

AMCOR

[Amici delle Chiese d'Oriente – \(Friends of the Eastern Churches\) Website](#)

AMCOR (Amici Chiese d'Oriente) is a non profit organization whose mission is to assist and support the eastern Churches (Slovakia, Lithuania, Albania, Turkey and Holy Land) that are still in a precarious state, and other Christian communities in difficulty.

Amcor provides economic, cultural and spiritual support for pastoral activities, promotes cultural and spiritual exchanges, sends volunteers on seasonal internships, helps to reconstruct scientific facilities in the local theological faculties, donates didactic material for Catechesis in the various dioceses, and disseminates awareness and knowledge of the Shroud image and message.

ABOUT US

AMCOR was set up after the expositions of the Shroud in 1998-2000. At that time the exposition reception service established contacts with several churches of the East that were emerging from Communist persecution, hosting their representatives for the few days of their visit to see the Shroud.

The exposition volunteers and some of their friends felt that these brothers should continue to be assisted, in particular by taking the message of the Shroud to their countries. To do so, they set up a no profit organization called Amici Chiese d'Oriente (AMCOR).

Our interlocutors are the Bishops and the faithful of Eastern Catholic Churches, both of the Eastern Rite (Greek Catholic) and of the Latin Rite. Until now we have been to Slovakia, Lithuania, Romania, Ukraine, Turkey, Israel, Armenia, Albania, Lebanon, and Croatia. On these occasions we take the image of the Shroud (usually a life-sized photograph developed from film onto canvas), and give lectures or celebrate a Via Crucis or other prayer initiatives. If requested, more than one copy of the Shroud image is provided. Participants pay their full travel costs; they are not paid for by the Association.

AMCOR supports the Eastern Churches in initiatives signaled by their brethren, such as works and assistance for poor children, for seminarians in difficulty, for theological libraries without books or computer equipment, and building projects for educational or religious requirements and for the re-establishment of consecrated life.

AMCOR members meet regularly and engage in various activities, holding events on cultural and spiritual issues, and arranging spiritual retreats, tours and pilgrimages that are sometimes preceded by seminars. They undertake to follow the original inspiration, feeling the call to bear witness to the values of the Shroud message about the Lord's supreme love for humankind that speaks to us from the silence of the tomb. All the activities are carried out by volunteers and friends free of charge.

Don Giuseppe Ghiberti

ACTIVITIES

AMCOR started out with a pilgrimage. A group of friends went to the Holy Land, and later on to Turkey, in the footsteps of Jesus and then St. Paul, shortly before the most recent Shroud expositions. When preparations began for the 1998 exposition, some of them decided to provide a more substantial contribution, and all of them stayed on as volunteers. On the advice of Mons. Ruggero Franceschini (Bishop of Iskenderun first, and then Archbishop of Izmir, Turkey), the group became a no profit association.

In 2000 AMCOR invited eighty bishops from former “iron curtain” countries to attend the exposition of the Shroud, providing board and lodging for groups of a dozen people per diocese for the few days of their stay, so that they could see the Shroud and visit the city. Our guests became our friends, leading to the invitation to go and visit them in their home countries in the East.

On each visit we give our hosts a life-sized copy of the Shroud and we participate, as far as possible, in one of their pastoral or charitable projects. Each visit has led to something new, with enriching experiences for all those involved. The countries visited have been: Slovakia, Lithuania, Romania, Ukraine, Armenia, Turkey, Albania, Lebanon, Croatia, with brief stops in Poland and Germany. The pilgrimage to take the Shroud to Jerusalem was particularly significant, taking place at an academic meeting at the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum.

The preparation for these initiatives soon led to the need to provide a spiritual program also for those remaining in Turin: many AMCOR full members cannot travel but they participate in the common aims and objectives of the community. There are religious education moments and study meetings, above all to learn about our most usual partners in dialogue: our Orthodox and Muslim brethren.

Each year we provide a short course of spiritual exercises, a series of Lectio Divina, community readings of the books of the Bible (starting with the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles), and some short local pilgrimages. Our primary goal is to promote loving devotion to the Shroud’s message and to find the most suitable means for raising awareness about it, and this is the focus of all our members and projects.

The term “Eastern Churches” indicates our first area of interest that continues to be very important, but we have made a change in the no profit association’s statute so as to include the African Churches as well. We are also devoting increasing attention to those from the East who are now living in Italy.

EASTERN CHURCHES

AMCOR follows the events of the Eastern Churches attentively, and supports them in prayer. In many cases participation and friendship are made possible through personal contacts with the various local communities or through friends who send information received directly from the various places.

AMCOR is in close contact with the Church of Turkey, also via the newsletter “Anatolia today” which it publishes, and follows what is happening in Lebanon. AMCOR has relations with communities in Israel through direct contact with the Romanian and Armenian Catholic community, receiving news on the drama of Syria, and joining all the Church in prayer. There is frequent contact with various East European countries, including Russia, and communication by letter with Georgia and Armenia.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Our life is beautiful also because it is a continuous challenge. It is only through identifying initiatives that help us to understand in greater depth the reasons behind our choices that we can remain faithful to our

original project. In its brief existence, AMCOR has identified several initiatives, whose motivations are threefold: spiritual, cultural, and mixed.

Inspiration and strength are the fruit of prayer, and every year AMCOR schedules short courses of spiritual exercises, repetitions of the Lectio Divina, and the continuous reading of the Holy Scriptures.

AMCOR holds symposia and lectures on the religious and cultural history and current situation of the nations to which we take the Shroud message so as to better understand the problems of our brothers.

The organization of some short pilgrimages is also centered around religious and cultural issues for all our members and friends.