is in the presence of the highest dignitaries of the Empire.*

*The Bethlehemite wraps around his Tarbouche which has a slightly flatter shape than I just described, a nice silk scarf which gives it a very picturesque shape, and it doesn't fail to give him a certain elegance. That is **the Kafieh**. We still use the Kafieh outside of Bethlehem, and its use is often widespread enough.*

Under the Tarbouch, they wear a small white bonnet, a type of cap which serves to cover the top of the head which always perspires, and serves to marvelously preserve the head from sunstroke during the intense heat which is so frequent and dangerous in the Orient.

Upon entering a Church, the Christians always remove their Tarbouche crowned with the Kafieh, but they are permitted to retain their cap or white bonnet.

2nd The Aba: *This is entirely different from those of the women. It is a nice, long, all black mantle or black with white rays fabricated in the large cities of Damascus, Aleppo or Baghdad. This cloak goes all the way down to the heels. It is waterproof. It is the winter garment. There is another Aba which is used in the summer. It is also of wool, but of a lighter fabric which is only made in Egypt.*

Some of these mantles have an elegant embroidery on the inside border. These are the mantles of a single color. The arrayed Abas are not susceptible to this type of adornment.

3rd Dahmer: *this is a type of nightshirt which has a certain resemblance to a European sweater, but which closes all the way up the neck. It is also of fabric, and can be of all colors, except red, green and yellow, colors which is only permitted for women. The Dahmer is generally black, brown or deep blue.*

4th The Ilhombase: *is a large dress, a distinctive vestment which is unique to the Orient. This dress is open from top to bottom in the front, but it crosses widely over itself and it is tight to the body by the Dahmer all the way to the belt. The Ilhombase can be of any fabric... cotton, silk or wool and it isn't of any particular color.*

*5th **The Ghesamm** is the traditional belt which cinches the Ilhombase from the inside of the Dahmer, and which gives the personage who is cinched an imposing air of gravity.*

*6th **The shoes**: they have entirely lost their oriental style, they are either European style slippers or shoes.*

Most Reverend Father, that is the Costume or Garment of the Bethlehemite and the inhabitant of the city of David which you expressed the desire to know. It pleases me to believe that it will please the readers of the Pilgrim, and that it will excite in a pleasant way their legitimate and innocent curiosity.

I can assure you this description is the most rigorously precise, and as such is susceptible to entering one day, given the circumstances, into a scientific publication about Oriental costumes.

At the moment, I am working on a very detailed note on the costumes and customs of the Bedouins. Here in Bethlehem, I have my information from a most reliable source. The man, actually one of the main notables of the city, is dictating it to me. Formerly, he lived with the Bedouins, under their tent; he took part in their wars; he had the opportunity to study at his leisure their costumes and their customs. Until now, so far as I know, this work has not been done in a more precise or more complete manner. I reserve it for the Readers of the Pilgrim, preferably over all the other religious publications which would be eagerly received.

On the other hand Most Reverend Father, I prepare the work you requested regarding the Stations of the Cross, with a detailed description of each of the stations on the Via Dolorosa which we follow with our Pilgrims every Friday. I will join it with the twelve stations which forms the Grand Processions which our religious invariably do each day in the Basilica of the Most Holy Sepulcher, and if God gives me the time and the strength, I will complete this dual work with a historic study of the great relics of the Holy Cross and the other Instruments of the Passion.

If God gives me the consolation to do it, perhaps after successively publishing these three notices in the Pilgrim, you could combine them and publish them together in a small volume which all pious families would want to own and which they would keep as a precious souvenir of the Holy Land.

Finally, Most Reverend Father, to provide a diversion from the serious and longer articles, you wish for your attentive readers, shorter articles which taxes less the spirit, which we can suitably call current news. I hope to be able to satisfy this legitimate wish, by sending you each trimester, one or two letters, in a familiar style, written as we say, in a rambling style which would give an account of the daily events in Palestine – one of these Letters is already in transit to America - others will follow this first one, and thus our friends, our Benefactors and our Brothers on the other side of the Ocean will live in some way in society with us and will see all that could be of further interest to them in this so interesting Orient, and especially in this ancient land of promise, precious heritage of our Fathers, the Holy Land.

