

MEDITERRANEAN ECHOES

March

2012

Ecce Homo

The Crowning with Thorns.

Each year on the first Friday of Lent we, at Ecce Homo have the tradition of commemorating the Crowning with Thorns. It is a very solemn and impressive ceremony. Usually the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Fuad Twal presides at this ceremony. However, this year it coincided with the installation of Archbishop Maroun Lahlam who was named by Pope Benedict XVI, as Auxiliary Bishop and Patriarchal Vicar of Amman.



Archbishop Maroun has been the Archbishop of Tunis and was greatly loved. I am sure that our sisters in Tunis will be very disappointed to lose their loved Archbishop. Amman is part of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Monsignor Maroun was also greatly loved here in Jerusalem so there is rejoicing at his return to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

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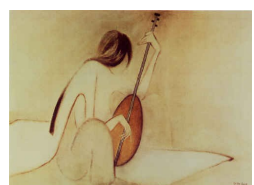
However, we were very pleased to welcome Fr. David Neuhaus sj, Latin Patriarchal Vicar for Hebrew speaking Catholics and Migrants in Israel, to preside at the ceremony. We had many religious, friends, staff as well as priests present. The singing was beautifully done by members of the Community of Chemin Neuf of Ecce Homo and Nazareth. Following the ceremony all were invited to the terrace to continue the celebration of friendship with a small reception. We thank everyone for joining us in this Lenten celebration.



Ein Karem

The life in Ein Karem

These last months the flow of visitors has diminished, they come mostly to enjoy the beauty of the garden, its peace. But we can give thanks to God who has blessed us with the rain- our cisterns are overflowing.



Some groups were very interesting:

In November there was a meeting of intellectuals Jews, Moslems interested in Jewish and Moslem music, the Kabbala, the Soufisme. That was the second visit to our house. Their visit to the House of Father Marie was very moving. One of them spoke with enthusiasm of Mary of her stretched open hands communicating God's light in its radiance.

We have received also a group of Jewish and Arab young girls belonging to the group "Creativity for Peace" They were guided by two women a Jewish and an Arab. Their aim is to teach these young girls to know and to appreciate each other through their common activities.

The "World Vision"ho spreads round the world an education of dialogue especially in the countries with conflicts.

The General Office of Bilingual and Binational schools "Hand in Hand" in which our sister Carmen is involved. he children Arabs and Jews are educated together from the Kinder Garden. We can mention also the groups visiting our garden, some of them ask for a talk. A young American, Jew, wanted to hear about Christianity and asked a lot of questions.

We have also groups of Christian Pilgrims who come for Mass and meals. We are there to offer our hospitality to the daily visitors with whom we have good relations.

The first room of Father Marie's House is now permanently open to the visitors . We are preparing a complementary panel on " Sion and Her Charism - Brothers and Sisters in the world today.

Finally spring is there, rains will disappear and the garden will put on its new dress of various color flowers, waiting for you>

Anne-Catherine for the community of Ein Karem

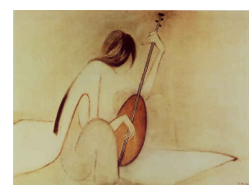
Gémenos

GEMENOS

These are some news of our HOUSE lost in our "Home for retired people"

On the 14th of February we celebrated the 102 years of Sr Jeanne Ghislaine who unfortunately cannot walk anymore , she hears with difficulty, but fortunately she can read and follow all the events of the world and of the Congregation. Celine who will be 95 in a few days (18th of March) was hospitalized urgently (on the 11th of march) because her bronchitis has had repercussions on her fragile heart!

That is for the sisters.... Now some other news from our" home for retired people".



After the dates were delayed twice, Andree et Fiorenza can occupy their new rooms on the 23-24 march ! Lydia will be able to have a room for herself, but still temporarily ! There are still sisters who are two in one room and those who are in rooms that have not been renovated yet. They will move later on in their new rooms.

We have our meals in the corners of the corridor of the new building; the kitchen remained in its old place (so you can imagine the trolley going back and forth from one building to the other pushed outside in all temperatures! Poor people of the staff! luckily the sun has appeared since the end of February.

