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Saxum: Laying the Last Stone

The three-part stone, with the text in Arabic, English, and Hebrew, was laid next to the entrance of the Conference Center to honor the former Prelate of Opus Dei, Bishop Javier Echevarria.

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Last December, a stone was laid next to the entrance of the Conference Center to honor the former Prelate of Opus Dei, Bishop Javier Echevarria, nearly a year after he left this earth

for heaven. This day was historical for the Saxum project since, though the Visitor Center is not yet finished, it symbolized the placement of the last stone of the construction.

The three-part stone, with the text in Arabic, English, and Hebrew, reads:

“Since 1994, Javier Echevarria, Prelate of Opus Dei, gave impetus to Saxum in memory of his predecessor, Blessed Alvaro del Portillo, to make the land of Jesus Christ better known, and as a place to encounter God, to foster prayer, peace and mutual understanding.

With filial gratitude for his pastoral work and his concern for all souls, we place this last stone.”

The ceremony was a simple one, with Msgr. Joaquin Paniello, Vicar of Opus Dei in Jerusalem, blessing the memorial plaque. Representatives of the companies behind the

construction of Saxum were present with their families to witness the culmination of their work.

Before the blessing of the stone, some of the leaders and coordinators of the project said a few words of thanks to all the construction teams. One of the representatives of Saxum spoke about Don Javier's vision, and detailed attention to Saxum's progress: *"He, and he alone, was the motor that moved tens, even hundreds of thousands of people around the world to help establish this project. He dreamed of a place where thousands of people would come, for a short time, to get to know the Holy Land better, to study, and to pray, because he knew that this land has a special power to facilitate the encounter between God and man – an opportunity for personal change, and to reflect in peace and quiet about what matters most in our lives."*

Later, Ory Shaked, the project manager, delivered a heartfelt speech about the trajectory of the Saxum project. He emphasized Saxum's uniqueness thanks to the people who, despite religious, cultural, and personal differences, came together to accomplish the same ground-breaking ideal. You can read his moving speech [here](#).

“Saxum is not just a construction project. Saxum is a project of hearts coming together, and that's what makes it so unique.”

With the Conference Center operational since June and the Visitor Center close to opening, the phase of Saxum's construction is slowly making way for a new and more exciting stage in which, just as it moved the hearts of those involved in its construction, it will hopefully move the hearts of thousands of

people who visit it while discovering the roots of their faith.

For photos of the ceremony and of Saxum Conference Center click [here](#).

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