NOTES ABOUT THE HOLY LAND

Description of the manuscript:

The two booklets, 40 pages each, 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches wide by 4 inches high, sewn with one stitch of white thread, but not held together. The margin, always on the outside, is 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide. This large space also filled, contains additional notes and critiques or different versions.

Contents of the manuscript:

These two little notebooks entitled HOLY LAND contain lecture notes related to the Palestinian history, archaeology, topography, and hagiography. They partially reveal to us the sources from which Father Frederic drew most abundantly. Citing some examples to indicate again the immense amount of work of this missionary: Abbe Darras: General History of the Church 15 volumes. M.C. Couret: Palestine under the Greek Emperors (Grenoble 1869); The Bollandists: Pallade: Historia Lausiaca: Migne Patrologie Latine, 213 volumes; Melchior de Vogue; The churches of the Holy Land, Paris, 1860; Victor Guerin; The Holy Land, its history, its souvenirs, its sites, its monuments, Paris, 1882; Sebastien Paoli; Codice Diplomatico; Chateaubriand: Itinerary from Paris to Jerusalem, etc., etc.,...

On the subject of Bethlehem:

Pages 13 to 25 of this manuscript, Father Frederic inscribed the notes he borrowed from M. de Vogue: "Les Eglises de Terre Sainte". While this manuscript obliges us to repeat certain paragraphs contained in the writings of the Servant of God, we believe we must transcribe them in-extenso. Some passages will compliment some which are missing elsewhere. Above all, by the notes in the margins which we will put in the footnotes, this writing will permit us to admire once again the methodical and precise work of the Custodial Vicar of the Holy Land.

BASILICA: From the atrium (completely destroyed) where we entered through three doors in the vestibule (which runs the entire length of the naves to the height of the lower walls. Four rows of monolith Corinthian columns. The five naves are of equal length, the center one is larger by itself than the two lower walls combined, and is made up of 11 spans. The transept is as large as the central nave and with it, forms the shape of a cross. The North and South extremities end in semi-circular abses which project to the exterior wall of the basilica. The 4 angles of the central cross of the transept contain 4 rectangular pilings which are flanked by 2 semi-columns corresponding to the rows of columns of the nave and the choir... (In the margin of this paragraph: "Description of the Basilica of Bethlehem").

The general plan of the church reveals not only a very true sentiment of the beauty and the simplicity, but a great knowledge of the conditions of religious architecture on the part of the designers.

*Principal dimensions (see the plan).
Size of the central nave from axis to axis 10m,40*

Size of the 1st side aisle axis to axis 4m.20

Size of the 2nd side aisle all the way to the wall 3m.75

Total size of the nave in the work 26m.30

Rays of the abse 4m.75

Total size of the work 57m.30

Length of the vestibule 6M

Total number of columns 46, plus 4 pilings of the transept and 18 semi-columns set either in the pilings or in the walls where the collonades are located.

The consecration – We don't know how she escaped destruction during the Persian invasion... is it because she was always admired in the 7th and 8th centuries by Saint Arnulph and Saint Willibald (In the margin: "see further the resumes we give of these relationships")
(These resumes are not in this notebook. Copyist's note)

In 937 in the Arab annals of Eutychus, is the first time there is mention of the Emperor Justinian as founder of the Church of Bethlehem... (In margin: "Objection without value".)
Justinian had the Church of Bethlehem which he found too small, demolished in order to make it larger and more beautiful. His orders were badly executed, and the architect's head was chopped off. Eutychus tells the same story for the construction of the Convent of Mount Sinai. Justinian, unhappy with the architect, had his head cut off... Legend that appears more inspired by the memories of a Muslim Seraglio than by the traditions of a Byzantine emperor.

Further, Procopius does not mention it, he who wrote an entire book on the monuments of Justinien... (In the margin: Fr. Lievin, p.33 says: "The Emperor Justinian restored the Basilica in 530. (Procopius: the Const. Justin, v.9) – (verify)."

