



JORDAN'S PAPAL VISIT SET of four values in honor of Pope Paul's January 4-6 trip to the Holy Land features the Pontiff's portrait at the left and Jordanian King Hussein's at the right. Values, background colors and central subjects, as shown on the above set received from the Rev. John D. Zimmerman of Jerusalem, Jordan, are 15 fils green, al Aqsa Mosque; 35f. red, Dome of the Rock; 50f. brown, entrance to Church of the Holy Sepulcher; and 80f. blue, courtyard of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

Jordan's Papal Visit Stamps Keep Presses Rolling As Big Initial Demand Holds Up Well

Bruce Conde

Philatelically as well as in every other way Pope Paul VI's pilgrimage to the Holy Land appears to have been outstanding. Jordanians of all classes, some of whom had never collected stamps, lined up interminably in the post offices to buy the new Papal Visit quartet which had been announced in the press and on the radio.

Between January 4, the first day, and the Pope's departure on the evening of the sixth—and presumably for some time thereafter—there were always long lines in the PO's waiting to buy the popular stamps. This was still true on the eighth when the writer left Jordan for Yemen.

Rationed at the rate of ten complete sets to each collector, with souvenir sheets if specially requested, supplies repeatedly ran out and new stocks had to be brought from Ministry vaults.

This caused half-hour delays in Amman and two-hour ones in Jerusalem, for the waiting lines. Postmaster-General Zaki Gsous remained in Beirut printing up additional stamps as Ministry stocks ran out.

When the writer left Jordan the printings stood at about 500,000 for the two lower values (15 and 35 fils) and 350,000 for the higher duo, as dealers continually reordered.

Souvenir sheets, which could not be printed up as fast as the adhesives, had to be rationed at about ten to 1000 sets to dealers, so low had stocks run. Collectors could get one or a few with their ten sets by going to the Ministry and specially requesting them—and they did so in droves.

Colors were not available at the time of writing up the spot news of the forthcoming set late in December (Linn's of January 20), but they are as follows: 15f. (al-Aksa Mosque), apple green and black; 35f. (Dome of the Rock), rose and black; 50f. (Holy Sepulchre), black violet and black; and 80f. (Nativity Church), ultramarine and black.

In each case the medallion portraits flanking the Holy Place are in black; King Hussein, on the right, is in gala dress uniform as Commander-in-Chief, while the Supreme Pontiff wears the golden tiara used at his Coronation last year.

The country name is in black at the top of each stamp and the commemorative inscription in colorless letters on a solid background at the bottom, Arabic on the right and Latin-English on the left ("Pa-

pa Paulus VI Visit to the Holy Land 4/1/1964").

The significance of the Holy Places chosen was mentioned in the earlier article but briefly the subjects are further identified as follows:

Al-Aksa Mosque, in addition to its Moslem significance in connection with the Prophet, was also the Royal Palace of the Crusader kings of Jerusalem in the Middle Ages and contained a chapel.

The 7th-8th century Byzantine-style Dome of the Rock occupies the site of Solomon's Temple and was also a Church in Crusader days.

The Holy Sepulchre covers the site of both Calvary and the Tomb of Christ and dates largely from Crusader times;

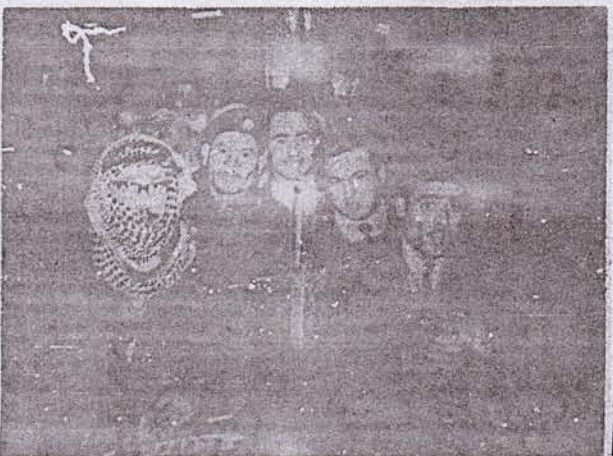
The Nativity Church at Bethlehem (which is the small and insignificant-looking building in the left background and not the imposing and photogenic Armenian convent to the right foreground) covers the actual spot of the Nativity and dates from the time of Empress Helena and Emperor Constantine in the fourth century.

