

Pope Plants KKL-JNF "Tree of Peace" in the Gardens of the President's Residence

On the second day of his visit to the land of Israel, **Pope Benedict XVI** planted an olive tree, naming it "*The Tree of Peace.*" The tree was chosen with great care from the KKL-JNF nursery in Eshta'ol in the Jerusalem Hills and transferred to the garden of the President's Residence. This tree is a part of the new renovations that KKL-JNF has undertaken in the gardens, with help from Friends of KKL-JNF worldwide.



During the ceremony at the Presidents' Residence, KKL-JNF World Chairman, **Efi Stenzler** greeted Pope Benedict XVI, praised his peace efforts and presented him with a gift: a bottle of olive oil pressed from a KKL-JNF forest and a very rare antique *menorah* estimated at 1500 years old. There were about 600 guests at the ceremony including representatives of KKL-JNF Israel, America and Italy.



The gardens of the President's Residence are a symbol of the Land of Israel. For over a century KKL-JNF has planted and nurtured forests and natural vegetation; restored ancient sites; worked to protect the environment; and strengthened the bond between the people of Israel and their

heritage. The gardens of the President's Residence are a miniature version of the Land of Israel and as such, KKL-JNF gladly accepted the request from the Residence to undertake changes in the gardens.



Particular emphasis has been placed on water conservation. Wasteful expanses of lawn have made way for thrifty plants that require little water. The new irrigation system has been planned with water conservation in mind. Saving water is an absolute imperative for Israel now, and who better than the President's Residence to lead the way?

KKL-JNF has already built over 200 reservoirs around Israel and is well aware of the importance of water conservation to the national economy.

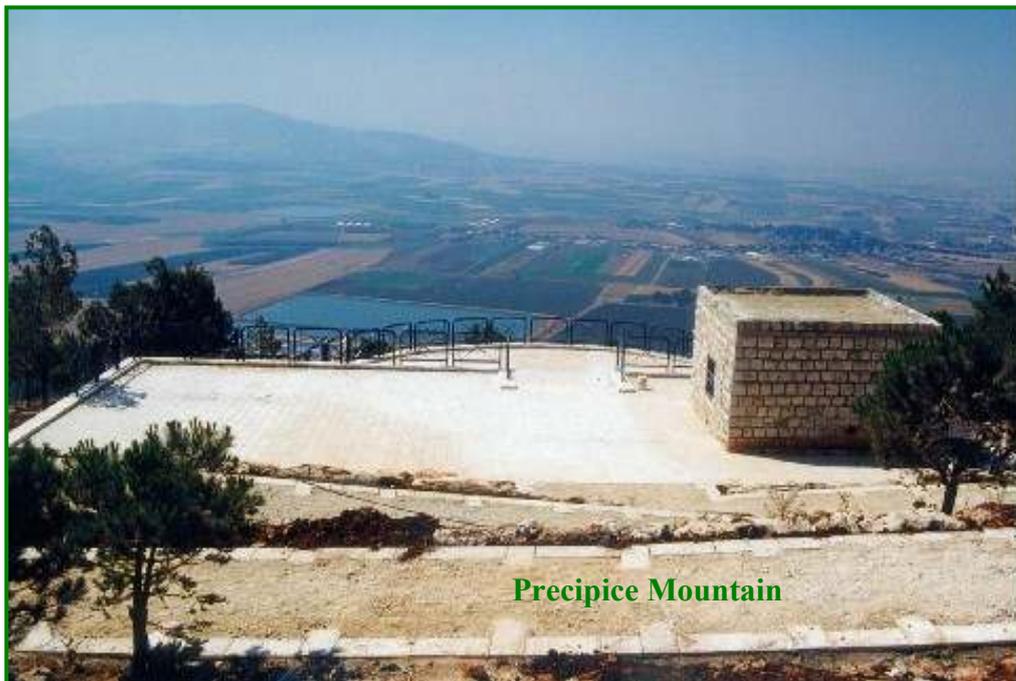
Every year, tens of thousands of people enjoy the gardens at the President's Residence during events and receptions.

Today, Thursday, over 40,000 people awaited the Pope with cheers and excitement when he went to conduct Mass at **Precipice Mountain** near Nazareth. A week ago KKL-JNF bulldozers worked around the clock to prepare the site of the open-air mass held by the Pope at Precipice Mountain. KKL-JNF enlarged the area of the

amphitheater located on the slope of the mountain, where the mass was held and also upgraded roads in the area and renovated other projects located on the mountain.

In addition, KKL-JNF moved an ancient olive tree, estimated to be 600 years old, from an Israeli Army naval base that is undergoing extensive renovations, to the site at Precipice Mountain. KKL-JNF decided that owing to its historical importance and its being a traditional symbol of peace, the olive tree would be replanted in the "**Reconciliation Forest**" near Nazareth in honor of **Pope John Paul II**.

The site chosen for the tree is on the route the Pope and his entourage took to the amphitheater where the mass was held. The Pope stopped by the tree and blessed it, expressing the hope that peace will soon come to this troubled region of the world, one of the central messages of the Pope's pilgrimage to the Holy Land.



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