In the 11th century, the terrible persecution of the Calif Hakem brought ruin and devastation upon all the Churches of the Holy Land. Only the Church of Bethlehem escaped.

The French chronicler Adhemar de Chabanois (1029) tells in these terms how it was saved: (In the margin: "How escaped the devastation of the Calif Hakem.")

"While the pagans tried to destroy the Church of Bethlehem, the site of the Nativity of Christ, suddenly a brilliant light appeared to them and cast them to the ground and they died on the spot. Thus the Church of the Mother of God remained intact." (De Bouquet, Recueil des Hist. Franc. T.X.).

GODEFROID was crowned king (and consecrated) on December 25, 1101 by the patriarch DAIMBERT. (Foulcher of Chartres)... (In the margin: GODEFROID was crowned 1101".

The following year, Saewulf visited the Holy Land. As a pilgrim, after he toured Jerusalem and its surroundings, he arrived in Bethlehem (In the margin: "Saewulf (1102) (collection of pages vol. IV). He said: "There, like all the Holy Sites located outside the walls of Jerusalem, everything was devastated by the Sarrasins except the church of the Basilica of the Virgin Mary, great and superb edifice. Almost in the middle of this church, there is a crypt under the choir in which is

seen the site of the Nativity of Our Lord on the left, and the manger is situated a little lower on the right"... I cannot pretend otherwise...

...I comment only that the most ancient of these authors (in the margin: "Fr. Lievin, p. 34 (t.2) note 2: We should however note that the Russian Daniel who visited the Holy Sites in 1113 tells us (p. 68): a magnificent Church stands on the Grotto of the Nativity of Jesus Christ. It is covered with tin, and this entire Church is covered with mosaic paintings.)

Make no mention of the rich interior decoration which greatly excites the admiration of the more recent writers. It isn't until 1185 that there is question of the beautiful mosaics which adorn... We must accept with reservation the passage of J. Phocas depicting in exaggeration: "The Church of Bethlehem... is also the liberal hand of my august master (Emperor Manuel Commene Porphyrogenite) who had this temple built and adorned entirely with gold mosaics." (In the margin: "Fr. Lievin says: Restored... see above when speaking of Justinian".)

DESCRIPTION OF THE PAINTINGS AND DECORATIONS *(In the margin: Mosaics in glass fragments, attached to a gold background. The brilliant whites, such as the brilliant parts of the censers and the chandeliers and the background of the inscriptions are rendered by means of mother of pearl plaques.)*

Entering the Church by the main door, the first mosaic we encountered and which covered the entire occidental wall on the interior, according to Quaresmius, represents a tree which the branches support the figures of prophets. It is partially destroyed. The only prophets still visible are Joel, Amos, Nahum, Micah, Ezechiel, Isaiah and the clairvoyant Balaam. Each has in hand a band on which is written in Latin, a verse from his prophecies, relative to the Birth of Christ.

Tree of Jesse: *These fragments belonged to a tree of Jesse...*

The nave. *Let us penetrate the nave. Everything was painted, from the base to the top of the walls, and it is probable that formerly a ceiling (sic) also in color completed the system of decoration. The columns themselves were painted despite the beauty of their material. The figures of the Saints were represented, their long silhouettes are still visible in many places, from the dark red background... All the surface of the walls was covered with mosaics whose subjects are determined. These mosaics begin immediately above the architrave of the columns and extends all the way to the woodwork surrounding the windows.*

The two sides of the nave however different in detail, offer the same sequence and the same subject matter:

1st – A row of personages see all the way to mid-body, representing the genealogy of Christ. (In the margin: "Disposition").

2nd – A series of images representing the principal councils separated by groups of fantastic greenery.

3rd – A frieze formed of leafy garlands between two rows of pearls; on the superior row from which lean the windows.

4th – A row of angels situated in the space between the windows.

5th – A frieze similar to the first one.

The two principal fragments which still exist, one on the North, the other to the South and which I sketched perfectly complement this arrangement (In margin: "Two fragment still exist".)

The SOUTH FRAGMENT CONTAINS (In margin: "south fragment".)

