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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Europe in the Holy Land

Plenary Assembly of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe
Israel-Palestine, 11-16 September 2015

At the invitation of **His Beatitude Fouad Twal**, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, the annual Plenary Assembly of the Council of European Episcopal Conferences (CCEE), the assembly which brings together the Presidents of all the Bishops' Conferences representing 45 nations on the continent, will take from 11-16 September in the Holy Land.

It is the first time in CCEE's history that a Plenary Assembly is taking place in the Holy Land, in the land where Christianity was born and developed. The exceptional nature of the event is further underlined by the fact that it is the first time in the recent history of Christianity that such a large number of high-level representatives of the European episcopate are meeting there at the same time.

By accepting the invitation for the Holy Land to host their meeting, the Presidents of the Bishops' Conferences intend to undertake a pilgrimage to the very roots of Europe, of European culture.

"The meeting is in fact a pilgrimage to the places where the Christian faith was born. From this land, Jesus' disciples travelled throughout the world to bring the new message of Jesus. The Gospel arrived in Europe having set out from this land, too! When Europe goes to the Holy Land, it is going, therefore, to the place of its Judaeo-Christian roots. This area of the world has always been a crossroads of civilisation, permeated by great cultural differences and at times by strong social tensions which in the past have united and today still continue to bind Europe and the Middle East", said **Mgr Duarte da Cunha**, General Secretary of CCEE.

The Council of European Bishops' Conferences of Europe (CCEE) currently gathers 33 European Bishops' Conferences, represented by their Presidents, plus the Archbishops of Luxembourg, of the Principality of Monaco, the Maronite Archbishop of Cyprus and the Bishop of Chişinău (Moldova Rep.), the Eparchial Bishop of Mukachevo and the Apostolic Administrator of Estonia. The President is Cardinal Péter Erdő, Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest, Primate of Hungary; Vice-Presidents are Cardinal Angelo Bagnasco, Archbishop of Genoa, and Mgr Angelo Massafra, Archbishop of Scutari-Pult (Albania). The Secretary General is Mgr Duarte da Cunha. The Secretariat is based at St Gallen (Switzerland). www.ccee.eu

There are two central themes to the meeting: the figure of Jesus and sharing about the challenges of the Church in Europe.

At the centre of their work, the bishops will focus above all on the Person of Jesus, true God and true man. “To look at the historical Jesus who lived in this land is very important to strengthen the relationship with the living Jesus today. To look at the historical reality which is at the start of the Christian faith and to know the person of Jesus within His people, is fundamental to understanding what He said and achieved. God made man came as a member of a people, that of Israel, which links almost genetically the People of Israel to all the Christian peoples of the land”, **Mgr Da Cunha stated.**

A good deal of time will then be devoted to listening to and sharing about the “joys and challenges” which today pervade the Church in Europe. In turn, the Presidents will report on the situation in their own countries. It will also be an opportunity for a discussion about some of the common challenges.

As well as the various celebrations in the Holy Places in Galilee, such as Capernaum, Magdala and a procession in the town of Mi’ilya to mark the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, of particular importance will be a **Prayer Vigil for the Family** in the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth, Saturday 12 September, led by the Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, **Cardinal Marc Ouellet**, preceded by a meeting of the bishops with Catholic families from the city.

Naturally included in the meeting-pilgrimage of the Presidents of the Bishops’ Conferences of Europe is a visit to the city of Bethlehem, where, for Christians, God revealed Himself and dwelt in human history. There, the participants will visit in groups different charitable works, institutions through which the Church is trying to be a neighbour to the most needy.

These charitable works are for the most part managed by and are the fruit of the insight of numerous religious Congregations working in the Holy Land. In Bethlehem, the Presidents will pay tribute to the humble and hidden work of the numerous male and female consecrated religious. In particular, the bishops will have the opportunity to listen to the testimony of the Carmelite Sisters and the Sisters of the Rosary about the life of the two new Palestinian Saints (Sister Maria Alfonsina and Sister Maria of Jesus Crucified), canonised on 17 May.

In Bethlehem, the Presidents will also meet the Custos of the Holy Land, the bishops of the Assembly of the Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land (ACOHL) and the representatives of other Christian denominations.

