



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

*At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land*

## The Order's projects together with the Latin Patriarchate

Some projects supported by the Order of the Holy Sepulchre in the Holy Land and completed in 2022



**At the request of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Order's mission is to support the implementation of numerous projects, large and small, in the Holy Land. This article presents the projects completed in 2022, thanks to the contributions of the Lieutenancies around the world. These works, once completed, contribute to improving living standards of our brothers and sisters in this part of the world.**

Aretrospective on the past year allows us to note that while the Covid-19 pandemic was less pervasive than the previous year and allowed for the normal resumption of international travel, other factors have destabilized the world. Firstly, the war in Ukraine, which caused a large number of casualties and led to increases in the cost of many basic goods and services, increases that in the Holy Land were sometimes as high as 10% and in other cases reached 20%.

Inflation also increased and unemployment rates remained high in Jordan and Palestine, where they continued to exceed 20% (peaking at over 50% in Gaza), compared to 5% in Israel.

The demands on the humanitarian aid fund therefore remained very high. The distribution of medicines, healthcare for the neediest, school support and social assistance continued unabated and the number of beneficiaries remained high. In addition, job creation programs in Gaza, support funds for Iraqi refugees in Jordan and East Jerusalem continued to support many families during the year.

In particular, thanks to the Order's funding, job creation in Gaza provided employment for some one hundred young people in the past three years. The good news is that some sixty-five people who have benefited from this program in the past now have permanent and secure jobs.

Support for Iraqi refugees also continued during the year, benefiting 17,000 refugees, including 12,000 Christians.

With regard to the East Jerusalem fund, there was an increase in demand due to the tightening of measures imposed on families applying for family reunification.

During the year, efforts were made to move towards more sustainable empowerment programs. Some creative programs were designed to help beneficiaries become independent, an example being the programs for women and young people, who improved their skills through the teaching of a trade that enabled them to generate an income to support themselves and their families.

In this sense, the AFAQ (Horizons) skills development and career guidance programs, implemented in cooperation with Bethlehem University, has been a great success.

#### PROJECTS SUPPORTING PASTORAL ACTIVITIES



Thanks to the gradual easing of restrictions on group activities, pastoral activities increased positively throughout the year.

Among the most significant activities was the resumption of summer camps after a twoyear break, as well as an increase in youth chaplaincy and scouting activities. Spiritual retreats also resumed, and the activities of the catechetical and liturgical offices increased.

Within this framework, several projects were carried out to provide services, renovation and safety, in order to offer a protected, welcoming and comfortable environment to those who benefit from it.



### **Purchase of a new minivan to support youth pastoral activities**

JEC Jordan (Christian Student Youth) needed a reliable vehicle to transport its members to various organized activities, including training courses, workshops, spiritual meetings, camps, sports activities and educational trips. Thanks to a generous donation from the **Dutch Lieutenancy**, the Latin Patriarchate was able to purchase a minivan to support these activities. A dozen members of the General Secretariat of JEC, fifty members of the Work Commission, priests, nuns and spiritual leaders of JEC, can now benefit from this purchase, which also allows all members in Jordan, especially those from the more remote villages, to take part in the masses, events and religious celebrations organized by this dynamic movement.



### Renovation of spaces for the Catholic Church in Jordan

The **Lieutenancy for Germany** financed the renovation of the Latin parish in Smakiyeh, which covered the church, the priest's house and the multi-purpose hall. The parish, which is located in a marginalized area outside the capital Amman, had not been renovated for decades. Thanks to this project, the Latin Patriarchate was able to create a pastoral environment suitable for living, praying and participating in masses and parish events.

In Misdar, one of the poorest neighborhoods of Amman, located in the eastern part of the city, where families struggle to meet their daily needs, the parish of Christ the King was established in 1924 and the construction of the church and school was completed in 1928. This parish continued to function normally until 1948, when many Palestinians fled their country and settled in the area, thus creating a new demographic situation. In fact, the parish grew significantly over the years, especially as many refugees fled from Middle Eastern countries and the region became a destination for all these immigrants. The premises needed urgent maintenance to meet the minimum health and safety standards of the residence. The project also included tiling work on 400 meters of the Church of Christ the King. All of this was made possible by another generous grant from the **Lieutenancy for England and Wales**.

