

Queen honoured for work in social advancement, sustainable development

King invites Pope Benedict XVI to visit Jordan



Her Majesty Queen Rania receives the Fondazione Mediterraneo award from Inter-Parliamentary Union President Pier Ferdinando Casini on Friday (Petra photo)

AMMAN (JT) — Her Majesty Queen Rania on Friday received an award from the Fondazione Mediterraneo (Mediterranean Foundation) in Italy, for her commitment to the advancement of social causes and sustainable development.

The foundation, which serves to stimulate partnerships among the Mediterranean, Europe and the Islamic world, recognised Queen Rania for her work in defending the rights of children, her commitment to endorsing women’s rightful role in society, promoting the education of young women, and her efforts to integrate different components of Arab society into a global process.

“As migration picks up pace, neighbourhoods are transforming, societies are diversifying, and the challenge of maintaining social harmony and providing equal opportunity is greater than ever,” Queen Rania said as she accepted the award.

“We must reach out; we must learn about each other; we must support

each other; we must stick together; and, we must be good neighbours — not only at home, at school, and in our communities, but across the boundaries of geography, culture, age and race,” she added, emphasising the crucial need to foster dialogue.

Inter-Parliamentary Union President Pier Ferdinando Casini welcomed the Queen and recognised Jordan’s efforts, specifically those of His Majesty King Abdullah, in promoting peace in the region.

Michele Capasso, president and founder of Fondazione Mediterraneo, said the foundation works to promote dialogue and increase cultural and social integration, noting that His Majesty the late King Hussein was a recipient of the award for his relentless work for peace, cultural tolerance and intercultural exchange.

“Dialogue is the means to an end,” said Capasso, “and the end is greater social cooperation.”

Such cooperation has been the focus of Queen Rania’s programmes, both locally and globally.

“We have to show by example that what humanity has in common is more powerful than anything that divides us,” she said, “and that means actions not just words, and it means raising the volume among the voices of moderation.”

The foundation, an international nonprofit organisation established in 1994, includes specialists and internationally recognised scholars who focus on the Mediterranean and politicians with international and diplomatic experience who have been involved in Mediterranean affairs.

It seeks to develop dialogue among civilisations and cultures, working in cooperation with the countries of the Middle East, the Gulf and the Black Sea.

The foundation, which bases its actions on the principles of equality, sovereignty, and dignity of peoples, annually recognises outstanding contributors in art (literature, art, creativity) and civil society (peace, democracy, institutions, information, diplomacy) of the Greater Mediterranean.

Former recipients include King Juan Carlos of Spain, the late King Hassan of Morocco, Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, First Lady of Egypt Suzanne Mubarak, Nobel Prize laureates Shirin Ebadi and Nagib Mahfouz and Arab League Secretary General Amr Musa.

Also on Friday, Queen Rania delivered an invitation from King Abdullah to Pope Benedict XVI to visit Jordan.

During the meeting, the Queen stressed the King's appreciation of the Pope's efforts to enhance cooperation and understanding between followers of different religions and spread values of love and peace in the world.

Queen Rania pointed out that Jordan, under the leadership of King Abdullah, is keen to enhance cooperation with the Pope and the Vatican and supports efforts to bring about permanent, comprehensive and just peace in the region.

The Pope commended the King's efforts to support the revival of the peace process between the Palestinians and the Israelis and enhance stability in the Middle East.

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