The Plenary Assembly will conclude on Wednesday 16 September with a celebration at the altar of the empty tomb of Jesus in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. Also envisaged is a visit to the Israeli and Palestinian authorities. Information about these visits will be given in the course of the meeting.

From 11-14 September, the meeting will be based at the Domus Galilaeae (*Road 8277 - Korazim ISRAEL*) in Galilee (north Israel), while from the afternoon of 14-16 September

the meeting will take place at the Notre Dame International Center (*Paratrooper's Road, P.O. Box 20531, 91204 Jerusalem*).

Below journalists can see some of the highlights of the programme with information about the celebrations to be broadcast through *live streaming*, the opportunities for interviews, the sessions at which they can participate, and other information.

Please note: the full programme for the meeting, along with the list of participants, is available at the CCEE website or in the *Asset Bank* (see media information) made available by the *Christian Media Center*.

Programme for the media

Friday 11 September 2015 - Domus Galilaeae

18:00 Start of the meeting

Part of the opening session of the meeting is open to journalists. Filming and photography is allowed subject to agreement with the CCEE Media Office.

Initial welcomes

Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem

His Beatitude Fouad TWAL

President of CCEE

His Eminence Cardinal Péter ERDŐ

Apostolic Nuncio to Israel and Apostolic Delegate in Jerusalem and Palestine

His Grace Mgr Giuseppe LAZZAROTTO

Reading of the Message from Pope Francis

19:30 Vespers and Celebration of Mass (Domus Galilaeae)
Presiding: His Eminence Cardinal Marc OUELLET

Saturday 12 September 2015 - Domus Galilaeae – Capernaum– Nazareth

10:00-10:30 Break - Opportunity for interviews

Interviews in loco (telephone interviews are not allowed) can be arranged with the CCEE Media Office (media@ccee.eu). Please send an e-mail indicating the person you wish to interview and the subject matter of the interview. It will be possible to do interviews only after receiving written confirmation by e-mail.

12:15 Mass (Capernaum)

Presiding: His Grace Mgr **Angelo MASSAFRA**, *President of the Albanian Bishops' Conference and Vice-president of CCEE*

Filming and photography are allowed only subject to agreement with the competent authorities (see information for journalists).

20.30 **Prayer Vigil in Nazareth** and Marian procession in the Basilica of the Annunciation
Prayer for families and for the Synod of Bishops
Presiding: **His Eminence Cardinal Marc Ouellet**

Filming and photography are allowed only subject to agreement with the competent authorities (see information for journalists).

For the live broadcast of this event on the website, please use the following "embed code"

Link: <http://goo.gl/jvVsNs>

Embed code:

```
<iframe src="http://rr-d.vidnt.com/player/?stream=Cancao1&account=dimd&delivery type=hls &height=400&width=600&autoplay=true" width="600" height="405"></iframe>
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Sunday 13 September 2015 - Domus Galilaeae – Mount of the Beatitudes

10:30-11:00 **Break - Opportunity for interviews**

Interviews in loco (telephone interviews are not allowed) can be arranged with the CCEE Media Office (media@ccee.eu). Please send an e-mail indicating the person you wish to interview and the subject matter of the interview. It will be possible to do interviews only after receiving written confirmation by e-mail.

18.00 **Mi'ilya – Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross with procession through the town**

Filming and photography are allowed here. For filming and photography during Vespers in the church in the town please contact the CCEE Media Office.

Monday 14 September 2015 - Magdala – Jerusalem

11:15 **Magdala - Mass** (*Duc in altum Shrine – Magdala Center*)
Presiding: **His Grace Mgr Fragkiskos Papamanólis, President of the Bishops' Conference of Greece**

Filming and photography are allowed only subject to agreement with the competent authorities (see information for journalists).

17:30 Jerusalem
Procession of the Latin Patriarchate to the Holy Sepulchre – prayer with the Franciscans and Vespers

Filming and photography are allowed only subject to agreement with the competent authorities (see information for journalists).

Tuesday 15 September 2015 - Jerusalem – Bethlehem

11:30-12:00 Break – Opportunity for interviews

Interviews in loco (telephone interviews are not allowed) can be arranged with the CCEE Media Office (media@ccee.eu). Please send an e-mail indicating the person you wish to interview and the subject matter of the interview. It will be possible to do interviews only after receiving written confirmation by e-mail.

18:00 Mass – Church of Saint Catherine
Presiding: His Beatitude Fouad TWAL

Filming and photography are allowed only subject to agreement with the competent authorities (see information for journalists).

For the live broadcast of this event on the website, please use the following “embed code”

IN ITALIAN : Youtube LIVE STREAMING FEED embed code

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/user/videocustodia/live>

Embed code:

