

# CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES

2019 A.D.

## Introduction

The "Collection for the Holy Land" was born from the desire of the Popes to maintain a strong link between all the faithful and the Holy Places, and given a decisive boost by Saint Paul VI through the Apostolic Exhortation '*Nobis in Animo*' (March 25, 1974). It is an instrument that the Church provides her children in other parts of the world to express solidarity with the ecclesial communities of the Middle East.

The funds traditionally collected on Good Friday are the main source of material support for Christian life in the Holy Land. The Franciscan Custody uses the Collection to carry out its important mission of preserving the Sacred Places, the stones of memory, and promoting the Christian presence, the living stones, through many pastoral, educational, welfare, health and social structures.

The territories that benefit in various forms of support from the Collection are Jerusalem, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Turkey, Iran and Iraq.

As a rule, the Custody of the Holy Land receives 65% of the Collection, while the remaining 35% goes to the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, which uses it for the formation of candidates for the priesthood, the support of the clergy, educational activities, cultural formation and subsidies to the various ecclesiastical circumscriptions in the Middle East.

In summary, we report what the Congregation received in 2019 and how it was distributed:

Amount received in 2019 from the Collection	US\$ 6.929.209,64
Amount received from the Custody for previous years	US\$ 1.350.000,00
<b>Total</b>	<b>US\$ 8.279.209,64</b>

## Academic, Spiritual and Human Formation of the Seminarians and Priests of the Churches under the Jurisdiction of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches

Thanks to the Collection, contributions can be made to seminaries, religious houses of formation and cultural institutions in the territories of competence, supporting in various forms (scholarships, university fees and health needs) young seminarians and priests, men and women religious and, depending on the funds available, and some lay people. About 300 students benefiting from scholarships are hosted in 7 colleges under the jurisdiction of the Dicastery in Rome. A new college that opened four years ago for nuns from different Eastern countries welcomes 32 female students this year.

In addition, the Dicastery contributes to the sustenance of the Pontifical Oriental Institute, a higher academic institution with two faculties, Eastern Ecclesiastical Sciences and Eastern Canon Law, of which the Cardinal Prefect is Grand Chancellor.

Formation of seminarians, priests and nuns in Rome, Maintenance of Colleges	US\$ 2,310,681.00
Pontifical Oriental Institute (PIO)	US\$ 915,571.00
Extraordinary subsidies for cultural collaboration	US\$ 50,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>US\$ 3,276,252.00</b>

## Subsidies for Educational Activities

The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Custody of the Holy Land, the Eastern Catholic Churches of the Holy Land and Religious Institutes are committed to the education of young people in the Holy Land. Keeping in mind the particular circumstances faced by Christian students and taking into account the arrival into the Holy Land of thousands of school-aged children from Syria and Iraq, the Congregation for the Eastern Churches has decided to increase the subsidies also for the current academic year.

The work of the Secretariat of Solidarity in the coordination and distribution of subsidies to educational institutions managed by the aforementioned institutions is also noteworthy.

One of the prestigious Institutions that ensures academic formation is Bethlehem University. Almost 3,300 young people, mostly Palestinian Muslims, are trained intellectually and humanly with the hope of

engaging in the construction of a country where mutual respect reigns and where human dignity is preserved. The commitment of the De La Salle Brothers in running the university is much appreciated.

Secretariat of Solidarity	US\$ 990,000.00
Schools of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem	US\$ 850,000.00
Bethlehem University	US\$ 1,200,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>US\$ 3,040,000.00</b>

### Ordinary and Extraordinary Subsidies

This Congregation contributes to supporting the Churches placed under its competence with subsidies drawn from the Holy Land Collection.

