



Friends of the Anglican Province of Alexandria

Supporting churches in Egypt, North Africa, Horn of Africa and Gambella

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FAPA NEWSLETTER – Lent 2022

Dear members and friends, greetings to you this Lent!

During winter I read Janine di Giovanni's *The Vanishing*.¹ It was not difficult to read, in one sense. She is a journalist and author by profession and writes personally and powerfully. It was very difficult to read in another sense. She gives her book the subtitle "The Twilight of Christianity in the Middle East" and that is what she documents. Chapter by chapter she focuses on Iraq, Gaza, Syria and Egypt and the historic, recent and current situations of indigenous Christians in these various places.

For the most part it makes for sad reading. Di Giovanni records conversations with Christians of all kinds of backgrounds and their families' experiences of living as minorities in Muslim societies. She explains some of the tensions that emerge when minority Christians are viewed as "lackeys of the West" or "fifth columnists" for Western ideals of how the world should run. She passes on her informants' wistfulness concerning the passing of the days when they as minorities found themselves secure in autocratic societies where their safety and inclusion was guaranteed for their loyalty to a leader himself from a minority background (as in Iraq or Syria). She documents the relief that Christians have largely felt in Egypt with Sisi's undoing of the (democratically elected) power of Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood. Everywhere, one senses despair – especially from civil war, from suspicion, from denial of many basic rights in societies subject to Islamist or ultra-nationalist or aggressive acts of suppression. Nowhere is sadder and more desperate than Gaza! Di Giovanni records the almost-disappearance of many Christians – of ancient and modern denominations – in many countries of the Middle East. Though she does quote some more rigorous analyses of demographic changes, di Giovanni sometimes errs in favour of a somewhat simplistic "précis" rather than a more faithful recording of the complexities of any particular situation (for example, of the recent war in Syria).

What shines through the book is di Giovanni's humility in the light of the faith she discovers in brothers and sisters of the Middle East – whatever their denominational background. Their faith inspires her to re-engage more seriously with her own Roman Catholic origins. Typical of the style in which she writes are her closingsentences, in a section entitled "The Vanished" – so, "already gone" in some way or other: "... *in many ways, this is a book about dying communities, but it is also about faith. I wrote it so that the people I documented would never disappear. They are here on these pages, and therefore they live forever. But I also wrote it as a way of acknowledging that their faith, in many ways, is more powerful than any of the armies I see trying to destroy them.*"²

Di Giovanni fleshes out the kind of scenes that must be the current daily experience of Ukrainians from all over their country, and their relatives abroad, looking on from afar. For many of them, their faith is part and parcel of their daily lives. Whoever may be the aggressors in the geopolitics and wars of today, our hearts go out to those losing their lives, their families, their homes, their basic human rights, their land, their hope, their futures ... And we pray for the strengthening of faith of all our brothers and sisters in Christ.

¹Janine de Giovanni, *The Vanishing* (Bloomsbury Publishing, London, 2021).

²*Ibid*, p 220



God of peace and justice, we pray for the people of *Ukraine* today. We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.

We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow, that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.

We pray for those with power over war or peace for discernment and compassion to guide their decisions.

Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at-risk and in fear, that you would hold and protect them.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Amen

Archbishop Justin Welby; Archbishop Stephen Cottrell

Diary Note - Annual Meetings

Trustees have decided to hold a virtual AGM at 1300 BST on Saturday 11 June this year - Archbishop Samy Fawzy will join us, via zoom; full details will be passed to members by email in due course.

In subsequent years, it is planned to hold a virtual zoom Annual General Meeting in early Spring, and a hybrid Annual Gathering in the Summer, hopefully in Central London.

New Trustees: We will elect 3 new trustees at the AGM in June: Canon Mike Parker, Angela Huddart and the Revd. Adel Shokralla.

The Winter Seminars

It is most pleasing to report the success of our venture into Zoom Seminars – over 60 members and friends from a variety of organisations with an interest in the countries served by the Province registered an interest. The programme of five seminars was superbly organised by Trustee - Dr Peter LeFeuvre; and we are most grateful to Christ Church, Bedford, who expertly handled the technology. We were blessed with excellent contributions from:

The Church in Ethiopia (January) Dr. Desta Haliso - Director Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology; Ven. Jeremiah Paul - Archdeacon of Gambella; Revd Dr Johannes Vander Bijl - former Principal of St Frumentius College Gambella; and retired Bishop of the Horn of Africa - Rt Rev Dr Grant Le Marquad.