1st – 7 busts representing the seven latest ancestors of Joseph... Their names are written in Latin characters of the XIIth century (from right to left): Azor, Sadoch, Achim, Eliud, Eleazar, Matthan, Jacob...,

2nd – 2 groups of arcades, separated by arabesques. All that is left of the first group is a fragment of column and a banner of inscription. The 2nd is nearly complete. It is made up of two centered arcades adorned with garlands of leaves and supported by 3 columns, which with their imitation Corinthian capitals, their shafts covered with geometric drawings and their bases formed of two torus are entirely similar to the roman columns which adorn the historic portals of our beautiful XIIth century churches. In each intercolumniation is a cubed shaped altar covered with a magnificently embroidered drape, trimmed with braid, enriched with precious stones and holding a superbly bound book of the Gospels. The altar to the right is flanked by two candelabra outfitted with candles, the one on the left with two censurs with chains suspended from a hook attached to the shaft of the columns. Above a long inscription in two registers contains a resume of the decrees of the Council of Constantinople. In the tympanum of the arcades, is a circle with an azure background, containing a gold cross with equal branches, from which fall four white rays. The arabesques which separate this arcade from the next one are by nature more bizarre and more fantastic. They simulate a plant than has no analogy in any flora...

FRAGMENT OF THE NORTH SIDE: more considerable... the series of personages has entirely disappeared. We see that while conserving the same general layout than the south side, however they differ in detail.

The groups of arabesques are the same but the edifices which enclose the inscriptions relative to the councils have a completely different form. Instead of a simple arch, they show a complete dome of a church, have the altar and the embroideries in common with the preceding scenes... There exists only two complete churches, that of Antioch and of Sardinia and the banner of a third one, that of Gangres are figured with this naivete and absence of perspective which characterizes the representations of the middle ages. (In the margin: 2 Churches complete – Antioche and Sardinia the banner of the one at Gangres.)

Inscription which crowns the scene Antioch: that of Sardinia:

The banner of the Gangres church (another of Anchira [phot. Salymann])...

In the space between the windows we still see three angels... standing, haloes, long white robes... two wings...

There remains... to indicate the subjects represented and to give the inscriptions which describe them... This text was conserved by Quaresmius... I made a few corrections... filled in some omissions... and reestablished all the abbreviations...

On the NORTH WALL are figured six Councils, thus disposed beginning in the East: Anchyra, Antioch (2nd), Sardinia, Gangres, Laodicea, Carthage (1st). (Following is the resume of all the councils... Ex: the 6th is "The Holy synod of Carthage, in Africa, under St. Cyprien, composed of 50 Bishops assembled against Navatus, guilty of refusing absolution. The Holy Synod condemned him as a heretic.)...

On the SOUTH WALL were the seven ecumenical Councils in order of their dates starting from the East: Nicea, Constantinople, Ephesus, Chalcedon, 2nd Constantinople, 3rd, 2nd Nicea, (the six 1st in Greek)... 7th; 2nd of Nicea. The inscription relative to this last council which has entirely disappeared was in Latin. Quaresmius conserved the greatest part for us. Judging from the transcription, the characters used were the Roman characters of the XIIth century, accompanied by numerous abbreviations (The page which is reproduced on the next page starts here. P. 322.). We know the 2nd Council of Nicea is the last recognized by the Greeks.

(Trans. note: insert the photo of Father Frederic's manuscript in this area – it is entitled: "exact reproduction" – here)

Such was the nave of the Church of Bethlehem... the representation of the Councils, especially the seven ecumenical councils are an altogether Greek subject. (In the margin: "There is only one example: Here is the note: The five first ecumenical Councils were painted in the imperial palace of Constantinople. With the Iconoclast heresy, Philip the Pious had these paintings destroyed after the 1st war of the images. They were reestablished by Theodosius, and destroyed again by Leon III. During the interval of Pope Constantine to protest against the vandalism, he had them reproduced on the porch of the Church of St. Peter in Rome.")

We never see them in the churches of the West.... Thus in all this vast decoration, we recognized the work of one Greek hand acting under the influence of a Latin devotion.