The Middle East continues to live in instability and tension. Those who have no food, medical treatment or school make themselves heard, as do the orphans, the widowed and the wounded. The Congregation pays particular attention to the needs of these people and works to rebuild social structures through the local Eastern and Latin Dioceses, as well as by coordinating the Catholic agencies involved in the aforementioned countries. Ensuring the means necessary for a dignified life for those returning to Iraq and Syria and for refugees in neighboring countries, such as Lebanon and Jordan, requires the collaboration of all people of good will. Furthermore, cultural, spiritual and psychological activities are encouraged that in various ways bring people closer, despite religious and ethnic differences.

Jerusalem	US\$ 339,100.00
Jordan	US\$ 38,000.00
Iraq	US\$ 153,000.00
Lebanon	US\$ 244,000.00
Turkey	US\$ 175,000.00
Syria	US\$ 296,000.00
Iran	US\$ 78,000.00
Egypt	US\$ 271,000.00
Ethiopia	US\$ 178,000.00
Eritrea	US\$ 148,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>US\$ 1,920,100.00</b>

### Conclusion

The generosity that the Catholic faithful express towards their brothers and sisters in the Middle East though the Collection can solve many problems, but prayer and moral support are even more necessary. We therefore invite you to "adopt" a Christian from the Middle East, even if you do not know his/her name, and pray for him/her throughout the year 2020. As Pope Francis said during the audience granted to the participants of the Reunion of Aid Agencies for the Eastern Churches (ROACO) of June 2019, "the cry of many who in recent years have been robbed of hope" must reach our ears and open our hearts to solidarity with them, "manifesting the face of the Church and helping to make it alive, in particular by fueling hope for the younger generations".

**CUSTODY OF THE HOLY LAND  
Order of the Friars Minor**

**Summary report 2018/2019**

The Custody of the Holy Land, for centuries has been committed to the preservation and revitalization of the Holy Places of Christianity in the Land of Jesus and throughout the Middle East. Among the various objectives of the Franciscan mission, we recall the support and development of the Christian minority that lives there, the preservation and enhancement of archaeological areas and sanctuaries, intervention in emergencies, liturgy in places of worship, apostolic works and assistance to pilgrims. Also for the two-year period 2018/2019, the Franciscan presence in the Holy Land manifested itself through the planning, planning and execution of the following projects and works:

- I. Works aimed at pilgrims
- II. Works aimed at the local community
- III. Other works - Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Rhodes and Kos
- IV. Ordinary salaries of the Custody

The listed works have been realized thanks to various types of economic contributions, firstly the Good Friday Collection, then the fund raising activities of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL) and the Association *Pro Terra Sancta* (ATS), but also through other private and institutional donors, as well as the proceeds from the activities carried out.

**Works aimed at pilgrims**

**Ain Karem: Sanctuary of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist**

- Work is underway to renovate the roof of the church of St. John the Baptist which includes the consolidation of the stone vaults
- In the design phase, the church's restoration work suffers from serious static problems
- The archaeological excavation inside the church and the restoration of the sacristy are imminent.
- Completion of the large Crusader hall to allow worship during the ongoing restoration work in the church
- Completion of the renovation of the premises next to the sacristy for the construction of the new parlour.

**Ain Karem: Sanctuary of St. John in the desert.**

- Work on general maintenance for the reception of pilgrims is underway

**Beit Sahour: The Shepherds' Fields**

- In the course of planning, the interventions for the conservation and development of the site, a broad intervention that will include new external chapels for celebrations, the redevelopment of the cave, new toilets and infrastructures.

**Bethany: Sanctuary of the House of Martha, Mary and Lazarus**

- Ongoing restoration and enhancement of the Byzantine and medieval remains of the monastery at Bethany through: recovery of degraded areas; training and employment of 10 young Palestinians for restoration work; support for the entrepreneurial activities of the local women's association; educational project with primary schools to learn about local religious and archaeological sites (supported by ATS).

