

Grapevine August 20, 2021: Pride in one of their own

Movers and shakers in Israeli society.

By GREER FAY CASHMAN

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RABBI DAVID ROSEN in a Papal audience with Pope Francis. (credit: Courtesy)

■ **TIME MARCHES** on. Rabbi David Rosen this week celebrated a milestone birthday, leaving his sixties behind as he turned 70. The Jerusalem-based director of International Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee, as well as the director of AJC's Heilbrunn Institute for International Interreligious Understanding, the British-born Rosen, before making aliyah more than thirty years ago, was the Chief Rabbi of Ireland, and before that the senior rabbi of the Green and Sea Point Congregation in Capetown, which is the largest Orthodox congregation in South Africa. Arguably, the most well informed and most closely related Israeli Orthodox Jew to leading clerical figures in the Christian and Moslem worlds, Rosen

is a member of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel's delegation for relations with world religions and is international president of Religions for Peace; honorary president of the International Council of Christians and Jews; and the Jewish representative on the Board of Directors of the King Abdullah

International Center for Interreligious Dialogue. He was part of the Israeli team that negotiated full relations between the State of Israel and the Holy See, and is a past chairman of the International Jewish Committee for Inter-religious Consultations, the Jewish umbrella organization for interfaith relations. In 2005, the Pope made Rosen a Knight Commander of the Order of St. Gregory the Great in recognition of his contribution to Catholic-Jewish reconciliation. In this respect, he is in all probability the only Orthodox Rabbi who can claim to be a Papal Knight. In 2010 Rosen was named a Commander of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II for his interreligious work. His work has also been recognized by the Archbishop of Canterbury who presented him with the Hubert Walter Award for Reconciliation and Interfaith Cooperation. He has received many other awards – too numerous to mention.

Rosen has spent more than forty years building bridges of understanding between people of different faiths. His work involves mediation and peace building as well as multireligious engagement on ecological issues.

He is also a confirmed vegetarian, not only in what he eats but also in what he wears. He absolutely refuses to wear leather garments or footwear. He is the honorary president of the International Jewish Vegetarian and Ecology Society.

In February last year, he was the first Israeli rabbi to be hosted at the Saudi palace. After having hosted an interfaith group of senior Moslem clerics at a prayer meeting in January in Auschwitz, Rosen later addressed them at the Nozyk Synagogue in Warsaw.

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