



INSTITUT FÜR ÖKUMENISCHE STUDIEN
INSTITUT D'ÉTUDES ŒCUMÉNIQUES

UNIVERSITÄT FREIBURG SCHWEIZ
UNIVERSITÉ DE FRIBOURG SUISSE



Prof. Barbara Hallensleben
Université Miséricorde
av. de l'Europe 20
CH-1700 Fribourg

Tel. [+41] 026 / 300 74 10
Fax [+41] 026 / 300 97 83
E-mail: Barbara.Hallensleben@unifr.ch
Homepage: <http://www.unifr.ch/iso/>

The Rt Revd Dr Graham Tomlin
Bishop of Kensington
Dial House, Riverside,
Twickenham TW1 3DT

Fribourg, 4th Sunday of Lent – *Laetare*

Dear Bishop Graham,

thank you very much for your confidence to fix a date in your agenda without knowing exactly what is waiting for you. The significance of the date of this letter led us to delay the communication ...

Today I would like to inform you officially that the three founders of the

SILVER ROSE OF SAINT NICOLAS

decided to award to you the Silver Rose of the year 2016.

The SILVER ROSE OF SAINT NICOLAS was founded on the 6th December 2005 by three members of the Institute for Ecumenical Studies at the University of Fribourg and the Institute for Eastern Churches in Regensburg:

- * *Mons. Dr. Nicolas Wyrwoll*
- * *Fr. Prof. Guido Vergauwen o.p.*
- * *Prof. Barbara Hallensleben*



The award is inspired by the „Golden Rose“ that since the 11th century is blessed by the Bishop of Rome on the fourth Sunday of Lent (*Laetare*; „Rose Sunday“). The Golden Rose was awarded to personages or to places of high importance for the life of the Catholic Church.

In accordance with the foundational idea, the Silver Rose is awarded to personages,

- * who in their life, like Saint Nicolas, manifest the *philanthropia* of God;
- * who, rooted in the life of their ecclesial community, give witness to the mission of the Church to the whole world by virtue of the Holy Spirit;
- * who contribute in this way to reconciliation and to a deeper community of the Church, of humankind, of the whole creation.

The Silver Rose is both an academic and an ecclesial award, reminding the fact that theological reflection bears fruit only in its living exchange with the personal witness for the growing community of the Church. We also want the Rose to be a sign that the ecumenical movement has its heart in friendship and needs to be expressed in symbols of the Glory and Beauty of our God.

In your personal life within your family, as a theologian, in your initiative to build up St. Mellitus College and as its inspiring principal, in your engagement for the renewal of the Church and now as Bishop, you represent in an excellent way what the symbol of the Silver Rose means.

Up to now, the Silver Rose was conferred to the following personages:

- * Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad (now Patriarch of Moscow) (2006).
- * Abbess Iosefina of Varatec in Romania, probably the monastery with the largest number of nuns in Romania, which actively supported the recovery of Church and Society after the fall of the communist regime by their prayer and their social activity (2007).
- * Mons. Dr. Eleuterio Fortino, collaborator of the Pontifical Council for promoting Christian unity, promotor of a spiritual ecumenism, specially in the catholic-orthodox exchange (2008).
- * Patriarch Mesrob, 84th Patriarch of the Armenians in Istanbul, who worked for reconciliation between Armenians and Turks; a serious illness prevents him since years to exercise his ministry (2010).
- * Prof. Fairy von Lilienfeld († 2009), a protestant pastor and theologian, the first women as a professor of theology in Germany, expert on the history and theology of the Eastern Churches and with a special love to the orthodox tradition (2011).
- * Mons. Antonio Mennini, Apostolic Nuncio in London, former Nuncio in Moscow where he successfully worked for a deeper mutual confidence between orthodox and catholic Bishops and priests and for the solution of several conflicts (2012).
- * The City of Elche in Spain, represented by the maioreess Mrs. Mercedes Alonso García, for the annual mystery play, handed down threw the centuries, on the dormition of the Mother of God, recognized as UNESCO world heritage (2014).

We feel honoured to confer the eighth Rose to you in the context of St. Mellitus College and its community of teaching and learning. If it is possible for you, Monday, 20th Juni 2016, would be a most convenient moment (at any time you propose), for a group of professors and doctoral students from Fribourg University will be in London and wants to visit St. Mellitus College. We would appreciate to include a common prayer in the Chapel when we hand over to you the Rose. From our side, we would like to invite the Apostolic Nuncio, Mons. Antonio Mennini, as he received the Rose in 2012 in Fribourg Cathedral and he already expressed his desire to know more about St. Mellitus College. If you would like to invite friends and brothers in the priestly and episcopal ministry, we will be glad, and we would like to inform His Grace Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, whom we met some months ago in Fribourg and who hopefully will participate in the Study Days in Fribourg in June 2017.

If you accept our decision, we will communicate it to the media on 9th May, feast of St. Nicolas (translation of his relics from Myra to Bari). We can talk about details later on, and we are willing to pay the costs for a short reception that gives us the opportunity to hand over some „real“ roses to your wife ... !

Thank you for your attention to all these explications and warm greetings, also from the whole „Committee“ of the Silver Rose

Barbara Hallensleben