**Bethlehem: Basilica of the Nativity**

- Collaboration with the other ecclesial communities present and the Palestinian National Authority for the restoration of the Basilica of the Nativity
- The construction of new benches for the sanctuary of St. Catherine's church is underway
- Renovation of the monastery facade

**Bethlehem: Sanctuary of the Milk Grotto**

- Remodeling of the complex waterproofing and rearrangement of the external areas for the reception of pilgrims

**Bethlehem: Casa Nova, Home for pilgrims**

- Completion of the renovation of all 66 rooms, the dining-room, the corridors and the stairs of the Casa Nova
- Replacement of the two elevators for pilgrims

**Capernaum: Sanctuary of the Eucharistic Promise**

- Completion of the work on the premises for the reception of youth groups and / or low cost pilgrims
- Renewal of the air conditioning and hot water systems of the entire monastery, with the adoption of modern low-consumption systems

**Emmaus Qubeibeh: Sanctuary of Saints Simeon and Cleophas**

- Renewal of some areas of the monastery to welcome the inter-obediential community

**Jericho: Sanctuary of the Good Shepherd**

- Restoration of the school stadium
- Creation of 10 new bathrooms
- Creation of a stage for the various school activities
- Creation of 4 new classrooms (including air conditioning, since the temperature in Jericho can reach 50 ° C)
- Renewal of the school library

**Jerusalem: Basilica of Gethsemane**

- The completion of the Tunnel project and elevators for pilgrim groups to connect the basilica area and the Cedron Valley via a pedestrian pathway
- Completion of the renewal of the hermitages available for hermitical experiences
- In the course of planning: service centre for pilgrims in the Cedron Valley

**Jerusalem: Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre of Our Lord**

- Implementation of structural consolidation of the rock of the grotto of the Invention of the Holy Cross following instrumental investigations and in-depth analysis

**Chapel of the Apparition**

- Replacement of the monastery lift/elevator
- Under study in collaboration with the Sapienza University (Rome) and the Venaria Restoration Centre (TO) the restoration of the Basilica's floor and the infrastructures (in agreement with the Greek and Armenian Communities)

**Jerusalem: Casa Nova, home for pilgrims**

- Completion of the renewal of the two premises purchased recently and now used for exhibitions of local handicraft works (mother-of-pearl and other) and one used as an ice cream parlor / coffee shop
- Renewal of a management office with a permanent exhibition of local crafts

**Jerusalem: Parish Centre**

- The master plan for the layout of the parish centre spaces is being planned

**Jerusalem: Christian Information Centre CIC**

- Completion of the restaurant with panoramic views on the building's terrace
- Continuation of the realization of multimedia educational didactic films for pilgrims dedicated to understanding and learning about the Holy Sepulchre

**Jerusalem: Christian Media Centre**

- Renewal of the editors' offices

**Jerusalem: Monastery of St. Saviour**

**Infirmery**

- Replacement of the lift/elevator / bed carrier for the sick

**Offices**

- Restructuring of the premises to enable moving the Souvenir Shop in view of the realization of the future museum

**Monastery**

- Renewal of the monastery kitchen
- Renewal of the ground floor of the monastery of the nuns' convent
- General maintenance of the roofs

**Jerusalem: Communications Office**

- Design of new offices at the Terra Sancta College

**Jerusalem: Maria Bambina, Home for Pilgrims**

- Reception of around 1500 overnight stays for pilgrims with limited finances

**Jerusalem: Sanctuary of the *Dominus Flevit***

- Implementation of an intervention by a master plan for a better reception of pilgrims and visitors to the sanctuary

**Jerusalem: Terra Sancta Museum**

- Ongoing structural consolidation of the premises that will complete the museum area at the Sanctuary of the Flagellation
- A modern museum centre for the enhancement of the Franciscan artistic, archaeological and cultural heritage is under construction. In the area of about 2500 m<sup>2</sup> will be included:
  - Archaeological museum: The places of the Bible in Palestine (Monastery of the Flagellation) (Third phase)
  - Historical Museum: The Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land (at the Monastery of St. Saviour)

