



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

"Olympic Games" in Ramallah



Young volunteers from France spend their summer in the Holy Land among Palestinian children, in the spirit of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. Their moving testimony pays tribute to a youth animated by the desire to build bridges between cultures in the name of faith in Jesus Christ.

Ramallah: How exotic this word seemed to us! It held within it the promise of the East, while our group of five volunteers busied itself organizing a summer camp for the Latin rite parish. Ten days of games, songs, discovery, encounter and teaching French but also ten days to learn first hand about the political, social and religious reality of this land, the subject of so much cupidity. Yes, all five could not wait to go out to meet the Palestinians.

This project was proposed by Charles-Edouard Roed-Guilbert, squire of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, who had already organized a first camp in Ramallah in 2015.

The successful outcome of that camp, with families and teachers, as well as the links forged with the parish, had convinced everyone of the need to continue the experience.

At the beginning of June - the eastern flexibility regarding dates had already won us over – set the period for **July 20-30**, and the theme: "The Olympic Games".

From our arrival, the French teacher who had helped organize the previous year's summer camp transmitted to us the enthusiasm that had marked that first experience. We expected to welcome more than 30 children from 2015 and receive about 35 students. What a surprise it was when the first

day we discovered that we were to share this week and a half with no fewer than **70 well-motivated students**, young and eager to learn more about our language. More than double last year's number, meaning that word had spread.

Among the many things that we observed and which amazed us, was the **closeness between the Christian and Muslim communities**. They all live in harmony and undertake certain public initiatives to organize activities that involves the different actors of the their community.

If the joy of children and communities were not enough to win our hearts, then the hospitality, of the community in which we lived and those who assisted us, the gratitude of parents, really made us feel fortunate to have been of this budding adventure. In fact, in less than four days, we can count: a lively evening hosted by a priest who lives with us, two invitations to dinner, an invitation to a traditional dance show followed by tea at the home of one of our precious friends and, again, another invitation to a guided tour of the main sites in the city.

Today we are certain of one thing: **this summer camp transforms us more and more each day.**

Claire de Puybaudet e Guillaume Malnoy

This year the "Tribune de Terre Sainte" summer camp is organized by Claire de Puybaudet, Anne Hitier, Joella Mercier des Rochettes, Guillaume Malnoy and Louis-Marie de Pomerol.

(August 3, 2016)