Since our first big removal, we had not the chapel anymore neither a community room, but we hope to have them both after the end of the big works! Fortunately for the more valiant we can go every morning for Mass to the parish which is very close, and we can go there to pray during the day. Despite the difficult moments that we have to endure, we have also the joy to see some good realizations which will facilitate the life of the residents.

It is a joy for us to see Genevieve V.P. coming to see us and to speak to us... We rejoice in advance of the coming of Aracely for a short visit, she is coming for a session that is being held in Marseille, and Carmen for an other session.

Big affection and union of prayer.

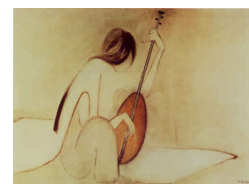
Community of Gémenos

Istanbul

Meeting of the Old Students

Every year at around the 20th of January(a Sunday) the meeting of our Old Students is held. This meeting brings together about hundred of them for a meal and the distribution of the "diploma-souvenir" to those who where graduated 20 and 10 years ago.

This year the 20th of January was a moment of meetings and encounters specially appreciated, Genvieve Vatin Perignon was invited by those who were graduated 40 years ago. The General Consul of France, the Mayor and the Director of the National Education Department of the area have honored us by there presence. How many were those Students? Certainly many hundreds. After the speeches, four people were specially honored one of the teachers of the faculty of humanities of Ankara, one teacher of archeology of the University of Istanbul, one teacher of Mathematics for 36 years in Sion, one artist of the National Theater of Istanbul, a teacher of the Faculty of Medecine and specialist of algology. Then those who gradu-



ated 50, 40, 25 years received a "plaquette-souvenir" of which they are very proud....) The boys are in our establishment for 16 years only) Three young students have animated this meeting with beautiful French songs very well presented, they were very applauded.

This same day, Mrs Lale Murtezaoglu invited the participants to celebrate also the 25 years of the creation of the "Association of the "Old Students" of which she is the president. This association, very active has also 2200 adherents. She organizes lectures, outings, assigns scholarships. She has at her disposal a place where the Old Students like to meet. They have a WEB. She publishes also a bulletin widely spread, where the news of each one can be announced. She wants to build really a "Sionian Family" We wish her a long life....

After this meeting in the theater ward = the ancient big chapel, the conversation continued in the "big hall" around a cocktail.

Monique

The Federation of the french Schools in Turkey have asked F.Guy Theunis (White Father), if he could animate one day on the "Non Violent Communication". The date was fixed for the 25th of February. This formation was for the Directors of the 6 school establishments of congregations, for the Director assistants of different sectors of education. The members of the Tuelles were also present. We were 44 participants.

In the beginning F. Guy presented the language of "Giraffe" and the language of "Jackal" followed by practical workshops. It was very nice to see how everybody involved in this reflection, the examples were not missing, the atmosphere was very friendly, because we knew each other very well. F. Guy answered the questions with great clarity to the situations we could present. The sharing was very fruitful and everybody left happy, some even thinking of having the same formation for their schools.

Monique

“ Istanbul Mosaic “

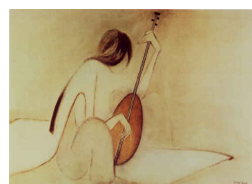
What is a mosaic, if not a harmonious assemblage of small pieces of stone of different colours but all glistening and the arrangement of which “speaks” .

Well! It seems to me that this expression can be applied to what I lived between the 17 and the 24 January 2012 in Istanbul.

First of all there was the warm welcome by Monique and Ceyda (a former pupil) who came to meet me in Asia (!) inspite of the snow, in the comfortable car belonging to Yasemin (another former pupil).

The following day , there was a meal with 19 former pupils from my first graduating class (1968 -69) and with whom I kept very friendly strong contact.

And in this same ‘register’ of former pupils, the big feast on Sunday 22, reunited prin-



cipally those who celebrated their 25 years, 40 years, 50 years of their graduation; without forgetting those who distinguished themselves by special service rendered to their country through their profession of lawyer, doctor, researcher, University professor, journalist, also a diplomat.

The presence of the very friendly Mayor of our district, of a representative of the National Turkish Education, and of the French General Consul who speaks Turkish well like French and whose humour charmed the audience, enhanced the evening.

Then followed the presentation of a diaporama - about the 25 years since “ The Association of Our Former Pupils “ started. We always like to see again and again the faces of the Sisters, of the teachers and even of the pupils who animated the Lycée during these specific years.