I know we wanted to see in the mosaics of Bethlehem the work of two different era, attributed to the Crusides all the portions affected with Latin inscriptions and consider all the rest as debris of an anterior decoration. This distinction doesn't seem possible...

(Here there is a paragraph of paleography. See the very text of the given reproduction.)

In the choir, there is nothing left. All the mosaics described by Quaresmius have disappeared. Only a single fragment remains in the abse. It comes from a long bilingual inscription in 5 lines which occupy the entire surrounding of the hemicycle a few meters from the ground. (Quaresmius entirely transcribed the Greek. Translation: This present work was finished by the

hand of Ephrem, painter and mosaic maker in the reign of the Emperor Manuel Porphyrogenete as in the days of the great king of Jerusalem the lord Amaury and of the most Holy Bishop of Holy Bethlehem Monseigneur Ralph in the year 6677, Indiction 2. (In the margin: "Inscription in the abse dated at the end of the decoration work".)

This date, after the calculated Greek date which places the birth of Jesus Christ in the year 5508, corresponds to 1169 of the 1st Christian, which is actually the 2nd of the convocation of Constantinople.

Manuel Commene reigned from 1145 to 1180

Amaury reigned from 1163 to 1173

Ralph was bishop of Bethlehem from 1159 or 1160 to 1173.

Thus a perfect concordance.

The Latin inscription which accompanies the Greek is mutilated, it was already in the time of Quaresmius; who could recover: COMES HOSTIS ET IM STATIS ET GRECIS IMPERITABAT HIS ECCLESIAMQ DOCEBAT S EFREM FERTUR FECISSE TV AVTEM.

The long reign of Manuel Porphyrogenete permits us... to move the date to 1150 the start of the enterprise, and it is no doubt to these incomplete mosaics that alludes the Arab geographer El-Edrese when he visited Bethlehem around 1154 when he said: the church is beautiful, solid, vast and adorned to the point where it is not possible to see one that is comparable." (In the margin: "El-Edrese in 1154. Geography, translation Jaubert.)

The inscriptions (of the Councils) are executed in Greek, to show the Greeks that the fundamental tenets of faith, while placed in a Latin church, didn't undergo any alteration (In margin: "The inscriptions and their choice proves the union between the Latins and the Greeks.") Only the inscription relative to the 2nd Council of Nicea is in Latin. Actually, in this case, the reproaches which undoubtedly the Latins addressed with the Greeks was brought forward, making the suspicion disappear. The consequences troubled the peace of the two communions.

These acts primitively redirect in Greek (cult of the images)... all the nuances were on the difference of the two words (Greek words here...) (adore – render an exterior cult)...

In the Latin translation sent to the West these two words were replaced by the single word ADORE... The French and German clergy, misled by the inaccuracy of this version, protested. The Council of Francort (In the margin: "See "Ecclesiastical History"). Of 794 rejected the acts of the Council of Nicea. (After long negotiations, the misunderstanding was clarified) (In the margin: "Note: The 2nd Council of Nicea is the last one recognized by the Greeks. Photius came a bit later...").

THE EPISCOPAL SEAT OF BETHLEHEM

Created in 1110 (Pope Pascal II), at the request of Beaudouin I. Prior to that the church was served by a chapter of regular canons, with a prior. The diocese was founded at the expense of the one in Jerusalem... In 1153 the city and the territory of Ascalon were united.

(In the margin: List of Bishops under the Latin domination with mention of the dates during which their names are mentioned in public actions.)

Anschetin: 1110-1120

Anselme: 1128-1145

Gerard: 1147-1151

Ralph: 1160-1173

Albert: 1173-1186

Peter: 1204 – 1206

Renier: (died) - 1244

In 1187 when Jerusalem and all the territory was conquered by Saladin, the Church of Bethlehem was respected because of the Muslims' veneration of the Blessed Virgin.

In the 2nd half of the 13th century, the monk Brocard visited it. Then came the first mutilation by the sultan of Egypt. A miracle stopped him. Marino Saint repeated it. Twenty years later, William of Baldensel speaks with admiration of the splendors of the church (In the margin: William of Baldensel").

