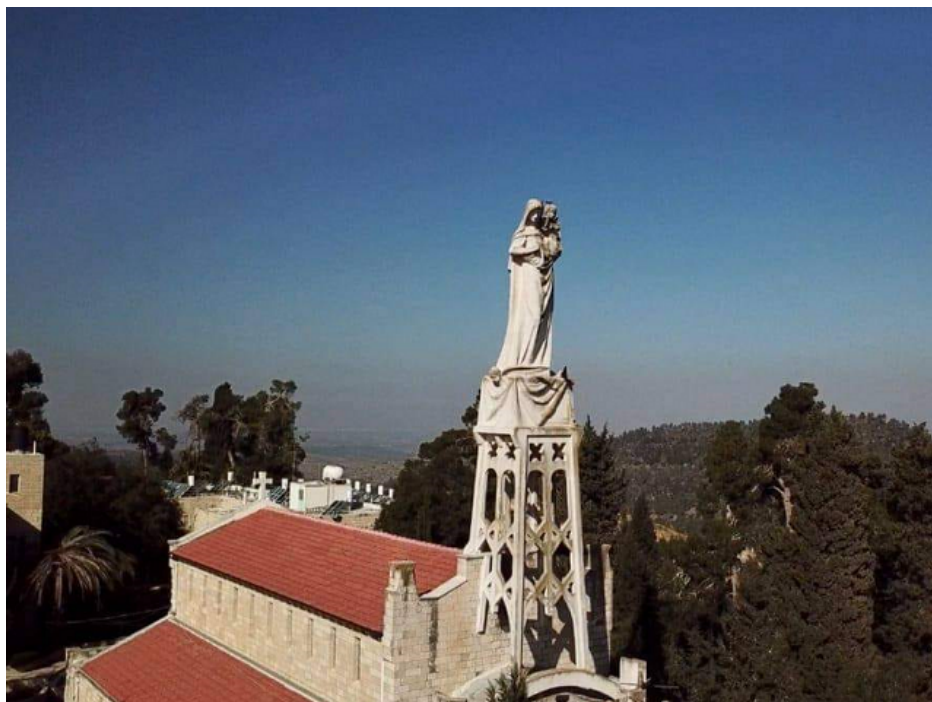




GRAND MAGISTERIUM – VATICAN
EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF
THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

Planting Seeds in Difficult Grounds: the projects undertaken by the Order within the ROACO framework



“Dear representatives of the Agencies, thank you for what you do: you are evangelizers, participants in the mission of the Church, bearers of Jesus’ love. Over the years, how many people have received the fruits of your generosity! You are sowers of hope, witnesses called, in the style of the Gospel, to work with meekness and without fanfare,” said Pope Francis warmly to the participants of the 97th Plenary Assembly of the Reunion of Aid for the Oriental Churches (ROACO) to which the Order participates, during the audience granted to them on June 27, 2024.

For years, in addition to the monthly contributions and projects that the Order of the Holy Sepulchre supports through the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Knights and Dames have been involved through the Grand Magisterium in contributing to some initiatives indicated by the Congregation for the Oriental Churches within the ROACO framework. In 2024, the Order adopted nine projects. Four of them directly benefit educational institutions linked to religious entities or congregations. These include: the installation of classrooms and restrooms at the school of the Discalced Carmelites in Haifa (Israel); the reconstruction of the fence for the nursery of the Combonian Sisters in Bethany (Palestine); the renewal of the electrical system at the Greek- Catholic Melkite school for boys in Zarqa (Jordan); and the maintenance of classrooms and stairs at the Dar Al- Lutf school in Aqaba (Jordan).

Other projects concern churches that need significant renovation work to better accommodate local communities. These include: at the Greek-Catholic Melkite church of Our Lady of the Dormition in Arrabeh (Israel), the pews will be replaced; in the complex of the church of Our Lady of the Ark of the Covenant in Kiryat Ye’arim (Israel), a contribution has been given for the redesign of the irrigation system; finally, work will continue on the insulation and maintenance of the roof of the Greek- Catholic Melkite cathedral of the Annunciation of the Virgin in the Old City of Jerusalem.

The last two projects involve more direct renovation work on buildings of religious congregations, such as the Monastery of the Benedictine Sisters of Our Lady of Calvary in Jerusalem and the guesthouse of the priests of the Incarnate Word located at the monastery at the Baptism of the Lord Sanctuary in Bethany, Jordan.

Local communities are always involved and contribute part of the funds for these works, which makes these projects even closer where the Order is called to “fill in” the missing part of an economic commitment that starts from the base and shows the interest, involvement, and love of local communities for their own structures and activities.

At the end of his speech to the participants in the ROACO plenary assembly (where the Order was represented this year by Dr. Petrillo, Treasurer of the Order, who replaced the General Governor who was unable to attend), Pope Francis specifically mentioned the Holy Land among those Oriental Churches who “are bearing a heavy cross and have become ‘martyr Churches’” and they “carry the marks of Christ’s wounds.” He encouraged the participants by reminding them that, “The seeds you plant in fields poisoned by hatred and war will surely blossom. They will be a prophecy of a different world, one that does not believe that might makes right, but in the nonviolent power of peace.”

(October 2024)