

"Take courage; be stouthearted" (Psalms 27:14)

ANNUAL REPORT

THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF CHRISTIAN YOUTH IN PALESTINE



2019



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“LAUNCH OUT INTO THE DEEP”



Dear Youth,

The Lord give you peace!

It was certainly a crucial moment, and a turning point in the life and the spiritual path of Saint Peter, when he experienced the deeper meaning behind the Lord's command: “Launch out into the deep” (Luke 5: 4). Peter must have understood that risking one's life with Jesus opens new horizons and unexpected possibilities. Beyond the material satisfaction, Peter experienced the need to confess his sin to Jesus, and by that, professed the divinity of the Master. He experienced the need to “fall at Jesus' knees” (Luke 5: 8), to adore, to pray. And this gives the freedom of heart you all desire.

Today we need this attitude of Peter, as young boys and girls who believe in God, who believe in Jesus and aspire to be His disciples. Beyond all the small or big material satisfactions: success, money, good health, rich social life, sense of belonging to a community; you need, dear sons and daughters, to “Launch out into the deep”; that is to build your life on your personal relation and experience with the Lord. This relationship cannot only be built on emotions, feelings and superficial motivations, but on deep and consistent listening to the Word of God and to the signs of the times around us: within our communities and beyond them as well.

Only such an attitude can assure a work that endures, that grows and passes from generation to generation and gives this inner impulse towards a diversity of concrete commitments in the Church and in society, for the sake of the Kingdom of God that will come.

“Do not work for food that perishes, but for food that endures for eternal life” (John 6: 27). Unless we seriously take to heart this commandment of the Lord, we cannot “endure”. Unless we clearly determine the center of our desires, we cannot reach where we need to arrive.

Dear youth, I exhort you to persevere through this marvelous path, alongside those who accompany you for years. The fruits of your commitment become more and more evident, as you persist and “keep going deeper”, and for that you must be watchful not to become victims of your own success. Remain humble yet full of enthusiasm for Jesus and His Church. Continue to be a witness of the authentic joy of the Gospel, which is your affiliation with Jesus and your faithfulness to His Word.

May the Lord bless and keep you.

† Pierbattista Pizzaballa
Apostolic Administrator

YJHP BRIEF

“*“[Jesus] loves you, dear young people, for you are the means by which he can spread his light and hope. He is counting on your courage, your boldness and your enthusiasm.”*

(Christus Vivit, 177)



■ History:

Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabbah brought his experience of working with Middle Eastern and international youth ministries to the Holy Land in 1964, through working in parishes. YJHP is a volunteer based mission that works under the umbrella of the Assembly of the Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land and under the administration of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. It serves about 3500 Christian children and youth (ages range, more or less, between 7-35 years old), who belong to more than 18 parishes, as well as different catholic schools and churches in eight Palestinian governorates. Its motto is “I have come so that they might have life and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10), and works on the premise of helping youth discover that faith in Jesus allows a person to live life to its fullest while living a solid Catholic moral life inspired by the word of God.

■ Description of the General Secretariat Structure:

The General Secretariat of Christian Youth YJHP has 13 secretariat members among them two consecrated people. All members are volunteer based work and do not get paid except the secretary.

The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem chooses the General Chaplain (consecrated), and the General Secretary (layman). Then these two people choose the deputy of the General Secretary and the rest of the secretarial

body members. They also choose another consecrated person to assist them. The secretary who has a stable job and the only paid facility in the group to maintain office requirement and communications. Each of the rest of the secretariat members leads a committee that represent one of the following categories; Children, Elementary, Secondary, Youth (university students), Young Adults (workers). In addition, there are three supportive committees that support the programs implementation: Prayer Committee, Development and Coordination Committee, and Media Committee. Each committee has between five to eight members, who are also volunteers.

■ Mission:

YJHP is an umbrella that unites and gathers all Christian children, youth groups and young adults of all parishes in Palestine. It nourishes the Christian faith and values of our youth and children to become an influential factor in their community. Thus, YJHP is the bridge that encourages youth to actively integrate within the community on various levels; economic, political and social that serve the Palestinian society.

■ Vision:

Our Christian children and youth, the future parents and leaders, will grow in their faith to live the way Jesus wants. With all the impacts of the harsh environment Christian youth are currently living through, the change will be possible if they apply the taught values and beliefs within society.

YJHP LOGO



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"Young people, do not let the world draw you only into things that are wrong and superficial. Learn to swim against the tide, learn how to share Jesus and the faith he has given you."