Also in Jordan, the **Lieutenancy for Luxembourg** donated funds for the renovation of the meeting room of the Christian Student Youth activities in Jabal Amman. The Chaplain and the JEC management team have always insisted on creating a professional environment to be used for meetings and activities at JEC headquarters. The renovated space will be ideal for group gatherings, formal committee meetings or training events. The space will also be used to organize online meetings, video conferences, presentations, lectures and interviews.

**NEW FACILITIES FOR OVER 3,000 STUDENTS AND NEARLY 300 TEACHERS**





In the academic world classes and extracurricular and pastoral activities also resumed this year.

Two major educational projects that had been presented and started in 2020 were completed in 2022 thanks to the **US Northeastern Lieutenancy**.

Some schools in the Holy Land needed a reorganization of their libraries, where shelves were limited and educational books were insufficient to meet the needs of students and teachers. In addition, the furniture was old or broken and far from comfortable for the students and teachers who wanted to use these spaces to read, study and do research.

Sixteen of these libraries were renovated. The project enriched the selection of books available for students and teachers, and also provided new furniture to offer a safe educational space to make access to learning more functional.

The second project was proposed by the Latin Patriarchate after the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted education worldwide and affected millions of students. Schools needed to be equipped with interactive whiteboards and projectors to optimize teachers' teaching to enrich the learning experience and cultivate students' passion and skills for technology. Overall, twenty interactive whiteboards and 20 projectors were purchased. Seven schools benefited and were able to offer interactive lessons, enhancing the learning experience of their pupils.



In Jordan, a total of 2,140 students and 204 staff and teachers benefited from the new equipment. In Palestine, 1,163 students and 92 staff and teachers benefited. In total, 3,303 students and 296 teachers will use the new equipment, thus enhancing and enriching the learning environment in the schools of the Latin Patriarchate.

At the structural level, a number of important projects aimed at modernizing services were implemented during the year. In particular, in the School in Gaza, four projects were completed.

The school entrance hall and laboratory had to be renovated as the safety of both areas had been compromised by multiple problems. The entrance hall is a very important space because it is used for all school activities, including meetings, assemblies and gatherings. The windows, lighting and ventilation system needed to be replaced and the entire security system overhauled. Meanwhile, the school's laboratory had become unusable due to a serious water leak that had caused extensive damage.

Thanks to the contribution of the **Lieutenancy for England and Wales**, work began in 2019 to secure these two areas.



The second intervention, completed in autumn 2022, involved the installation of a new steel roof on the school's playing field, thanks to a donation from the **Lieutenancy for the Netherlands**. This project was proposed to complement the Latin Patriarchate's commitment to provide its students with a positive school environment and to contribute to their health and well-being. The new canopy will provide a shaded area where students can rest during recess and protect themselves from the sun and rain, allowing for longer periods of safe learning and play. In addition, the more adequately protected play area will also allow the parish to host family and social events that require a shaded outdoor area.

Lastly, the **Lieutenancy for France** financed the extension of a computer lab for the students and teachers of the Gaza school. As for the school in Jordan, the school building of the Latin Patriarchate in Ader had been in need of renovation for some time, especially in the basement, where there were problems with humidity and general dilapidation. It was therefore urgent to reinforce and restore the foundations. The work, which began in 2021 with the support of the **Lieutenancy for Germany**, was completed in 2022, making it possible to create a safer and healthier environment for the children.

PROJECTS FOR THE WHOLE DIOCESE OF THE HOLY LAND



The **Lieutenancy for Luxembourg** also supported the work of renewing the IT management system for the entire Diocese of Jerusalem. The Latin Patriarchate needed to create a centralized web application system that could be hosted by the Patriarchate's Data Centre and be accessible to all parishes and the Chancery, including the Custody of the Holy Land (Franciscans).

The **Lieutenancy for Eastern Spain** supported the training of the Patriarchate's employees, as well as employees of the Beit Afram Retirement Home, the seminary, the printing office, the vicariates and others, through training and capacity building courses. The program was implemented by the Human Resources Department of the Latin Patriarchate and included: courses on archiving principles, payroll accounting, payroll processing and management, strategic planning for school leaders, an electrical training course and a scholarship for a master's degree in nursing, culinary arts, as well as a training course in music for kindergarten teachers.