**Monte Nebo (Jordan): Memorial of St. Moses**

- Completion the two new chapels to encourage pilgrim celebrations
- A project of the environment to accommodate pilgrims who wish to make retreats

**Monte Thabor: Basilica of the Transfiguration**

- Completion of the renovation of an external chapel for pilgrims
- In course is the planning of general interventions for the preservation of the site with the creation of a parking area inside the monastery, with a connecting road to the external car park with the internal one having a sidewalk for the disabled and services for pilgrims

**Naim: Shrine of the Resurrection of the Widow's Daughter**

- Interventions for the opening and development of the site are being planned

**Nazareth: Basilica of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

- Restoration and maintenance work for the conservation of the sacred grotto
- Renewal of the air conditioning and hot water systems of the entire monastery, with the adoption of modern low-consumption systems

**Ramleh: Sanctuary of St. Joseph of Arimathea**

- Completion of the restoration of the bell tower of the sanctuary and of some classrooms

**Tabgha: Sanctuary of the Primacy of St. Peter**

- The access ramp for disabled pilgrims has been completed

**Works aimed at the local community**

Works in favour of young people

**Bethlehem: Boys' Home**

- Home for 27 children including 10 interns in social difficulty
- Renewal of heating system

#### **Scholarships and subsidies**

- Financing of 490 university scholarships (225 from the Custody + 265 from the FFHL) for the duration of 4 years, distributed in different universities (Bethlehem, Hebrew University, Bir Zeit, Amman); 178 grants for students in financial difficulty

#### **Support for craft businesses**

- Purchase of spare parts, production equipment, aids for securing the activities of 10 small craft activities

#### **Activities for families**

##### **Bethlehem**

- Continuing are: projects in support of the parish family counseling; the project aimed at more than 20 children (ages 6-12), coming from families in difficulty; medical assistance for families in serious financial difficulties; renovation of homes belonging to the most needy families (supported by FFHL)

#### **Works in favour of parish communities**

##### **Bethlehem: Catholic Action**

- Extraordinary general maintenance of the bathrooms in the parish swimming-pool area for the use of the local population

#### **Schools**

##### **Amman**

- Ordinary maintenance work (renovation of the kindergarten kitchen, bathrooms and cleaning of primary school floors)
- Creation of a new robotic teaching laboratory at the nursery and 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade classes. This program will be extended to all the next two years
- Purchases of the e-school educational program using modern means teaching (school management system: which fosters communication between school, parents and the student learning management system that promotes interactive teaching between teachers and students in the classroom and at home)
- The radical restructuring work of the Peace Building built in 1976 is underway

##### **Bethlehem:**

- Continuation of the rearrangement of the external basketball court of the school and general painting of the same
- Creation of six classrooms for the professional branch (tailoring, carpentry, electricity laboratory, beauty and beauty branch)

##### **Cana:**

- Works for the construction of a new school (structural works completed) are underway. The complex will also include the parish centre and a covered parking of an area of 5000m<sup>2</sup>

##### **Jericho**

- Installation of whiteboards in the classrooms
- Construction of a stage for the school theatre and 4 new classrooms
- Creation of a tent to protect the children in the courtyards alone
- Installation of air conditioning in the school (the temperature rises in the summer up to 50° C)
- Creation of a computer room for students

##### **Jerusalem: Saint Joseph School (Jaffa Gate)**

- Renovation works of the electrical system completed

##### **Jerusalem: Terra Sancta School (Damascus Gate)**

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- Ongoing construction of new sports facilities below the large courtyard of the school, which will house a swimming pool, a gym and playgrounds on the building's roof. These premises will also be used by the youth of the Old City
- Renewal of school premises continues  
Jerusalem: Helen Keller School - Beth Hanina
- After the opening of a kindergarten two years ago with 80 students this will progressively lead to the opening of the first section of a primary school.

