The Order of the Holy Sepulchre collaborating in ROACO projects

Students in the Catholic school in Gaza

Each year, as part of the Reunion of Aid Agencies for the Oriental Churches (ROACO), the Order of the Holy Sepulchre commits to support some projects, expanding its mission of solidarity in the Holy Land, meaning all the biblical territories, and all the Catholic communities in addition to the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

At the recent ROACO Spring meeting, the Order has agreed to collaborate in projects for the Catholic communities of the Greek-Melkite Church and of the Rosary Sisters who welcome a thousand pupils, in Gaza, in very difficult conditions.

■ The **Saint Vincent Hospice in Jerusalem** has been managed by the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul since 1885 and particularly welcomes disabled children. In order to better respond to the needs of poor families, the structure is in **need of renovation work** on the nursery and the asylum to avoid the closure. In fact, compliance with current health and safety legislation is required by the city's administrative authorities and the Ministry of Health.

■ In the **Greek-Melchite parish of the Dormition of Mary in Arrabeh**, an Arab village located in the north of Israel, the building in which Christian community meetings are held, in particular the activities of the catechism, is also in need of **renovation work**. The village is home to six mosques and one church dating back to 1950.

■ The **Greek-Melkite community of Nazareth** has about 10,000 faithful. The **Church of St. Joseph**, built 50 years ago, works to meet the spiritual needs of parishioners, as well as hosting prayer meetings for students of the annexed Greek-Catholic school twice weekly and many other parish activities. Work began on badly needed renovation two years ago, with a local contribution covering 60% of costs. The Order of the Holy Sepulchre will contribute specifically to about 75% of the costs for the fence project to protect the church from vandalism which unfortunately has recently damaged the structure.

■ There is a small Christian community of **Catholic Greek-Melkite faithful and Greek-orthodox faithful in the village of Bi'ina**, next to Akko, in northern Israel. The Melkite **Church of Saint Peter**, built in 1907, has 250 parishioners. The project supported by the Order will provide for the construction of an annex to the church to accommodate religious and social activities for the local community and the surrounding villages.

■ Another project that the Order has committed to in 2016 through ROACO, is the **renovation of The Sisters of the Rosary School in Gaza**. This school, run by a Latin rite Catholic congregation of women religious, welcomes about 900 students – of which only 9% are Christians, considering the small number of Christians left in the Gaza Strip – and provides schooling from pre-school to the age of 15-16. The Order will fund the renovation of the toilets and kitchens, as well as realize side access stairs to the facility and install a new drainage system.

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