The Church in Egypt (February) – His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos, Coptic Archbishop of London; Rev Mark Takki- Alexandria School of Theology; Archbishop the Most Rev Dr Samy Fawzy Shehata and his predecessor Rt Rev Dr Mouneer Anis... and the latter's son Mr Shady Anis.

The final Seminar in this series, entitled **Christians and Muslims**, was held on 13 March. Archbishop Emeritus Mouneer Anis informed us of the various interfaith 'engagement' projects (1) which have taken place in recent years, and the Revd Colin Chapman contributed a thought-provoking presentation - 'Engaging with Muslims'.

It was most encouraging to learn how Christian - Muslim relations have been nurtured and grown over recent years. The stories of engagement, especially from younger people of both faiths were exciting to hear, offering hope for fruitful partnership and Christian gracious confidence. A Recording of this Seminar is available on the FAPA website www.fapa-egypt.org

- (1) 'Together We Develop Egypt' is a country-wide programme with Misr El Kheir which brings together young Christians and Muslims in social development initiatives.
<https://youtu.be/RK1SqeB6DM8>

The establishment of the Gosour Cultural Centre (Building Bridges)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EPtYu3R9Q4f91emi_crsRWEHyFgmNs90/view?usp=sharing

The Harpur Memorial Hospital

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NorAGRTYZX64DdD172tflDuhJCw8wTSf/view?usp=sharing>



Bios of some of the Contributors to the Winter Seminar

Rt Rev Andrew Proud graduated from King's College London's Theological Department in 1979 with a Bachelor of Divinity (BD) degree and an Associateship of King's College (AKC), and then trained for ministry at Lincoln Theological College for a year. From 2002, he was Chaplain to St Matthew's Church Addis Ababa, before becoming Area Bishop of the Horn of Africa from 2007-2011. From 2011 until his retirement in 2019, he was Bishop of Reading.



The Venerable Jeremiah Paul writes: *I went to School in Gambella up to a High School level.*



In 2002, I had such a spectacular encounter with the Lord, Jesus, and my life never remain the same ever since. I begin to experience the power of the gospel of Christ working in and through me in a totally new dimension. My heart begins to burn for the lost to be saved through Christ.

I was installed into a full time ministry in 2003 so as to lead the St. Luke's Anglican Church in Gambella,. In the following year, 2004, I was made a Deacon by the Most Rt. Rev. Dr. Mouneer H. Anis at St. Mathew's Anglican Church in Addis Ababa. I then

served as a Deacon for 4 years.

In 2005, I began to embark on a business of planting churches in and around distant villages of the Gambella Region. During this time I was also working as a TEE Tutor, teaching Clergy and Lay Readers whose level of Education was still low. This went on until 2011 in which I was invited with my family by Archbishop Mouneer to study a Theological Degree at AST (Alexandria School of Theology) in Cairo.

During my 4 years' studies in Egypt, I had the privilege of leading the Sudanese congregations at All Saints' Cathedral in Zamalek, Cairo, as well as serving 'Refuge Egypt' as its Spiritual Director, a title given to me by Archbishop Mouneer.

After graduating in 2015, I had to go back home and then served as a Lecturer at a newly established Anglican Theological College known as St. Frumentius' Anglican Theological College (SFACT) in Gambella. I taught at St. Frumentius' as a full-time Lecturer from 2015-2019. Venerable Paul is now Archdeacon of the Diocese of Gambella



Rev Johannes Vander Bijl, originally a native of Namibia, has travelled and worked extensively in cross-cultural settings in different countries around the world. He and his wife, Louise, serve as missionaries with SAMS-USA. They have two married sons and five precious, rambunctious grandchildren. Rev Vander Bijl was the Former and Founding Principal of St Frumentius College, Gambella from 2013-2016.

