



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

*At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land*

## Two seminarians share their experience



Seminarian Jiries Khalil shares his spiritual path

*“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you came to birth, I consecrated you” (Jeremiah 1:5)*

My name is Jiries Majed Abu Khalil. I am 21 years old and I was born on the 17th of May 2001. I am originally from Jifna, a small village near Ramallah in the West Bank, but my family moved to Jerusalem eight years ago.

My calling to enter the seminary became stronger after I had received the Sacrament of Confirmation on the 17th of May 2013. At the end of the Mass, the bishop suggested I join the seminary if I wanted. I thought a lot about it because I knew it was not going to be an easy decision to make. I finally made my decision to get a taste of that life by joining the minor seminary so I could learn more about Jesus, about the vocation and about the Patriarchate I belong to.

I entered the minor Seminary in 2014. After finishing school, I stayed here and entered the propaedeutic year to know if my vocation was to serve God as a priest or to serve him as just a believer.

So, I entered the propaedeutic year to know if that was my vocation, and following this year and two years of philosophy I was certain of it and my decision to become a priest. I recognized that the voice of the bishop at that time was the voice of the Holy Spirit calling on me to be God's servant.

As the above quoted verse from (Jeremiah 1:5) states, I feel my mission in life had already been decided from the day of my conception in my mother's womb. The day I received the sacrament of confirmation when I first felt my calling was also my 12th birthday. That is why I feel I was called to be a servant of God the day I was born, May 17th.

Finally, I hope to become a good priest, and a good shepherd. So, I ask you to pray for me on my journey towards becoming what God wants me to be. Thank you so much.

*(April 2023)*



“This life brought me closer to God”, shares seminarian Salameh Azar

My name is Salameh Azar. I am 23 years old, a Palestinian from the city of Beit Jala where the Seminary is located. I am now in my second year of philosophy. I entered the seminary three years ago after completing two years at Bethlehem University. I withdrew from university and the reason is that I felt God wanted me to pursue something else.

I didn't feel out of place when I first entered the seminary. The reason is mainly that since I was a child, I felt very connected with the church and its mission. Of course, taking this decision has not been easy, especially since my mother was not in favour of it. She depends a lot on me because I am the oldest son.

Despite the fact that I quickly got used to my new life in the seminary, it does not mean that it is without challenges. The strict routine is the toughest part. However, I also find this life to be also very rewarding. Most importantly, it brought me closer to God.

My calling is now clearer, and that gives me the peace of mind I need the most, knowing that I am in the right place. I feel more in tune with my inner self and the divine within and without. In the future, I aspire to be a priest with a new vision, one that can help me be closer to people's lived experiences and struggles following the example of Jesus Christ.