# From Bethlehem to Panama: Rosaries for WYD

The “AveJmj” project mobilized Bethlehem’s young workers to produce thousands of Rosaries that will be gifted to everyone attending the WYD 2019. The Order of the Holy Sepulchre, on the initiative of the Grand Master, wished to financially support this generous project.

**“Praying for peace, especially for Jerusalem and the Middle East”** is Pope Francis’ special prayer request for WYD of January 2019 in Panama.

This appeal has given rise to the beautiful project **“AveJmj”**: “Ave” for the prayer to Mary, while “Jmj” (acronym in Spanish) stands for the World Youth Day, but also for “Jesus, Mary, Joseph”. In a few days, young participants from around the world will be **united in prayer to the Christians of the Holy Land thanks to the Rosaries that will be distributed to them**, olive wood Rosaries **crafted by the inhabitants of Bethlehem.**

Promoted by Bishop Pierre Bürcher of Iceland and Swiss author Daniel Pittet, the “AveJmj” project provides for the manufacture and shipment of 1.5 million Rosaries from the port of Ashdod (Israel) to Panama. The associations ‘Saint Jean-Marie Vianney’ Lausanne and Caritas Jerusalem support the initiative, raising funds and managing the operating sector. **The Order of the Holy Sepulchre strongly supports** this project of solidarity with the Christians of the Holy Land.

Between Beit Sahour, Beit Jala and Bethlehem, **eleven workshops of artisans were enthusiastically dedicated to producing the rosaries**. Each one is specialized in a particular aspect of production: the beads, the crosses, the engravings ... Groups of women were hired for the final assembly of the various pieces**. Thanks to this project, hundreds of inhabitants have found work.**

For example, it is a real “blessing” for Ibrahim – owner of one of the laboratories – who could buy new machinery and hire other people. In fact, according to Harout Bedrossian from the Caritas Jerusalem

‘fundraising’ office, recruitment pursued the specific purpose of “**involving the poor and the needy**, so that they can work and live in dignity”.

“AveJmj” is an initiative that **unites young people especially in prayer during WYD,** but also young people from the Holy Land.

Through this operation, Caritas Jerusalem has chosen to value the young workers of the Holy Land. Basel and Kamel have been appointed operational coordinators of the meticulous quality control to be carried out in each laboratory. The artisan mastery of the inhabitants of the Holy Land is brought to light by this world-wide project. Ihab – owner of the laser centre that engraves the words “Bethlehem” and “JMJ 2019” on each cross – expresses great joy in **seeing his work “sent all over the world!”**

In Panama, **each young person will receive three rosaries**: one for himself, one to give to another participant and one to bring to a person from their country of origin. Spread around the four corners of the globe, these small beads of olive wood will help to create a strong bond of prayer, the first step towards a unity that generates peace.

**Pauline Bourgogne**

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