After the traditional distribution of the “plaquettes” to the “ heroines “ of the day, tea was served in the Big Hall and this was the occasion for sharing and exchanging news happily with one another.

N.B. There are no boys in these graduations, not yet...



Second ‘register’ of the mosaic : the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This is always intensely lived in Istanbul where all confessions of Christianity, Catholic Latin and Oriental, Protestants of all denominations, Orthodox, Armenians... exist.

Each evening of this week, all pray together in a different place of worship.

I joined Monique and Isabelle to participate in 2 celebrations : at the Syriac Catholic and at the Greek Orthodox churches.

I left the third ‘ register ‘ of my mosaic for the end, the one which gives meaning to the whole: it is the community.

It is not numerous, for sure, but it is so lively and welcoming, attentive to everything and to everybody, as if they were 10 !

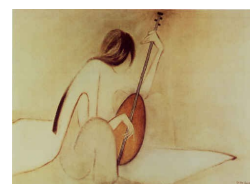
The three of us, we celebrated the feast of 20th January, very simply but profoundly in union with all the Congregation. Time for prayer in our small chapel : each one shared what seems essential to her in this event and gave thanks for it.

Mass was at the Cathedral (in the heated annex) celebrated by our Bishop, while the texts and hymns were chosen by us. Aperitif at the community room and supper at a restaurant followed!

Personally, I liked this evening very much, all simple at the heart of a week which passed too quickly!

My mosaic is beautiful, isn’t it?

Geneviève



Tunisie

At the beginning of November we received a letter from our Landlord telling us that he wanted to take back his flat for a project of his son.

After having searched and visited for many weeks various flats, finally on the 14th of February, right in the middle of the bad weather (cold and rain) we left the house and its lovely garden to move into a nice and pleasant house with 3 rooms instead of 2 which allows each one of us to have her own room. The difficult time of moving from one house to another is

over now. We continue to settle in and to find a place for everything. Luckily our friends came to help us!

The area in which we live now is sympathetic, popular and much more central which enables us to do our shopping. There is even an old bus that makes a few journeys a day, that allows us to go easily to the Centre "la Voix de l'Enfant" which is at 45mn walk from our house. Unfortunately there is no garden in our house, but we have two little squares planted with a lemon tree and a

jasmin.

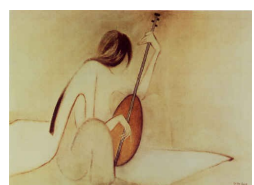
Your visit will be always a joy for us. We are waiting for you.

Agnès

Here is our address :

3, rue de Tripoli
- 8000 Nabeul (opposite of a beautiful Hammam)

Our Tel : (216) 72 286 220



"Enlarge the space of your tent"

This is one aspect of our vocation that we live here with all our heart.

Yesterday, Saturday 17 March 2012, our bell rang. It was Georgina, one of our students, all in tears. She gave us the news that the Patriarch Shenouda had just passed away. Some of the other students had already gone to the Coptic Orthodox Church, Mari Mina, near by, to pray there.

This is how we ended the entry into Sunday prayer and joining our brothers and sisters mourning for their leader Baba Shenouda.

A few moments later Faiza received a phone call from one of her friends, a Moslem, giving her (us) condolences for Baba Shenouda. The neighbours did the same as well as people we met in the street. We also gave our condolences to our families and friends.



Last September 2011, Wafaa joined us as a young professed sister. She had already lived here some years before. She still has to finish her final fourth year of Religious Studies at the Lazarists Fathers' Centre in Manshiya. She did very well in the first semester exams. Since October we have nine students in our small foyer, enrolled in different university colleges. The first semester of studies passed peacefully and all of the students are back after some weeks holiday to continue the second semester.

One consequence caused by the atmosphere of the revolutionary year, we stopped going to churches rather away from our house, like the Jesuits'. Some of us used to go there three or four times a week, now we go there about twice a month. We try to keep closer to our house, and we go regularly to St Anthony's Church our parish. Being so regular our parish priest called on us to do some service: Wafaa and Faiza to do the reading in Arabic once or twice a week, and Faiza to give Holy Communion and /or to get the Chalice from the Tabernacle. (Our Parish Priest is in a wheelchair as a result of an accident some years back.

