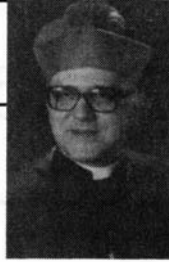


## Interview: H.B. Patriarch Michel Sabbah



# 'Let us begin a new page in history'

*The Patriarch was interviewed on Nov. 3 in Jerusalem by Paolo Raimondi and Dean Andromidas.*

**EIR:** We would like to have your view, as the Patriarch of Jerusalem and as a Palestinian patriot, of the recent agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization of Yasser Arafat.

**Sabbah:** First of all, I have to say that as Patriarch of Jerusalem I am concerned with peace and justice for every inhabitant in this land—Palestinian, Israeli, Christian, Jew, or Muslim. . . . These peace agreements are essentially a good positive step taken by the two peoples, Palestinian and Israeli. It was not the solution for all pending problems. Justice, solutions to all problems, are yet to be found. The meaning of these agreements is that from now on, violence must stop, in order to begin a new phase in the history of this long confrontation between two peoples. From now on, the way and the means to search for peace and justice will be peaceful ways and means; there will be commissions to talk and discuss, until a solution is reached.

These agreements are a new start and a change in the way of pursuing the search for justice, and the search for a solution for the long conflict between both peoples.

Until now, over almost a century, both sides took ways of wars and violence. Now they try the other way, the peaceful way. And this is essentially good and positive.

**EIR:** What do you think are the priorities to pave the way for a real understanding among the Israelis and the Palestinians?

**Sabbah:** The first priority is to create mutual trust and confidence. For generations, both sides were educated to see in the other an enemy to hate and to kill before he kills you. It is up to all leaders now, political and religious alike, to change this way of thinking. The other is no more the enemy. He is the one with whom one has to build peacefully peace and justice, and a new society where there is equal place for everyone, and where every one is a brother and a sister to the other. And this reeducation will take time.

Therefore it is a priority not to drag out discussions and commissions and keep delaying decisions and new solutions. Decisions for the new peaceful way of life must be taken in the shortest possible time. . . .

**EIR:** The social doctrine of the church is, "Development is the new name of peace," from Pope Paul VI up through the most recent encyclical of Pope John Paul II. *EIR* has always proposed the realization of great infrastructure and social-cultural projects, using the most advanced scientific and technological discoveries of man to fight for justice and development against poverty and any form of colonialism. What is your view about the economic aspect of the agreement?

**Sabbah:** This is very true. And peoples in need of development should be helped with all kinds of technology. But even in using technology, the value and the dignity of the human being should be respected and considered first. The human being has to be respected as an individual and as a person.

Therefore, development cannot begin without the education of the person himself, who is in need of developing himself. The priority is the education of the person—education which must remain loyal to each one's culture, religion, and social traditions.

**EIR:** We understand economy as the manifestation in society of the *imago viva Dei* principle. But throughout the world we see the spread of the New Age pagan ideologies associated with malthusianism, racism, and the destructive materialism of the wild free market ideology. What can one do to avoid the mistakes the western world has made, for example, in eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall?

**Sabbah:** Economy will help any human being to realize in himself the "image of God" if it remains in the service of the human being, and not the opposite: if it is a response to the needs of the human beings, and does not use them as an instrument of profit. When economy is only a way of making profits, when it creates need instead of responding to real needs, it will not assure equitable distribution of goods between individuals and peoples, and it will not help true development or create real peace within societies and among peoples.

**EIR:** The question of Jerusalem has not been dealt with in the agreement. What do you suggest should be the status of Jerusalem, both as the city where Israelis and Palestinians live, and as the holy city for the Christian, Islamic, and Jewish religions?

**Sabbah:** Jerusalem is a holy city for the three religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Moreover, two peoples live in it and have national aspirations: Israelis and Palestinians. Jerusalem is unique in the world; therefore it needs a unique and special status which will respond to the religious and national aspirations it represents. It is a status which has yet to be found. Only on that condition will Jerusalem resume being a holy city, a city of reconciliation, in which each one feels himself or herself as brother or sister to all brothers and sisters who live in it, whatever their religion or nationality may be. Therefore efforts must be made by Israelis and Palestinians, and by all believers, to find this unique and special status.