Rt Rev Dr Grant Le Marquand was born and raised in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. He is married to Wendy, a retired family physician. He studied for ordination at McGill University and Montreal Diocesan Theological College, was ordained in the Diocese of Montreal. After serving in that diocese for three years after ordination, he and his wife and (at the time) one child went to Kenya where he taught New Testament at St Paul's United Theological College. Returning to Canada he did a doctorate in NT at Wycliffe College, Toronto and then served on the faculty there before moving to the US in 1998 to teach at Trinity School for Ministry. After 14 years at Trinity, he became the second Area Bishop for the Horn of Africa in 2012 and lived in Gambella for six years. After Wendy contracted health problems they returned to Trinity where Grant is once again teaching NT.



His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos is the Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London. His Eminence is President of the Bible Society, Co-founder and Co-chair of the Lausanne-Orthodox Initiative, and the Orthodox President of Churches Together in England, Chair of the Council of the Oriental Orthodox Churches in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, Co-chair of the Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Commission, Ecumenical participant of the Church of England General Synod, President of Christians Aware, Chairman of SAT 7 International Council and Executive Board and a Member of the Central Committee

of the World Council of Churches. He obtained a degree in Political Science, Philosophy and Sociology, and continued on to postgraduate studies in Australia before returning to Egypt to the Monastery of St Bishoy in Wadi-El-Natroun where he was consecrated a monk by the late Pope Shenouda III and served as his private secretary until 1995.

Revd. Mark Senada is a full-time lecturer at the Alexandria School of Theology Seminary (AST) in the Anglican diocese of Egypt. He majored in business. Mark holds a BTh from AST and a master's degree in Arts and Religions from Trinity School for Ministry, Pennsylvania, USA. Mark teaches several classes in the Old Testament and biblical theology. He is ordained in the diocese of Egypt and heads up the diocesan youth ministry. Mark is married to Joy.



Shady Anis BSc (Menoufia University), MAR (Trinity School for Ministry, USA). He is currently pursuing a PhD at the University of Cambridge, UK. His areas of special interests are Theological Anthropology, Justification, Martin Luther and Thomas Cranmer. Shady has published on Reformation Theology in a Contemporary Islamic Context and Anglican understandings of Anthropology. Shady is the former North African Regional Director of the Alpha Course and is a Lay Reader at St. Michael's Anglican Church, Heliopolis. He and his wife Eman have one daughter and one son.



A Tunisian Study Tour - 2023

Members of the FAPA Committee with experience of study tours/pilgrimages to Egypt and Gambella plan to extend the possibility of UK supporters to visit other parts of the Province. The first such tour is planned to take place to Tunisia in April 2023.



It is envisaged that this will be a 9-day tour studying early and current Christianity and embracing visits to: **Sidi Bou Said** (Bardo Museum and Baptistries); Carthage (Byrsa Hill, Cisterns, Antonine Baths and Theatre); **Dougga** (Berber, Punic, Roman Byzantine UNESCO Settlement); **El Djem and Sousse** (Kairouan Aghlabid Pools and Great Mosque)

'Pilgrims' will worship at St Georges, Tunis (Revd. Frank Bernardi)

Money Matters FAPA Members are asked to review their **Annual Subscription** – please increase your donation if possible and set up a Standing Order if you do not already have one and please ensure your donations and subscriptions are Gift Aided. Donation Forms are available on our website <https://www.fapa-egypt.org/get-involved> or contact Judith our Treasurer email: treasurer.fapa20@gmail.com

We ask Members to subscribe at the suggested minimum of £25 per annum. *Our administrative costs are small and all surplus funds are passed on to ministries and projects suggested by the Archbishop.*

As a registered UK charity FAPA is able to help channel donations from individual FAPA members and partner organisations to the Province in response to specific appeals. Non-specific donations are passed to churches or projects recommended by the Bishops.

The Episcopal School in Menouf



Established in 1930, in the Nile Delta region, the Episcopal School continues to provide quality education and a caring environment for 840 students in primary and preparatory education (6-15 years) and 75 in kindergarten.

The school is also a place which builds social relationships with the community, and among the students and parents. This is significant in a school where 20% of the students are Christian, and 80% are Muslim.