In October 2011, Sister Bernadette- Clarisse, was hospitalized because of a stroke and was in the ICU at a hospital not very far from our house. We were called to help as much as we could especially with visits. In the meantime Sister Catherine, accompanying Sister Bernadette couldn't stay the night in hospital. So we were very happy to have her pass the night with us for about a week till Sr Bernadette was out of the ICU. Sister Bernadette is much better and back in her convent, but still in a wheelchair.

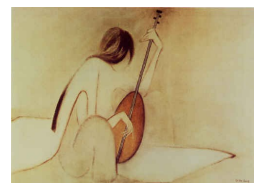
In view of the reconfiguration and as preparation for the 20th January we renewed our Project for Life.

On the 25th of January 2012 we celebrated the first anniversary of the Revolution with great hope, still facing some more difficulties.

And today, 20th March, we passed these last days following the lying in state of Baba Shenouda at the St Mark Cathedral in Cairo, on Sunday and Monday, and today the funeral at Saint Bishoi Monastery in Wadi Natrun. The Christians were given holidays on these days to be able to follow this event. Three of our students went home, the other six joined us in watching TV, in sharing about our role in life, in the church, about religious life, thus becoming closer in mourning and admiring Baba Shenouda.

And spring is with us again full of hope with the white blossoms of the orange trees, and the yellow and white daisies and the orange capucines (nasturtiums) and the red hibiscus flowers of our garden surrounding our house.

(Wafaa, Faiza and M Carmen)



Malte

Celebrating the “Shipwreck of St. Paul in Malta”

...He ordered those who could swim to throw themselves overboard...and so it was that all escaped to land. After we had escaped, we then learned that the island was called Malta. (Acts 27:43-28:1)

Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, when a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand... (Acts 28:3-6)

February 10th is a very important and special feast, very close to the heart of every Maltese citizen, whether in Malta or in the Diaspora. We commemorate the very beginnings of our Christian Faith when St. Paul was shipwrecked on the little Island of Malta.

The Maltese community in the Holy Land takes this opportunity to get together to celebrate and encourage each other in whatever our ministry is outside our homeland. This year we chose to celebrate at Ein Kerem, where the Brothers and Sisters of Sion made it a real feast by their warm welcome on their beautiful premises.



Three Maltese priests celebrated the Eucharist in our chapel and as usual we were honoured by the presence of His Excellency the Ambassador of Malta, Dr. Abraham Borg, and the Consul in Ramallah, Alan John Bugeja.

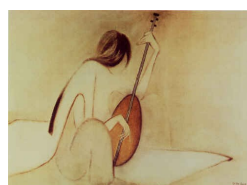
Fr. Joe Calleja, OFM who is studying at the Flagellation, was our main celebrant and his inspiring homily was heart-warming. Our ancestors were the Phoenicians, who originally came from the northern coast of Palestine, and therefore St. Paul found a familiar culture and language to communicate with the people of the island who spoke Aramaic/Hebrew (not Greek or Latin). This enabled Paul to evangelise the people in three months!



“We shall have to run on some island” (Acts 27:26). This expression “shall have to...” is quoted in the Gospels and the Scriptures only when it expresses God’s plan; for example, “The Son of Man has to go up to Jerusalem...” Therefore it was in God’s plan that Paul should land in Malta. This makes the Maltese people consider ourselves as “people of the Scriptures”, who carry the responsibility of spreading the Good News, like the first Christian community in the Holy Land.

Our Eucharist was followed by an aperitif and a delicious lunch in the dining room and a big cake to close our Celebration.

Rose-Teresa



“Mgr. Henri TEISSIER in AUBAGNE”

In response to the invitation by the interfaith and non-believing group, Msgr. Teissier, Archbishop emeritus of Algiers, came to spend the day of February 21 in Aubagne. He arrived at 10 a.m. and was welcomed by an already numerous group in the library of the Observance chapel.

Introductions, talk about this and that, an interesting talk on the Jewish presence in Algeria (since the beginnings).

This was to replace the first encounter that was to have been held at the synagogue, but which had to be canceled.

Since more and more people arrived, we had to go down to the chapel, where in no time the heating was put on, the microphone installed...