In subsequent centuries, the destructions ... (translator's note: see page 325 of the French text. The next word stops mid-word, and the subsequent sentence and/or paragraph(s) are missing. Clearly the printer omitted something and the editor and/or proofreader missed the omission !

... this may be the 'mistake' for which the printer apologizes at the end of the French text!)

In 1478 the framework of the roof was done over with funds sent by Philip the Good, Duke of Bourgogne. Edward IV, king of England, donated the lead for the roof.

At the end of the 17th century, the roof is ruined. The lead of the covering is removed in 100 places by the Turks to make musket balls, allowing rain water to penetrate...

In 1672 restoration was undertaken and completed at a great cost by the Greek patriarch Dositheus. The treaty of 1690 gave the church to the Latins, usurped again in 1758 despite the capitulation of 1740... In 1843 it was restored by the Greeks one last time. What was left of the mosaics were covered with a coating of lime...

*(In the margin: "Baptistry"). **BAPTISTRY.** On one of the exterior facades is sculpted in relief a cross; above it, there is an inscription in a cartouche: "In memory, the rest and remission of sins (of the donors) whom the Lord knows the names".*

*(In the margin: "Wooden door".) **WOODEN DOOR...** dilapidated tomb. Two inscriptions in Arabic and Armenian (today it is impossible to recover them: Quaresmius did it). 1st. Arabic "This door was completed with the help of God in the time of our powerful and magnificent king the 2nd of the 1st month of 624" (11 January 1227). The mentioned king was no doubt the Armenian king in the following inscription. "Year 676, the door Saint Mary patriarch Abraham and patriarch Aracheli, in the reign of Erman son of Constantine (Note in margin: Some difficulty with the*

name Hethum for Erman (see ibid.)")The year 676 of the Armenian era or of Tiben (551 after Jesus Christ), corresponds to the year 1227.

Note of the copyist: In the same manuscript, pages 47 and 49 are borrowed from the following work: LA TERRE SAINTE, its history, its souvenirs, its sites, its monuments, by VICTOR GUERIN, aggregate and doctor of letters, charged by the mission of the Orient (Plon and Cie), rue Garanciere, 10, Paris, (1882) in.-4e.

If the first paragraph is already included in the articles of Father Frederic, the other is not. The sanctuary of the Milk Grotto is sufficiently popular to give it a place in this volume about Bethlehem. Further, Father Frederic took the trouble to copy this passage:

Text copied by Father Frederic:

BETHLEHEM: *When the procession arrived at this last grotto (the Holy Innocents) it is difficult not to feel interiorly moved at the moment when, in a similar place, a group of young Bethlehem choir children sing this beautiful hymn, one of the most touching among the hymns of the Church: "Hail flowers of martyrs on the edge of the light, harvested by the persecutor of Christ, like a whirlwind brings the budding roses!"*

"Oh you first victims of Christ, tender lambs slaughtered for Him, you who play innocently under the altar with your palms and your crowns."

THE MILK GROTTTO: *About three hundred steps to the East-Southeast of the Basilica of the Nativity, on a hillside is found a grotto vulgarly called the Milk Grotto. We descend by a stairway of thirteen steps. Dug entirely into a whitish and sandy turf, it makes a slightly irregular form and measures approximately six steps long and four wide. The ceiling is upheld by seven columns or segments of columns. Toward the middle is a most simple altar which faces toward the orient. All the women of the country, Muslims and Christians, have a great veneration for this sanctuary. They come here to pray when, while they are nursing, they notice that their milk is slowing, and scratching the very soft rock, they easily removed pieces, which they carefully take, to reduce them to a powder which they put in their food. By this, they hope to make their milk more abundant if they still have some, or to recover it, if they have lost it. This is a general belief spread among them and a number of pilgrims have long since noticed it. The singular virtue attributed to the wall of this grotto, according to some, is that the Blessed Virgin spent a night in this place with the Infant Jesus before the flight to Egypt. According to others, the anxiety experienced by the Mother of the Messiah when she heard of Herod's threats, caused her milk to diminish, and she recovered it by retreating into this grotto, at the bottom of which she felt safer than in the stable where she had given birth to her divine Son. A refugee in this asylum, distressed that she could not nourish her Child, she would have implored the Almighty, and immediately she would have felt her milk return in such an abundance, that some drops would have fallen on the ground. From there, they say, the whiteness of the rock, of the area in particular which she reduced to powder, to be an efficient remedy against the diminishing and even the disappearance of the milk in women who have become mothers. I do not insist further on the advantages of these traditions. Native and poetic productions of piety and popular*

imagination, they must be appreciated for what they are, without pretending to impose as fact, to a believing public.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF MASSES CELEBRATED IN BETHLEHEM

