



GRAND MAGISTERIUM – VATICAN  
EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF  
THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

*At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land*

## “Search for what unites. Overcome what divides”

Pope Francis' first meeting with Israel's President Reuven Rivlin



“The importance of interreligious dialogue and the responsibility religious leaders have to promote reconciliation and to build peace”, was emphasized on September 3 at the Vatican, on the occasion of Pope Francis' first meeting with Israel's President Reuven Rivlin, for which the Pope's main collaborators were also present.

The occasion allowed them to discuss the socio-political situation of the region that has been characterized by several conflicts, and “particular attention was given to the situation concerning Christians and other minorities.” They discussed problems with relations between Israel and the Holy See, the local relationship between State authorities and Catholic communities, “the desirable prospect of the conclusion of the bilateral agreement that is currently in negotiation,” particularly addressing the situation of Christian schools in Israel facing the drastic reduction of state subsidies.

The head of the State of Israel, who succeeded Shimon Peres in July 2014, wished to “remember the common origin of Judaism and Christianity,” and offered a stone tablet as a gift to the Holy Father, on which can be read the verse of a psalm. In return the Pope gifted him with a bronze medallion displaying two separate rocks joined together by an olive branch as a sign of peace, with the inscription: “Search for what unites. Overcome what divides.”

A few days before his meeting with the Pope, President Rivlin wanted to offer reassurance to Christians in the Holy Land, and met with the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem in Tabgha, Galilee, in the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves, which had been damaged in an arson attack by Jewish extremists on June 18.

*(September 20, 2015)*

