



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

Introducing schoolchildren and local communities to the Order

The experience of the Lieutenancy for Ireland



On April 17, 2024, during the Easter Octave, the Communications Officer for the Lieutenancy for Ireland, Thomas Kilduff, visited four National Schools in the Parish of Kingscourt in the Diocese of Meath.

The invitation of the local Parish Priest, the Very Rev'd Gerard MacCormack, ecclesiastical member of the Order, was to meet with the students and teachers to discuss the humanitarian aid distributed by the Order to the Christian communities in Gaza and the Holy Land.

The visits were in spiritual preparation for the students to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, and the topics included the Holy Land, the Christian communities who live there and the suffering of the inhabitants arising from the current conflict.

“The most touching aspect of the school visits – shares Thomas Kilduff – was the innocence of the youngest infant school children (4-6 years) who had knowledge of Jesus and the Holy Land, having received excellent religious instruction from their teachers. The older school children (7-12 years) were very aware of the current conflict in Gaza; they understood the suffering of all those affected and demonstrated their eagerness to help by organising a charitable collection of money.”



Indeed the students decided to raise funds, by means of a uniform-free 'fun day' at each school and collected a substantial sum of money for them of over €700 which they chose to donate to three specific beneficiaries, including: the Holy Family Latin Parish Church in Gaza; and the St Vincent's Daughters of Charity Crèche and the Hogar Niño Dios where children with special needs are hosted both located in Bethlehem. The sum they collected was sent to the intended beneficiaries via the Grand Magisterium.

Separately, the parishioners of Kingscourt donated an additional sum of €1,700, which in total amounted to a very generous donation of €2,400, which will benefit the 'living stones' who are most in need at this current time.

Thomas Kilduff visited each of the four National Schools to give an age-appropriate PowerPoint presentation to the school children, who ranged from 4 to 12 years old. Both the school children and teachers expressed great interest in learning both about the Order and also about the Holy Land. The Communications Officer for the Lieutenancy for Ireland continues, "It was a very humbling experience to witness the awareness, enthusiasm and love that such young school children have for their Christian faith and indeed for their less fortunate brothers and sisters in Christ."

Owing to the success of this initiative, the Lieutenancy intends to follow up with more school visits, both at a National and Senior level. The involvement of members, both lay and ecclesiastics, will be encouraged to ensure the most successful outcome to raise the profile of the Order; the existence of the Christian communities in the Holy Land and to raise awareness of the importance of prayer, daily remembrance and financial aid to support the 'living stones' at this time of most need.

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