



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

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

## The Lieutenancy for Portugal and an experience of service and prayer with young people



For the first time in its history the Lieutenancy for Portugal organized a volunteer program in the Holy Land for a group of young Portuguese students. Over a period of three weeks, these young people lived in the town of Saint Mary Magdalen where they helped the Legionaries of Christ in the construction of the Magdala Project.

At Magdala, the day begins early. The alarm clock rings at 6:30 am and after breakfast, there is half an hour of prayer time before work begins. And thus, every day for the group of dozens of volunteers from all over the world who came to help build the dream of Magdala.

The spiritual journey of our young people, always accompanied by the tireless Father Timothy Meehan, L.C., as well as contact local Christians and pilgrims of all nationalities made this stay truly unforgettable.

Today Magdala is far more than a hotel and a magnificent church on the shores of Galilee. Following the discovery of a firstcentury synagogue, Magdala has become an important pilgrimage site for Jews as well as for Christians.

Hundreds of pilgrims arrive every day and they need to be welcomed, given guided tours, helped to prepare liturgical ceremonies, and given the possibility to buy refreshments and souvenirs. However superficial these activities may seem, they allow the dream of Magdala to become reality. The work of volunteers makes Magdala's millennial stones come to life!

The Lieutenancy for Portugal wanted this volunteer program to be accompanied by a personal deepening of the faith, in addition to contact with the institutions of the Catholic Church in the Holy

Land. In this regard, during the free moments, pilgrimages were organized to the Holy Places, always accompanied by a Knight of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre. Young volunteers also had the opportunity to meet some of the preeminent members of the Latin Church of Jerusalem, such as the two patriarchs emeritus, Archbishop Michel Sabbah and Archbishop Fouad Twal, Father Francesco Patton, Custodian of the Holy Land, as well as other Franciscans and Priests of Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. This contact with the reality of the Holy Land rendered the mission of our young volunteers something truly special.

At the end of this rich experience with the reality of our Mother Church and with Christians of Jerusalem, living stones on the paths walked by Jesus Christ, our young people returned home with a heart filled with joy and the desire to always be present in the Land in which God was made man.

**Tiago Teles de Abreu**

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