



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

Welcoming the Palestinian diaspora into the Order of the Holy Sepulchre



Investiture of Knights and Dames in the Canada-Montreal Lieutenancy.

Amal Catherine Shomali – Chancellor of the Canada-Montréal Lieutenancy – sent us an account of the recent Investiture of a Knight from Palestine. We publish some passages of this moving text, which invites other Lieutenancies to involve the Palestinian community in the annual feast dedicated to Our Lady of Palestine, Patroness of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

The Vigil at Arms and Investiture Ceremonies of the Canada-Montreal Lieutenancy were held on November 14 and 15, 2020 at Mary Queen of the World Cathedral and presided by Msgr. Christian Lépine, Grand Prior and Archbishop of Montréal, Québec, Canada. Due to the limitations imposed by the Health authorities, both ceremonies were live streamed through the Cathedral's YouTube channel as well as the Lieutenancy Facebook page.

Three members were welcomed. Among them Knight Gilbert Jaar, an Engineer from the little town of Bethlehem, he immigrated to Canada in 1982 and studied at McGill University. The Jaar family members were parishioners of the Church of the Nativity, St. Catherine parish, in Bethlehem, Palestine. Like many Christian Palestinians, Gilbert and his siblings decided to leave the hardship of the occupation in search of a better place. They possessed a good solid education and were able to quickly adapt to Quebec society, they perfected their French and English and all three are excelling in their careers. Sir Gilbert is the third member of the Order in Canada of Palestinian origin and from the archdiocese of Jerusalem.

There are many Palestinians in the diaspora, all over the world, who were students in the schools of the LPJ as well as former parishioners of the Churches of the archdiocese of Jerusalem. Because

of their solid education acquired in these schools, they are for most very successful but do not seem to have a link with the local Lieutenancies where they reside.

The Lieutenancies all over the world need to find a way to reach out to this community and the best way to attract them is through the celebration of the annual feast of Our Lady Queen of Palestine. This will enable the Palestinians in the diaspora to feel the support and solidarity of the Lieutenancies to their homeland and cause. This will incite them to remember and realize the role the Knights and Dames have always played in the survival of the Church of the Holy Land as many do not even know of the existence of the Lieutenancies and how much their financial support enables the archdiocese in Jerusalem to sustain itself.

By making this link, by building bonds through local masses, conferences as well as social and cultural gatherings or perhaps by sharing a good Palestinian meal, all these efforts would entice the Palestinians in the diaspora to want to also support the work of the Order. This will encourage them to be on the giving end instead of the receiving end of the equation like it was in the past when they were in the Holy Land.

We began, in the Montreal Lieutenancy, to involve the Palestinian community in our annual mass to Our Patroness Queen of Palestine where the hymns are all chanted in Arabic and a small Mediterranean snack is shared after mass where many of our members get to exchange with them and appreciate their participation and presence. The Palestinians present start then to understand that our capes and medals are a call to service to the Mission of the Holy Land. We hope that this will open the door to other Lieutenancies to new opportunities.

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