



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

What do you place at the centre of your summer?



“The situation in the Gaza Strip is truly terrible. Yet if you look at the parish’s Facebook page and the images we share, everything would seem bright and cheerful. That is not the case. I am not saying that what we are doing is artificial; on the contrary, what we are doing is very real, but it might even seem crazy... After all, we cannot allow our children and teenagers to die in despair.”

This was how Fr. Gabriel Romanelli, parish priest of the Holy Family Church in Gaza, spoke on July 30 as he shared images of something that would seem perfectly ordinary in many parts of the world but that, in Gaza, became a cause for great celebration: inflatable play structures that, thanks to the generosity of some friends, the parish was able to rent so that children and teenagers could enjoy playing together.

“The joy of young people and their ability to detach themselves, even for a while, from their surroundings—to have fun and play at a time when war is raging in Gaza—is absolutely essential. These children will be tomorrow’s adults.”

With this vision and spirit, throughout July the parish in Gaza—where educational and recreational activities for young people are difficult and rare because of the war—succeeded in organizing a summer camp offering a wide range of activities, from Palestinian dance classes to moments of prayer and spiritual reflection, from art workshops to sports, games, and religious instruction. These are opportunities to build a better future while the reality of war still surrounds them today.

From Gaza we move to Galilee, where the General Secretariat of Galilee – Office for Youth Ministry has concluded the first phase of its 2026 summer program with initiatives involving young people and families. During the “Faith on Fire” evening, young people from the parishes of Galilee gathered for a time of praise and prayer (you can watch the video), while a retreat inspired by the figure of St. Peter was also organized in Nazareth for high school students aged 16 to 18.

Summer is truly a special time to devote time to oneself, to experience community life, and to live the faith more deeply by refocusing on what is essential.

This was also the experience of a group of volunteers from the Lieutenancy for Western Spain who, continuing a well-established tradition, spent July 9–28 serving in the Holy Land.

The volunteers assisted the Franciscan friars at the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre with maintenance, cleaning, and the care of the church during opening hours. They also served through the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem in other locations, especially in Bethlehem, where they worked with the children of Hogar Niño Dios, run by the Sisters of the Incarnate Word.

Returning home to Spain and Costa Rica, the volunteers carried with them a profound experience of faith, meaningful encounters with the Patriarch and the Custos of the Holy Land, and the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the life and witness of the Christian community in the Holy Land.

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