The 140 x 109mm souvenir sheet incorporates all four of the stamps in their natural colors with a large black inscription at the top giving the country name in elaborate characters in both Arabic and English.

The stamps are arranged, Arab style, from right to left: 15, 35, and 50, 80, and the sheet is imperforate. Jones & Co. "Butterfly" unwatermarked paper was used throughout.

The writer was privileged to be at the Damascus Gate of Jerusalem a little before 5 p.m. on January 4 when Pope Paul, wearing a simple white skull cap and white robes, made his way—on foot, in

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This snapshot was made by Col. Conde on January 4 when the Papal Visit set of four Jordan stamps was put on sale at the Amman General Post Office. Outside the weather was bitter cold, as indicated by the man at the left whose head is swathed in a typical red and white Jordanian "kufiyah" or headgear.

VISIT

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spite of tightly-packed crowds of well-wishers—into the Holy City.

On January 6, at the Apostolic Delegation on the Mount of Olives, at 11:50 a.m. as part of the mission from the Imam al-Badr of Yemen to seek papal intervention on humanitarian grounds to stop the war in Yemen, the writer was received in a papal audience, during which the Pontiff conversed with our mission chief, H. R. H. Prince Seif al-Islam Abdurrahman, in Italian.

At the end of the audience the Holy Father gave to each of us the Papal Visit (Pilgrimage of Pope Paul VI to the Holy Land) medal and a set of the Vatican City commemorative stamps issued in honor of the Pilgrimage.

The stamps, with views of the Nativity Church, Bethlehem; the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem, the Virgin's Fountain, Nazareth; and of the Holy Father himself (in the same robes in which he received us), are mounted in a cellophane pocket.

This in turn reposes in a 143 x 107mm cream colored card folder on front cover of which are emblazoned the Papal Tiara and Keys of St. Peter, in gold, the whole being enclosed in a matching envelope.

The Pope and King Hosein were presented commemorative stamp albums of olive wood of Bethlehem enclosing not only the Jordanian Papal Visit set but also other recent Jordanian commemoratives, particularly the Holy Places set of 1963.

The presentation was made by H. E. Abdul Mejid Murtada, Jordan's veteran (and philatelist) Minister of Communications.

Our mission presented to all the journalists in Jerusalem and Amman, folders entitled "Peace in the Holy Land to Greet Pope Paul VI, But Can We Have Peace in Yemen?", describing the plight of the Yemeni people under the Egyptian bombings.

We also mailed out a great number to the leading world newspapers, with accounts of our visit to the Pope. Papal visit stamps were used on all, and probably accounted for the largest non-philatelic use of these stamps during the Pilgrimage.

The appeal to the Pontiff was made without political considerations—in fact, it stated that political efforts to end the war (through the UN "disengagement" mission) had failed, and that only humanitarian considerations should prevail.

Pope Paul expressed his hope

that peace could be achieved, and instructed his Apostolic Delegation to gather fuller facts on the case for a comprehensive report to him in Rome after his return there.

Our Imam sent his greetings and welcome to the Pope on his visit to "our common Holy Land" in the Arab world. In turn, the papal entourage expressed amazement that an Arab people in the farthest and most isolated part of the peninsula should be keenly alert to the papal pilgrimage and the Holy Father's attributes as a peacemaker and humanitarian.

And thus Paul VI's pilgrimage remains a landmark in the Islamic history of Yemen as well as in our albums as a beautifully commemorated occasion in the history of philately.