IMPORTANT INTERVENTIONS FOR THE BEIT AFRAM HOME FOR THE ELDERLY IN TAYBEH, PALESTINE





Established in 2005 to provide care and a healthy environment for the elderly in Taybeh and other neighboring villages in the State of Palestine, the Beit Afram home for the elderly also offers opportunities for interaction with students, youth groups and religious movements, enabling the elderly to remain active and engaged and to safeguard their dignity and self-esteem.

In the building that houses this facility, the railings and balustrades of the terraces and balconies had been defective since their construction. In addition, the house had suffered extensive damage and had multiple problems related to inadequate waterproofing of the building. Waterproofing works were necessary to protect the integrity of the structure and create a healthy environment for residents and staff. In 2022, thanks to a grant from the **Lieutenancy for France**, the Latin Patriarchate was able to carry out these repairs, thus securing the building and providing safe and secure living and recreational spaces for the elderly residents and staff.



Also thanks to support from the **Lieutenancy for Eastern Spain**, it was possible to purchase a washing machine for the Beit Afram old people's home, to ensure the necessary hygiene of the linen provided for the elderly. In addition, in terms of technology, an intercom system was installed that allows staff to see and speak to visitors at the entrance, ensuring the safety of all.

#### RENOVATION OF THE CONVENT AND HOUSE OF THE SISTERS OF THE ROSARY IN RAMALLAH AND BIRZEIT, AND OTHER WORKS IN PALESTINE



Other projects completed in 2022 involved the convent and house of the Sisters of the Rosary, located in Ramallah and Birzeit respectively. Through their presence and work, the Sisters of the Rosary respond to the needs and make a difference in the lives of local Christians in the Holy Land. Their mission is dedicated to apostolic works in the fields of education (kindergartens and schools), social work (with the elderly) and medical care.

The nuns' convent in Ramallah, located close to the school of the Latin Patriarchate and the parish building, faced some problems both during peak school hours, when parents would pick up their children, and during the parish activities that last until the evening, coinciding with the nuns' prayer hours. That is why an intervention was necessary with the aim of transforming the convent into a more private and peaceful place for the sisters, allowing them to live their spirituality in complete serenity.

The house of the Sisters of the Rosary in Birzeit, on the other hand, which had not benefited from renovation work for several decades, had serious dampness problems and no longer met the minimum health and safety standards for residence.

The work of separating and renovating these two places began in 2021 thanks to the contribution of the **Lieutenancy for France** and the **Lieutenancy for Austria**, and was completed in 2022, creating a healthier, more comfortable and safer environment for our sisters who work to cultivate goodness towards all the people living in the Holy Land.

Also in Birzeit, another building was in need of maintenance: The Church of Our Lady Queen of Peace, a historic building with a dilapidated roof and several water infiltrations in the interior walls and ceilings. Waterproofing and renovation work was therefore needed, which was carried out between 2021 and 2022 thanks to the contribution of the **Lieutenancy for Ireland**.

#### MAINTENANCE WORK FOR THE PATRIARCHATE BUILDINGS IN JERUSALEM



Staying in the area of historical structures, the Latin Patriarchate building in Jerusalem represents a legacy for the Church and the city. The structure consists of the Co-cathedral and the main building. The roof of the Co-Cathedral was suffering from waterproofing problems, resulting in water seepage on the first floor and damage to the ceilings and interior walls. The poor condition of the roof was accelerating the deterioration of the building's historical materials (masonry, brick, wood, plaster, paint, etc.), which would eventually lead to a general disintegration of the structure.

Thanks to a donation from the **Lieutenancy for Portugal**, it was possible to start renovation work in 2019, in order to close the various water infiltration points and, at the same time, improve and maintain its structural integrity, thus providing a healthier environment for the inhabitants of the



historic building. Priests, nuns (around 20 religious men and women), forty staff members working in the administrative offices, and members of the surrounding Christian community who come to pray in the Latin Patriarchate Cathedral during religious celebrations and festivals benefited from the work, which was completed in 2022.

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For the year 2023, the Latin Patriarchate has requested the Grand Magisterium consider redistributing the resources sent regularly and prioritizing charitable and pastoral activities. This will be done by reducing the budget for projects, in order to meet the needs of families who have suffered greatly from the Covid-19 pandemic over the past two years, particularly those employed in hospitality and pilgrimage-related activities that have been closed down (causing job losses, unemployment, reduction of staff and hours in the hospitality, care, crafts and related service sectors).

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