BY Most Rev. Father Frederic of Ghyvelde, o.f.m.

Editor's note:

While I was in Palestine during the time the Informative Process in view of the Beatification of Father Frederic in Trois-Rivieres, I thought it would be interesting to extract from the Mass registers in our various convents, the signatures of the Servant of God. They are proof of his presence at such and such a place. We generally know that the Franciscans, like other Religious, sign in the special registers the masses they will celebrate. In Palestine, in each convent, there are several ad hoc registers, classified by the mass intentions; for Benefactors, for Friars, for the Deceased, for Princes, for special intentions, for personal intentions. I made the effort to find the signatures of Good Father Frederic in the different Mass registers in Bethlehem. A few may have escaped me.

I placed them in chronological order. I will give the dates, the intentions and, when it is indicated, the specific place where these masses were said. We could also verify the large number of trips the Servant of God made to the Cradle of the divine Savior.

However, I don't know for what specific reason, my lists only start in the middle of the year 1879, when Father Frederic had already been the Custodial Vicar of the Holy Land for a year. Yet, we know from his writings that he celebrated on several other occasions in Bethlehem. Also, his travel journal tells us he had hardly arrived in the Holy Land, when the missionary made his first pilgrimage to Bethlehem, and he celebrated mass on the 26, 27, and 28th of June 1876 at the Holy Manger for the students and benefactors of the Seraphic college of Bordeaux, and at the oratory of the Holy Innocents for the children he would evangelize later, and at the Milk Grotto. He certainly came back to Bethlehem during his service at Holy Sepulcher (December 1876 to April 1877, as witnessed by one of his relations on the occasion of the Epiphany in 1877. He was certainly also there during the retreat for the Carmelite Sisters from the 23 of January to the 2nd of February, 1879. He also must have spent a few days in the spring of the same year, when the architect Amedee de Piellat drew the first plan for the expansion of the church of Bethlehem "under the directions of Father Custodial Vicar". Thus we come to the month of June 1879. Let us now follow the plan announced above.

(Trans. note: abbreviated without the intentions... this is purely to prove he was in Bethlehem... the 'intentions' are irrelevant.)

YEAR 1879

June 16

October 6 to 14; 21

YEAR 1880

January 12 and 29

February 3 and 4; 11 through 14; 16; 21 through 23; 25 through 27

April 5, and 8; April 12 through 17; April 19 through 24; April 27 through 30
May 4 and 5; May 10 through 15; May 18 and 19; May 21 through 25; May 30
June 1 and June 21
July 3, 6, 7, 15
August 1, 11, 20, 23, August 26 through 28
August 26-28
September 26
October 12 through 14; October 19 and 20; October 27 through 30
November 4 through 6; November 17, November 23
December 2 through December 4; December 14

YEAR 1881

January 9 and 10; 13 and 24
April 21

YEAR 1882

August 25
October 11, 19 and 30
November 7 and 8
December 1

YEAR 1883

February 21
March 3
July 10 and 11
September 11
December 28

YEAR 1884

July 29 and 30

YEAR 1885

February 17
May 17
July 10 and 12
September 15 through 23
October 21

YEAR 1886

February 10 through 12
February 14 and 15
March 7
June 27
October 6; October 8 through 23;
December 20; 25 and 28

*YEAR 1887**January 1, 3, and 5; January 11 through 13; January 19 through 30;**February 23**March 26**April 15 and 19**May 23**June 12**July 15 and 28**December 28**YEAR 1888**January 6**February 16 and 17;***The End**