Thus Msgr. Teissier presented his books before a large audience.

At 2:30 p.m., we met again at the mosque for a discussion on “Living together”.

Msgr. Teissier gave three extraordinarily moving testimonies by Muslims who had attended Fr. Pierre Lafitte's funeral; this latter had run a library in Algiers for medical students.

These texts are an eloquent proof that “living together” is not the fruit of an intellectual search, but exists where Faith in God is translated very naturally into attention to the other, into serving the other...

The students who had to do with Fr. Lafitte had definitely felt this.

The day was brought to closure between 6 and 8 p.m. in the community center “le Pin Vert”, which is run by our Muslim friend Kaddur.

We were surprised by the presence of a large number of Moroccans, Algerians, Tunisians, who took an active part in the sharing on “how to live one's faith where one is, how to live its roots”. Several became enthusiastically involved in our projects.

Among these projects is that of having Msgr. Teissier return to us next November!

And of course the evening ended with a simple and friendly buffet supper.

We remain very grateful to Msgr. Teissier, who gave us generously of his time, his experience, and I would even say his friendship.

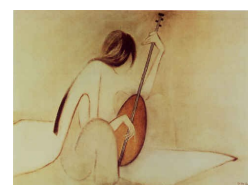
Geneviève

MEDICAL ETHICS AND RELIGIONS

“Giving in the various Religions”

Gift and Voluntary Help: Jean-François MATTEI (President of the Red Cross of France)

By its very nature, a gift is freely given when it is not remunerated although this would be possible.



The gift can be material (money, some good);
spiritual (a word, life), and thus it can go as far as the gift of self;
bodily (all or part of the body), which raises
ethical questions.

A gift has four characteristics:

- it is individual, from one person to another person;
- it is pertinent, adapted to the needs of the one receiving it;
- it is spontaneous, not based on merit (or retribution or reward);

it is freely given, authentic, disinterested.

This idea of gift is more and more in contradiction to the facts of daily life. E.g. the gift of organs: the body is not a property, it cannot be made available to possible buyers.

The gift is necessary for life in a society. E.g. the gift of blood: it is freely given, but society pays those who work in that area.

Motivations: according to A. Comte, altruism is innate; nevertheless, individualism triumphs... But there is also an existential altruism of compassion: helping the other gives one the comforting impression of being useful for something.

Altruism as giving value: the person who gives is suspect; however, true altruism does exist. Denying that the other can love is a proof of one's own selfishness.

Generosity resembles love.

One can give without loving, but one cannot love without giving.

The less love there is, the more generosity is necessary.

Love cannot be commanded, but generosity can. That is why generosity is a duty.

As you can imagine, these few notes cannot give you all the wealth and depth of J.F. Mattei's talk. But I'm passing them on to you as a possible basis for reflection.

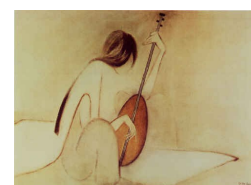
As to the other talks, I will only mention them.

The Buddhist point of view was presented by Julien CLAYET-MAREL (Ph.D. in law).

The presentation of the Jewish point of view was entitled "Giving and/or receiving" and was given by Rabbi Lionel DRAY. It was quite legalistic...

One interesting detail on donating organs: you can give blood and bone marrow because they grow back, and one kidney because it is possible to live with only one kidney. The rest is forbidden, for one must be able to arrive in heaven complete...

The Catholic point of view was presented by Geneviève COMEAU (teacher, Xavière). Her talk was entitled: "Giving and receiving, a key to Christian life". She emphasized the idea of relationship and added that of "returning", which is to say, giving in turn.



Her position turned out to be very close to that of J.F. Mattei.

I could not stay for the afternoon. The points of view presented were:
that of the Muslims by the physician Youssef KOUIDRAT;
that of the Protestants by Denis MULLER, university professor;
that of the followers of the Baha'i religion, entitled "Giving of oneself, giving to humanity".

These colloquia are organized by the *Espace Ethique Méditerranéen* [Mediterranean Ethical Space], which was founded by J.F. Mattei; it has a conference room and a library in the basement of the Timone Hospital in Marseille.