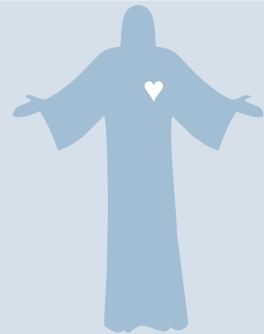
(Christus Vivit, 176)

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After consultation with the Apostolic Administrator H.E. Pierbattista Pizzaballa and His Beatitude Patriarch Michel Sabbah, former patriarch of Jerusalem and the founder of the youth ministry in Palestine in 1964, the General Secretariat of the Christian Youth Ministry has decided to break apart from JEC and form a local Christian Youth Ministry; under the name, “The Youth of Jesus’ Homeland – Palestine”.

Starting from May 2019, YJHP has adopted the following logo as its official logo:

■ **Jesus the Young:** He stands in the midst of the logo calling all young people to life. “I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). It is the permanent verse that the General Secretariat has chosen as its motto; believing that Jesus Christ is life and He calls us to live our lives completely based on biblical values and Christian faith. On this basis, the Christian youth seek to improve their lives and put effort to change what they can change and work with others to develop the Palestinian society. Youth are encouraged to integrate their Christian faith in all of their efforts.



■ **The Cross with the Map:** The Cross of Life appears immediately behind Jesus. This cross has given “everyone salvation” (1 Timothy 2:4). The cross symbolizes pain, suffering and death; however, it is also a source of hope, strength and life. As Jesus Christ suffered pain, crucifixion and death. People, especially youth, are still suffering from pain and struggles in their homeland. They look at the cross, to draw strength and to have patience to turn their pains to the power of redemption and new life.



■ **The Ship with the Sail:** The Church, which calls everyone, especially youth, represents boarding the ship to accompany Jesus, “put out into deep water” (Luke 5:4) and carry the annunciation from Jerusalem to the entire world. The wind that pushes the sail of our ship is the love pushes us all for our own good and the good of our church and country, “Jesus’ Homeland”

■ **The Big Circle:** Gathers all symbols and unites the entire logo, just like Jesus when He was on the cross bringing us all to Him. We are united by the new life coming from the cross. In this life, our strength is to witness, love and serve everyone. You may notice that the circle is open. It is neither closed nor self-contained. It is open to welcome everyone at any time. It is a circle without any right angles; meaning that everyone is equal and the center of the circle is Jesus Christ. He is the one who gathers us from the four winds (Mark 13: 27) and is always calling us.



THE YOUTH OF JESUS' HOMELAND - PALESTINE

"WHAT A BEAUTIFUL NAME!"



Mr. Rafi Ghattas
the General Secretary of YJHP

According to the 2017 PCBS census, there are no more than 1% of Christians in Palestine. This percent sounds the alarm of our presence in the Holy Land. Jesus' homeland probably has the last generation of Jesus' followers, and this is where it all began.

This result shocked everyone and made Christian organizations think seriously about preserving the Christian presence in the land of Incarnation. Thus, the General Secretariat of YJHP saw that they have the greater role in fostering the Christian youth's sense of belonging to this land, who eventually will form Christian families and define whether they will carry the last generation of Christians of the Holy Land. Accordingly, we started diving into the deep thought of belonging and consolidation. This gave rise to the idea of the name "The Youth of Jesus' Homeland – Palestine". Is there a name more beautiful than this name?

In this report, you shall find the method of work we followed since the beginning of 2019 after we chose the verse of this year "take courage; be stouthearted" (Psalms 27:14). We were brave and courageous and went ahead through our various activities in the different Palestinian governorates.

While we proceed with the implementation of these activities, we reached a stage to narrate the old story this Land lived; the

story of redemption, the story of whose holy blood was integrated with the soil of this land, the Story of "Ibn El-balad". You shall further read about the largest Christian festival in Palestine which reminded Christians and non-Christians with one of the sons of this land, who lived in no less difficult circumstances than today. However, from this land, He redeemed the whole world.

55 years ago, Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabbah established the General Secretariat of Christian Youth YJHP, and over the years, it has taken root, that the relationship between the youth and the local church is changing. Today, we are the revolution church; we learn from the past, live the present, and always look to the future. Here, in Jesus' homeland, we are the living stones whom Jesus confirmed 2000 years ago that we will not be silent and will always sing: "Hosanna to the Son of David" (Matthew 21:9)

2019 was very special as we tried to raise our voices in a land that missed the fragrant scent of Jesus in the midst of pain due to the Israeli Occupation and all the political events. Today, we will continue our message with two dreams in our hearts: the first is to have "Al Hayat" center to reinforce our ideas and visions for our Christian youth and the whole community.

