



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

The Holy Land Commission visits Jordan



During its latest on-site visit, the Holy Land Commission of the Grand Magisterium, focused on gaining first-hand knowledge of the projects and meeting the people involved in various activities supported by the Order in Jordan. The visit of President Bart McGettrick, members Detlef Brümmer from Germany and Cynthia Monahan from the United States, as well as former president and current consultant of the Holy Land Commission, Tom McKiernan, took place from September 8 to 15, 2019.

Accompanied by Sami El-Yousef, the Latin Patriarchate chief executive officer and by the deacon Jubran Salameh, the Commission began its visit at the Church of St. Paul the Apostle in Jubeiha which was one of the major projects supported by the Order over the past few years and which is about to be completed: Jubeiha has seen its Christian population grow and the need to have a church that could accommodate all the faithful has long been an important request. The projected date for the inauguration of the completed church – which will be able to accommodate 2,700 faithful – is in the first few months of 2020. Another stop was that of the church of Marj Alhamam, which was also financed by the Order. “The Commission is satisfied with the quality of these facilities and the good use made of them,” commented Bart McGettrick.

Following this, the delegation went to Our Lady of Peace Centre. This structure usually cares for children with disabilities but since the arrival of many Iraqi refugees in Jordan, it has also taken on the responsibility of offering support to some of them. The issue of refugees – which shows no sign of diminishing in importance – has been the subject of particular attention by the Commission. With regards to Syrian refugees, “about 25% of school-age children have no access to education and this cannot be considered ‘normal’,” commented the Commission in its report of the visit.

The next day the group continued onto Hashimi where another significant project was recently completed: a new kindergarten built with the Order’s contributions and inaugurated in March 2019. The day continued with a visit to Msgr. William Shomali, patriarchal vicar in Jordan and with a meeting

with school principals from the Amman district. The following days were also dedicated to meetings with the Patriarchate school principals from other areas of the country. "The principals are grateful for the help received from the Order," said the Commission President, who also expressed concern at the Jordanian state schoolteachers' demands for a wage increase of 50%. This will clearly have an impact on teachers in the Patriarchate schools which would not wish to offer a lower salary than the one guaranteed by the state, on pain of losing competent and qualified staff.

The delegation also met Msgr. Mauro Lalli of the Apostolic Nunciature of Amman and the director of Caritas Jordan, Wael Suleiman.

There were various meetings with local communities. For example, one evening the Holy Land Commission had the opportunity to pray the rosary with a large group of faithful (2000 people!) gathered at the Church of Mary of Nazareth in Sweifieh, and on another occasion to attend Mass in the parish of Tla el-Ali followed by a procession to celebrate the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross along with 1200 people. "The parishes we visited vibrant and active. The engagement of youth was a particularly pleasant aspect of our visits," concluded Bart McGettrick.

(December 2019)

150th anniversary of Patriarchate schools in Jordan

Also in Jordan, on October 5, celebrations were held to mark 150 years since the opening of the first Latin Patriarchate School in Jordan at our Lady of Peace Center. Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister Raja'i Mu'asher, the Patriarchal Vicar for Jordan Mons. William Shomali, the Apostolic Nuncio in Jordan, Mons. Alberto Ortega Martín and various other authorities were present at the ceremony during which the steps taken so far against illiteracy and for the dissemination of Christian educational values to all citizens were outlined. To date, the Patriarchate has 25 schools and 18 kindergartens in the Hashemite kingdom "in the service of humanity" with 11,000 Christian and Muslim students noted Father Wissam Mansour, Director General of Patriarchate Schools in Jordan. The Order of the Holy Sepulchre, which pays particular attention to the education of young people, is proud to be able to support these structures on a monthly basis, thus allowing Jordanian young people to pursue their education in an environment that prepares them to be competent men and women and at the service of dialogue in society.