### **Jerusalem: Helen Keller School (School for the Visually Impaired)**

- Completion of the acquisition of this school

### **Jaffa**

- Restoration of some elementary school classrooms

### **Ramleh**

- Restoration of some elementary school classrooms

Apartments for the needy and young couples

### **Jerusalem**

- Old City. The renovation work of the houses in the Old City continues with the aim of improving the living conditions of the residents: complete renovation of 7 dwellings (4 in 2015, 3 in 2016, 7 in 2018); partial renovation of 6 dwellings (2 in 2015, 4 in 2016, 5 in 2017-18); renovation of the exterior (facades, roofs, etc.) of 5 buildings
- **Dar Consul renovation project.** The renovation of the residential complex in the Old Town is underway, with 40 apartments and a disused ground floor. The project area is around 2500m<sup>2</sup>
  - Class A restructuring with major interventions for 14 homes (of which 7 are completed)
  - Class B renovation with medium interventions for 16 homes (of which 10 completed)
  - Class C restructuring with minor interventions for 10 homes (of which 6 completed)
  - External renovation of 6 buildings (4 of which are completed)
- **Dar el Kbire:** Design of the 300-400m<sup>2</sup> extension of the building and improvement of the 19 existing dwellings (6 are completed). The total area covered by the project is around 2500m<sup>2</sup>
- **Tumian Palace:** Design of the extension of the building with the construction of 3 additional floors and 800m<sup>2</sup> for residential use
- **Abu Geries:** Design of the extension of the building with the construction of 750m<sup>2</sup> for offices, catering and shops
- **Saint James housing project at Beit Hanina:** Already obtained is the building permit for two additional floors in each of the 6 buildings, for a total of 24 apartments. The executive planning for an elevated extension is in progress.
- **Betfage (Monte degli Olivi):** 10 new apartments built, an extension of approximately 750m<sup>2</sup> of the residential complex consisting of 10 buildings. The apartments have been completed and handed over to families.
- **Pisgat Zeev housing project:** Design of the new residential complex with 70-80 housing units and 300m<sup>2</sup> for commercial use

### **Jaffa**

- The Franciscan Neighbourhood: the building permit has been obtained for 124 apartments for Christian families in the parish. The total area of the apartments will be around 10,000m<sup>2</sup>

### **Nazareth**

- Karm el Sacheb housing Project: project for the construction of a residential complex (church, rooms for social use, 80 apartments for young families)

### **Other cultural works**

- **Studium Biblicum Franciscanum.** Every year the Custody of the Holy Land financially supports the Faculty of Biblical Sciences and Archeology at the **Studium Biblicum Franciscanum** in Jerusalem. It offers around 30 scholarships to students from different dioceses, for the duration of their studies
- **Christian Media Centre.** The services offered include: Website, completely renewed, simplified in use and now mobile friendly; Terra Sancta News a weekly news that tells about faith, history, current events in the Holy Land; broadcast by around 35 broadcasters worldwide in 6 languages; documentaries on social and religious themes, in different languages; broadcasting directly liturgical celebrations and events
- **Institute of the Magnificat Music School.** It is affiliated to the Vicenza Conservatory, the Magnificat promotes research activities and cultural events at local and international level. It welcomes more than 220 Christian, Muslim and Jewish students, led by 25 professor who are Jewish, Christians and Muslims
- Training of 50 Franciscan students from developing countries to whom the Custody guarantees food, accommodation and financing all studies in Jerusalem between STJ and SBF
- Training of 72 young people in formation in the Custody (from the aspirant to specialist studies)

#### **Other works**

Assistance given to the Syrian and Iraqi population, Christians and others has continued and intensified in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. The people are living in a situation of extreme necessity, they are helped through the presence of the Friars of the Custody of the Holy Land with financial support and collaboration especially from ATS (Association Terra Santa NGO)

#### **In Lebanon**

- Reception and temporary support for 14 Iraqi families in Deir Mimas and over 47 in the area of Harissa and Jounieh.
- Educational help for 28 Iraqi children and young Iraqis in Deir Mimas, over 35 in the Harissa area and almost 65 in Jounieh. Aid to 40 young Syrians in Jounieh and Beirut

#### **In Syria**

Aid for the people given through the parishes of Aleppo, Damascus, Knayeh, Yakoubieh and Latakieh.