Geneviève

Divers

Interfaith happenings in Jerusalem

ICCI

The Inter-religious Coordinating Council of Israel (ICCI) is launching several new programs for this year, under the title of "An Other Look." These programs include

a weekly series on Christian Readings of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. Fr.

David Neuhaus sj.(given in Hebrew):

a monthly clip screening and discussion series on "Living Together in the same Land". (English.)

a monthly series of encounters with local Religious Leaders. (Hebrew)

Bernadette, Maureen and I went to the first session titled "Understanding Each Other—Palestinian and Jewish Perspective." We had a very stimulating and informative discussion after each film clip. The different aspects that were highlighted were:

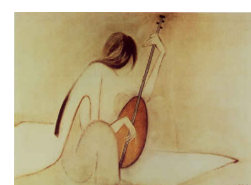
The fear of some of the Israelis as they drive through West Bank areas to reach their Settlement;

The stereotyping of Palestinians;

An interview with what seemed to be an ordinary educated Palestinian about his life and his family and their experience under occupation, just before he became a suicide bomber.

Demolition of Palestinian homes and the eviction of a Jewish family who were then taken in by a Palestinian family for several months.

Those present were, Israelis, Palestinians and expatriates, and it was great to hear the honesty expressed and the acknowledgement of the injustices that are so obvious and that those of us present deeply regret. It is a tremendous initiative to gather peoples of other faith to share some of the concerns that are blocks to peace.



Rainbow.

We as a community are members of a Jewish Christian Dialogue Group called “Rainbow. For this year the theme we have chosen is a monthly presentation on a psalm used in both Jewish and Christian liturgies. We alternate each month-when there is a Christian presenter there is a response from a Jew and vice versa. We can always be assured that it is a provoking and stimulating discussion. We are grateful for the ease and honesty with which we can meet and discuss many issues

Centre for Biblical Formation Jerusalem.

Spanish program:

With the arrival of secretary Br. Carlos Vasconcelos nds, assisting Br. Elio Passeto Director of the program, we knew we were in for a very lively and well prepared Spanish Biblical Program. Our congratulations to Carlos for the wonderful ministry, as he guided and ‘skipped’ with our Spanish and Portuguese speakers, supporting them through a very successful month here in Ecce Homo.

The energy and sharing between the 33 participants, including Brs. Espedito de Lima & Osmar de Paullo and our Sisters Paulina Gutierrez nds from San Jose, and Helena Esmeralda de Souza nds from Rio de Janeiro, filled the halls of Ecce Homo and brought joy and delight to all during the month of January.

The final Eucharist in the Ecce Homo Basilica and the inclusivity of the feast that followed was another occasion for much rejoicing as the participants gave warm and generous thanks for the month of studying the scriptures in the Land. Congratulations Elio, and for all those who made this a memorable month of learning.



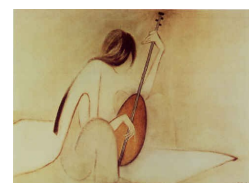
English Program:

Now into their third week the participants of this final three month Sabbatical program to be offered here in Ecce Homo are beginning to call their house of study – home! Coming from 12 different countries they have entered fully into this precious and gifted time, studying, praying and walking with their scriptures in the land we call holy.

Blessed with excellent guides the initial weeks were spent exploring the archaeological sites as far as Masada including a float in the Salt Sea and Qumran and as close as the Temple Mount/Haram esh-Sharif just

across the road. Next week will be spent on pilgrimage in the region of the Galilee.

It has been rewarding and most encouraging to hear this past week from students as they leave the lecture hall following a class on the prophet Amos, or Interpretation of the Bible in Judaism and Christianity in Rabbinic and Patristic times, that they are now keen to study more of the un explored



treasures and richness found in the scriptures.

One of our Lecturers, who teaches Romans in this sabbatical session, called in at the weekend with a present for us. The book is entitled “The Jewish Annotated New Testament “New Revised Standard Version Bible Translation edited by Amy-Jill Levine & Marc Zvi Brettler. Oxford University Press, 2011. Some titles of essays found towards the back of this book are helpful reading and very pertinent for our participants – ***Bearing False Witness - Common Errors made about Early Judaism; and Paul and Judaism.***

Bernadette Lynch nds

Avis important

“We would like to invite you to visit our new web site of the Mediterranean Network, that has started to function.

www.sion-med.org

