



GRAND MAGISTERIUM – VATICAN
EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF
THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

The 2018 projects undertaken and supported at the request of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem



The Grand Magisterium of the Order has chosen to direct more economic aid granted to the Holy Land to support education, especially in terms of the salaries of teachers in the schools of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Sami El-Yousef, chief executive officer of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, shared with us some important details about the projects the Grand Magisterium will support during 2018 in agreement with the Latin Patriarchate.

In 2018 the Order's commitment to the projects proposed by the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem focuses primarily on the conclusion of projects already underway.

One example is the **Jubeiha church**. In Jubeiha, Jordan, there is a growing Christian community. The first phase of the project was the basement floor, which was completed before Christmas 2017, enabling the parish to host Christmas celebrations there and to use the basement floor as a temporary church. The project continues in 2018 with the construction and completion of the church itself and the bell tower. "We hope to finish it by Easter 2019", stated Sami El-Yousef during the Grand Magisterium meeting of April 2018.

Another ongoing project concerns the **kindergarten in Jaffa of Nazareth**, serving an important parish in North Israel. This structure will have 6 classrooms as well as a multipurpose hall on the top floor of the building. The project is expected to be completed in Summer 2018 so that hopefully with the start of the new school year in September 2018, the new kindergarten will be opened. This is the site where the Governor General placed the cornerstone during his first official visit to the Holy Land.

The third ongoing project is the **kindergarten in Hashimi**, Jordan. According to Ministry of Education regulations, a kindergarten cannot be on three levels but only on one level for children's safety so

a new building has to be constructed next to the school. The chief executive officer of the Latin Patriarchate informs us that “the project has already started and digging has begun. Like Jaffa of Nazareth, it is estimated to be completed by Summer 2018 to be ready to welcome students for new school year.”

Giving priority to completion of already ongoing projects, only one new big project has been added: the **renovation of the residence for priests in Anjara** where priests were very busy in developing the new building for the care of children but were not taking care of their own needs. “When I visited the premises a few months ago – states Sami – I found the place where they live in a bad shape. A project was then prepared and submitted to the Order who accepted to support it so that in a short span of time, the priests will have renovated premises to live in.”

In addition, the Order is continuing to fund the **salary increase for teachers**. 1,500 employees work in the 45 schools of the Patriarchate and their salaries are really below the standard of the local cost of living both in Palestine and Jordan. Talking about this action that the Grand Magisterium decided to support, Sami underlines that “it is particularly important because there are 1,500 families whose sustenance is guaranteed by the employment opportunity created by the schools and this is a contribution to keep Christian families in the Holy Land and provide them with a dignified life.”

Finally, this year the Order has agreed to **fund some small projects** totalling around 300,000 \$ to provide support for a number of initiatives which will not exceed 30,000 \$ each. Those types of projects will be able to invest in capacity building projects, infrastructure development, equipment projects for schools, centres, parishes. A total of 18 projects have been approved and these will support civil and mechanical works (60%), human resources and development (20%) and pastoral care (20%).

Elena Dini

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