- Aleppo emergency centre at the parish and Terra Sancta College:
    - distribution of food parcels
    - health care for pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum care for both mother and child
    - care of all cases of infertility in all Christian families of all Rites,
    - care of children and their growth from all points of view
    - + primary needs of milk, diapers for children in the parish, with a monthly subsidy for each child,
    - + Post-traumatic War Treatment Centre for children and young adults for Christians and Muslims
    - + clothing distribution, twice a year to more than 1,000 children ...
    - + Acquisition of catechism centres and summer oratories in the poorest parishes, from all points of view,
    - + summer oratory for more than 1300 children, material acquisitions, logistics and content for 6 summer oratories and five parishes,
    - + "after school" project for 60 children with limited comprehension
    - + top quality English course in the city, at different levels in the city for 65 academically able children
    - + "mental arithmetic" course for 77 academically able children (new 2019),
    - + Assumption of children with special talents (private piano lessons for 6 students),
    - school support (monthly sum awarded) to students of schools and universities, for students of the Latin Rite,
    - repair / reconstruction of damaged houses (of three different levels of damage): we have rebuilt 1500 houses to date (in favour of all Christians of all Rites)
    - help given to start small businesses and work activities (1000 people), in favour of all Christians of all Rites)
    - project to accommodate 120 Christian soldiers discharged after 8 years of compulsory military service: help through creating job opportunities for each of them (new 2019),
    - aid project for Christian, Orthodox and Catholic fiancés, for example: wedding gift (one-year home rental, electricity, one or two-room furniture, home repair ...)
    - free funeral service and project to help with the burial service and purchase of the coffin,
    - Project to support the families of priests and their poor families, for all Catholic and Orthodox Rites.
- Support projects of the Armenian Orthodox Church (new 2019)



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- support for the clergy with a monthly sum for each priest who receives a low salary,
- logistic and material help for Orthodox priests to collect data on families, using three of our employees,
- assumption of young poor families with a food package and health care (in place),
- assumption of new catechism centres, where they do not yet exist.

• **Damascus (Bab Touma, House of Ananias, Tabbale and Salhie):**

- repair of structures damaged by bombing
- help for poor families and young people
- medicines and medical interventions
- children and students study aids
- renovation of interior spaces on the ground floor of the Bab Touma parish, for youth activities
- study and restructuring space for a parish cultural centre for young people at the **House of Ananias**
- Help and support aids for the sick
- Education, help for kindergarten children in Tabbale
- A Post-traumatic War Treatment Centre for children and young people

• **Latakiah:**

- purchase of land to build a pastoral centre at the service of the local parish community
- monthly distribution of food parcels to around 300 families
- A Post-Traumatic War treatment Centre for children and young people

- Aid for refugees in the 3 villages of Knaye, Jacoubie and Sjeide

**In Rhodes - Kos**

- Food aid and first aid for refugees passing through the temporary reception centre of Rhodes and Kos
- Project to repair the parish church, cemetery and monastery in Kos after the earthquake

**Ordinary salaries of the Custody**

- Monthly salaries of around 1150 employees in Israel and Palestine divided between 15 schools (60% of the total number of employees), 4 *Casa Nova* Homes for pilgrims (20% of the number of employees), 80 sanctuaries, 25 parishes and many other activities.

Jerusalem, 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2019



**Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem**  
**General Administration**  
**Summary of Main Projects 2018-2019**

The main projects of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem during 2018-2019 centered around three main themes, being expanding the humanitarian support to needy Christian families; enhancing the educational support, mainly through the schools and parishes; and focusing on the pastoral activities, mainly through the parishes and the work of the pastoral committee. Below is a summary of the main projects under each of these main headings.