```
<iframe width="560" height="315"
src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/Pf0ZnFR95dw" frameborder="0"
allowfullscreen></iframe>
```

IN ARABIC: youtube LIVE STREAMING embed code

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/user/videocustodiar/live>

Embed code:

```
<iframe width="560" height="315"
src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/NZmU-k0ae2g" frameborder="0"
allowfullscreen></iframe>
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Wednesday 16 September 2015 - Jerusalem

07:15 Mass at the Empty Tomb in the Basilica of the Resurrection
 Presiding: **His Eminence Cardinal Péter ERDŐ**

Filming and photography are allowed only subject to agreement with the competent authorities (see information for journalists).

Information for the media

1. Full programme and list of participants. The full programme and list of participants is available on the CCEE website and in the **Asset Bank** (shared file) made available by the Christian Media Center (see point 5)

2. Venues for the meeting and access. From Friday 11 (at 18.00) to Monday 14 September (ore 12.00), the bishops will be meeting at the Domus Galilaeae (*Road 8277 - Korazim ISRAEL - In front of Vered HaGalil*).*

From Tuesday 15 September from 09.00 to 12.00 the bishops will be meeting at the Notre Dame International Center (*Paratrooper's Road, P.O. Box 20531, 91204 Jerusalem*)**.

* in the afternoon of Monday 14 September the bishops will transfer to Jerusalem

** in the afternoon of Tuesday 15 September the bishops will transfer to Bethlehem for some visits and a celebration.

In both places, the meeting will be **behind closed doors**, apart from part of the opening session and the public celebrations, as indicated in the programme.

3. Access to the Media Office. Access to the *Domus Galilaeae* and to the *Notre Dame Center* is solely for accredited journalists who on arrival will receive the badges guaranteeing access. From Friday 11 September (at 15.00) until Monday 14 September (at 12.00), accredited journalists can access the Media Office on the lower floor with free Wireless connection in the *Domus Galilaeae*.

On Tuesday 13 September (09.00 to 12.00) the Media Office will move to the Notre Dame International Center in Jerusalem.

4. Filming and photography

Filming and photography in the Plenary meeting room can be done subject to agreement with the CCEE Media Office (email: media@ccee.eu/ mobile: **+41 79 12 80 189**).

Please note, for the celebrations in the Christian shrines in Galilee and in particular the celebrations at the Holy Sepulchre and the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem, filming and photography must be arranged in advance and agreed by the competent

authorities. Please contact the *Christian Information Center*: <http://www.cicts.org/> (department *Filming and Media*).

5. Material available to journalists. Documentation under embargo will be sent to accredited journalists in due course.

Photographs. High-resolution photographs of the meeting will be made available free of charge at the following address: <https://goo.gl/photos/8oyvqVe1Ev6jyslYA>
Use is allowed subject to the application of the signature © **Mazur**/www.catholicnews.org.uk

Videos. Daily, the *Christian Media Center*, the media partner for the meeting will provide a video service about each day free of charge without a logo (images without audio for the private sessions and with clean audio for opened events) (*see: list available videos - and identifiable by the signature **Video clip_date***). It will be accompanied by a written text to facilitate the realisation of audio in the user's language.

Photography and production. The *Christian Media Center*, the media partner for the meeting, will make available and free of charge different videos of their own production. "*list available videos*" and identifiable by the signature **TSNEWS_date**. These Videos are copyrighted and can't be edited.

Other photographs produced by the *Christian Media Center* will be made available free of charge to journalists. Their use is allowed subject to the application of the signature ©**Christian Media Center**.

Access to the *Asset Bank* and the downloading of photographs, videos and documents is possible using the following data:

Website: assetbank.cmc-terrasanta.com

Username: [ccee](#)

Password: [ccee@432](#)

Live Streaming. Some events during the meeting, indicated in the programme, will be broadcast through live streaming. Information to link the *Christian Media Center* player to an external web page is indicated in the programme.