A lookback at 2020 in the Holy Land

Current issues for the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem have been dominated by the health crisis arising from the pandemic, and the need to come to the aid of a hard-hit Catholic community.

We share some excerpts of the reflections of Sami El-Yousef, CEO of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which retrace the salient moments and the important initiatives of these complex months of 2020 that have allowed the Christian communities of the Holy Land to be supported in difficulties and continue to be a seed of hope in their land.

“In the humanitarian area, the suffering multiplied exponentially, and we had to adjust our efforts to reach the largest possible number of people who were suffering as a result of the pandemic. The main programs of support continued uninterrupted and increased including our medicines, medical emergencies, educational support, social assistance, refugee and migrants support, job creation in Gaza, and support to marginalized communities in East Jerusalem. In addition, and due to the unprecedented generosity towards the two appeals launched in May, we were able to support thousands of families with basic humanitarian needs and tuition support.”

“As for the educational pillar of the LPJ, the teaching and learning process to some 20,000 students attending 44 schools in Jordan, Palestine and Israel continued through the dedication of over 1,795 staff who worked very hard to adapt to online teaching almost overnight without much preparation, then go back to modified in-class education then adjust again to some blended educational combination.”

“The pastoral activities continued at various levels depending on governmental regulations which seemed stricter in Israel than in neighboring Palestine and Jordan where semi-normalcy continued. Activities involving large numbers of people were all curtailed including summer camp activities, big celebrations surrounding major feasts, weddings, and funerals. However, contact was maintained

between the priests and the faithful, and many online activities were arranged including the streaming of masses."

"As we got closer to the end of the year, we were happy to learn of the decision of His Holiness to appoint Archbishop Pizzaballa as the 10th Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem since the re-establishment of the Latin Patriarchate in 1847. […] His appointment ensures that all the hard work of the past four years will continue uninterrupted without any delay to ensure that the LPJ of the future stands on solid ground from a financial and administrative perspective to tackle the many challenges that remain."

"In closing, allow me to extend our gratitude and appreciation to our generous donors from around the world, and in a very specific way all those who supported us extraordinarily through the two appeals for their generous moral and financial support without which our work would have been impossible."

(January 2021)