



Press Release

THE TERRA SANCTA ORGAN FESTIVAL INTRODUCES ITSELF

November 5-28, 2014

Nazareth, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jaffa (Tel Aviv), Emmaus, Rhodes

The Terra Sancta Organ Festival (Holy Land Organ Festival) is an international music event and a cultural activity in which the Custody of the Holy Land allows everyone to enjoy the beauty of its pipe organs, an asset that would otherwise be restricted to Latin Catholics in their liturgies.

The sound of the organ is, in the Middle East, a sign of the Christian presence: organs are found inside most churches and in the churches are found Christians. An international organ festival, taking place here, in this Holy Land, represents not only a recreational, artistic and cultural moment but also the public manifestation of this presence, today under threat in many areas of the region. The Terra Sancta Organ Festival seeks to support this presence not only by giving it visibility but also by promoting the restoration of the organs and the training of new local organists.

The Terra Sancta Organ Festival is the only music festival taking place in different countries. Our hope is that, starting from Israel, Palestine and Greece, the festival will eventually reach in the next years the other places where the Custody of the Holy Land has a presence: Jordan, Lebanon, Cyprus, Egypt and..... Syria (Inshallah). Everyone, whatever their religious background, is invited to attend the concerts. A special invitation is extended to pilgrims and tourists with a passion for music.

The first edition of the festival will take place in Israel and Palestine starting November 5 until November 28, 2014. A "Prelude" of the event was held on the Greek island of **Rhodes from September 30 to October 4.**

The organists are all internationally known like the American **Mark Pacoe** (organist and music director of the Church of St. Malachy in Times Square in New York) and the Germans **Ulrich Pakusch** (organist and music director of the Basilica of Werl and collaborator of the greatest orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic) and **Axel Flierl** (the organist and choir director of St. Peter and Paul Basilica in Dillingen an der Donau, Bavaria, that is the co-cathedral of the Diocese of Augsburg). The Italian **Eugenio Maria Fagiani** (organist in the Symphony Orchestra "Giuseppe Verdi" of Milan) will play the oldest pipe organ of the Holy Land, an Agati from 1847 that has been recently installed in the Church of St. Peter in Jaffa (Tel Aviv) especially for this occasion. **Chris Paraskevopoulos** is a very talented Greek organist, one of the few organists to be found in Greece. He is also the artistic director of the music festival that has taken place since 2009 in the church of St. Francis in Rhodes.

The Festival is organized and produced by the Custody of the Holy Land. The Commissariats of the Holy Land in Germany and in the United States, the Franciscan Media Center, the Magnificat Institute, the website Custodia.org, the Christian Information Center, the ATS Pro Terra Sancta and the Franciscan fraternities - where the concerts take place - have all collaborated in various ways.



To announce the event, the **website** www.tsorganfestival.org has been launched. Aside from the festival, the site concisely describes all the activities of the Custody of the Holy Land, according to their location thanks to an interactive map. The site is in English, Italian, Arabic, Hebrew and, for the first time in an official announcement of the Custody of the Holy Land, also in Greek and German (as of today available only on the ATS Pro Terra Sancta website). From the site, the user can access the videos of the festival on its YouTube channel, the audio files on SoundCloud, an online audio distribution platform, and all the latest news from the Facebook page. More, from the website it will be possible **to follow the live stream** of some selected concerts: all the concerts in Nazareth, the concert of November 13 in Jerusalem and the concert of November 28 in Bethlehem.

The concerts of the festival will take place **November 5-28, 2014**

Every Wednesday in **Nazareth** (November 5, 12, 19, 26)

Basilica of the Annunciation, 6 pm

Every Thursday in **Jerusalem**, (November 6, 13, 20, 27)

Church of St. Saviour, 6 pm

Every Friday in **Bethlehem** (November 7, 14, 21, 28)

Church of St. Catherine at the Basilica of the Nativity, 6 pm

Tuesday, November 18 in **Jaffa (Tel Aviv)**, Church of St. Peter, 7 pm

Sunday, November 23 in **Emmaus El-Qubeibeh**, Church of St. Cleophas, 12:00 noon.

Transportation from Jerusalem and Bethlehem will be provided because of the difficulty in accessing this Palestinian location.

From September 30 to October 4 "Prelude" on the island of **Rhodes** (Greece) in partnership with "Organ & Music Festival Rhodes" in the church of St. Francis.

Free Entrance to all concerts.

The Custody of the Holy Land is a special and international Mission to the Catholic Church, a part of the Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans). The Franciscans arrived in the Holy Land in the thirteenth century, and from 1342 have a mandate to preserve and serve the Holy Places on behalf of the Catholic Church. In addition to the care of shrines and assistance to pilgrims, the Franciscans have developed many activities for the benefit of local people, primary in support of the Christian community, but not exclusively. The Custody of the Holy Land is also a diplomatic entity recognized by many countries and institutions.

Terra Sancta Organ Festival

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