**Expanding the Humanitarian Support to Needy Christian Families**

The Latin Patriarchate continued with the existing humanitarian assistance programs that have been offered for many years and expanded the programs to areas where there are emerging needs resulting from the deteriorating economic and political reality of the Holy Land (Palestine, Jordan, and Israel). Such support can be summarized as follows:

- Social Assistance – to support families who are categorized as the poorest of the poor in the areas where we serve. Such families had serious economic problems and the support sometimes ranged from food coupons to payment of utility bills and back rental.
- Educational Support – to assist needy Christian families secure the education of their children either at schools or universities.
- Medical Assistance – to support poor Christians who are in need of urgent medical procedures and do not have medical insurance.
- Medicines – to cover the monthly medicines of poor elderly members who have chronic diseases and require medications on a monthly basis, and do not have insurance.
- Iraqi Refugee Support – to support the families of Christian Iraqi refugees in Jordan through subsidies to their rent costs, medical expenses and transportation.
- Syrian and Iraqi Refugees education – providing a quality education to Syrian and Iraqi refugees through opening 12 LPJ schools in Jordan in the afternoon as second shift to educate the children denied a formal education.
- Gaza Job Creation – providing employment and training opportunities to youth and needy members of the Christian community thus encouraging them to stay in this small yet vibrant community.
- East Jerusalem assistance – to provide Christian families caught in the politics of the city support to sustain their presence in the city as they face legal and eviction proceedings.
- Livelihood refugee support in Jordan – through the implementation of a number of training and employment programs, hundreds were involved in gaining skills in cheese making, pizza production, tailoring skills, and wine making among others. Such refugees became self-sufficient through gaining these skills.

Through the above assistance programs, thousands of needy Christians were assisted as they faced poverty, legal notices, medical emergencies, and general marginalization. In total, over \$2 million dollars were allocated to these various programs.

## Educational Support

The Latin Patriarchate operates a network of 45 schools and 34 kindergartens spread over the three countries of Israel, Palestine and Jordan. Many of these schools are old, with some buildings being over 170 years old while others more recently constructed. In total the schools educate 19,000 students and employ around 1,550 people, mostly Christians. The project support is divided into two components, the first being new institutions, while the other being the focus on enhancing the buildings through infrastructure, furniture, and equipment upgrades. As for the first category, here is a summary of the main projects:

- Jaffa of Nazareth – Israel – Construction of a new Kindergarten there to meet the growing needs of the Christian community and to expand the school. This project also included a complete renovation of the adjacent school.
- Hashimi – Jordan – The construction of a new Kindergarten in Hashimi which was mandated by the Jordanian Ministry of Education, as the old building did not meet the governmental standards.
- Gaza – Palestine – The construction of a new Kindergarten at the Holy Family School in Gaza to meet the growing needs there. This project also included adding a new floor to expand the school as well as installing a solar energy system.
- Salt – Jordan – The relocation of the school from the crowded center of Salt to the outskirts where the school was relocated in the building formerly used as a kindergarten and house for the Rosary Sisters. This provided an enhanced learning environment after completely renovating the building.

The cost of the above projects was in excess of \$2 million dollars.

In addition to these main construction and renovation projects, a number of additional smaller projects were completed including:

- Improving the infrastructure, furniture and equipment at the various schools to ensure a healthy and safe environment. Below is a highlight of the various main projects:
  - Installing solar energy systems at over ten schools in Palestine and Jordan. Not only did this reduce the cost of electricity, in many places down to zero, but contributed to an environmentally friendly eco-system.
  - Installing smart boards at no less than ten schools to enhance the use of technology in the educational process.
  - Hundreds of student desks were either rehabilitated or replaced to ensure a safe and comfortable environment for the students
  - Renovation at eight schools of the toilettes improving the hygiene for the students.
  - Renovation works at a number of schools including school halls, classrooms, and laboratories.
  - Installing an elevator at the Seminary in Beit Jala
  - Enhancing the Computer labs at three schools
  - Installation of CCTV security systems at a number of schools to enhance safety.
  - Upgrade of the electric grid at two schools.

The cost estimate for the above projects is about \$1 million dollars.

## Pastoral Activities

There was renewed commitment to support the pastoral work of the diocese and this can be divided in two categories, the first being to support the pastoral activities while the second component consisted of much needed infrastructure development to support the activities. Below is a summary for the two sub-categories starting with the activities:

- Summer camps focusing on bible education and visits to holy sites were held during the summer at all 55 LPJ parishes.
- Sunday school activities were supported at many LPJ parishes.
- Production of educational materials and games to enhance the pastoral work included educational games production “In the Footsteps of Jesus”
- Support to Catholic scout troupes scattered throughout the parishes.
- Provide transportation costs to various parishes in Palestine to participate in the Palm Sunday procession in Jerusalem as well as Our Lady of Palestine feast in Rafat.
- Expanding the work with the migrant community in Jordan.
- Supporting the work of the prison ministry in Jordan.
- Translating spiritual literature to the Hebrew language to support the Hebrew speaking community.
- Recording Arabic spiritual and religious songs for use by mass media, marketed through YouTube to attract the younger generations.
- Major support to the activities of the Youth Chaplaincy in both Palestine and Jordan.
- Supporting the spiritual retreats of the Lectors and Acolytes.
- Supporting the spiritual retreats of Deacons, and new priests.
- Developing the Emmaus Center for family support.
- Purchasing a bus to support the pastoral activities of the Gaza parish.
- Purchasing a mini-van to support the work of the Youth Chaplaincy in Palestine.
- Supporting all costs of the Catechetical Office and its work throughout the Diocese.

The estimated cost for the above activities is around \$500,000.

As for the infrastructure works completed to enhance the pastoral activities, they can be summarized as follows:

- The continuation of the construction of the new Church in Jubeiha, Jordan, which will have a capacity of about 900 seats as well as the parish hall. Expected completion date is March 2020.
- The renovation of the Rosary Sisters residences in Amman, Rameh, Zababdeh, and Beit Jala.
- The rehabilitation or expansion of the parish halls in Kerak, Fheis, Beit Jala, Ramallah, Taybeh, Bir Zeit, Aboud, and Jenin.
- Construction of two rooms in Gaza to serve as a training center serving the youth.
- Complete renovation of the priests’ house in Anjara.
- Rehabilitation works at the Churches in Hashimi, Ader, and Smakieh.
- Renovations and expansions of the Christ the King Bookstore in Beit Sahour being the main source of Christian books and references in the area.

- Renovation of the main conference room at the Latin Patriarchate.

The estimated cost of implementation of the above projects is approximately \$1.2 million.

### **Other Miscellaneous Projects**

In addition to the main projects stated above, there are a number of additional projects in various LPJ entities including:

- *Our Lady of Peace Center in Jordan* – six projects were completed to enhance the services of the center which caters to people with special needs as well as host many pastoral activities. This included the restoration of the hydrotherapy pool; renovation of the games area; establishment of a sensory room; rehabilitation of the speech therapy room; completion of two retired priests' apartments; and renovation of the bathrooms.
- *Ecclesiastical Courts* – complete renovation of the courts headquarters in Jerusalem including a safer environment especially for the court documents.
- *Beit Afram Elderly Home in Taybeh* – a number of projects were completed to improve the infrastructure. This included installing a new fire safety system; safety repairs to emergency exits; re-asphalting the parking lot; water-proofing works to fix leaky roofs; and introducing an air-conditioning and ventilation system in the kitchen.

The estimated cost of the above projects is approximately \$350,000.

*Sami El-Yousef*  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
*27 November 2019*