Meanwhile, the second dream is that we can break all the political challenges through our work, and gather all youth of Jesus' homeland; starting from Jerusalem passing by the West Bank and Gaza Strip up to Galilee.

In conclusion, we can only thank the supporters and sponsors, the General Secretariat, committee leaders and members, and all members of YJHP, who have contributed to the success of this special year.

We wish you an enjoyable reading and we are always waiting for your rich responses and comments.

The Youth of Jesus' Homeland is always ready. Our youth will not fade away with Jesus.



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"We cannot just say that young people are the future of our world. They are its present."

(Christus Vivit, 64)

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ACTIVITIES DURING LENT



CHILDREN

The Children's group started its spiritual activities with the theme "My Eyes on You" at the Mother of Sorrows Church in Aboud. More than 130 children from third to sixth grade of different parishes joined.

The aim of the meeting was to raise awareness of the importance of the Bible in their lives through the implementation of several scientific experiments linking them to their spiritual lives. Hence, the children were able to reapply each experience and explain it in their own way. The committee distributed piggy bank to each child at the end of the program in order to save as much money as they can during the Lent season and to send it for a person in need.



ELEMENTARY

Nearly 130 participants from seven to nine grades joined the spiritual activity “We walk up to the trail of Jesus” in Jericho on Sunday 17th of March 2019. The activity aimed to deeply introduce the participants to Jesus from the beginning of His trial until crucifixion through participating in the Stations of the Cross. The committee focused on the idea that Jesus went from Jericho, the lowest point in the world to reach the four corners of the earth, and thus, He calls young men and women today to “go into the whole world” (Mark 16:15). The participants set off on foot carrying the cross to the summit of the mountain, where they experienced the pain of Christ through walking the Stations of the Cross.

One of the objectives was to focus on the necessity of explaining the visited sites. For instance, the committee explained about the Baptism Site (Al-Maghtas) linking it to all the events that took place on the Jordan River, in addition to Mount of Temptation and its religious and geographical importance. They also illustrated the three temptations as the Gospel recorded and eventually rode the cable car down the mount.

The activity included various and entertaining parts of self-discovery and the relationship with others such as icebreaker activities and hymns.



SECONDARY

“Get up, let’s go” is the title of the first spiritual activity of the secondary group. It was held on Friday 4 May 2019 in Jerusalem, and the committee chose this title from the Gospel of Matthew when Jesus said to his disciples in Mount of Olives “Get up, let us go”. This title encouraged the participants to go from their past, sin and pain, with Jesus who is life, hope and joy.

The participants were approximately 150 from all parishes. The activity enhanced the spiritual aspect by linking the biblical text and where it occurred with the life of each person, especially that the activity was in Jerusalem. During the day, the participants walked a journey of fasting, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday reaching to the Resurrection of Christ in Easter Sunday through the various programs the committee prepared. They also visited the Holy sites which gave everyone the opportunity to know the Holy places in Jerusalem. The activity ended at the Terra Sancta Parish Center in Beit Hanina, where a play prepared by the secondary committee was performed. This play focused on the difficulties youth deal with, especially this category and how to overcome them without despair. At the end of the program, the participants launched balloons in the sky, raising their prayers.

Conducting an activity in Jerusalem and visiting the Holy Sites was a great challenge because of the very complicated situation. Yet, the activity left a spiritual fingerprint in each participant's heart. It raised their awareness for the importance of Jerusalem as Palestinians and Christians in particular.

UNIVERSITY

On 15 March 2019, 100 youth from various parishes participated in the spiritual activity organized by the General Secretariat of YJHP in Ein 'Arik under the title "You Me". The aim of this activity was to show and clarify through its various programs that Jesus Christ is not far from our lives as He shares the same difficulties, challenges and injustices we are currently experiencing. This idea was embodied by the members through a play that presented the challenges and pains of young people today. Mr. Ward Andreia from the Christian Ministry in Galilee left a clear impact on the participants by raising several points about pain and how everyone is living it. In addition, he focused on the solution of overcoming pain through the individual's relationship with Jesus Christ and the importance of spiritual life. The activity involved many interactive competitions that aimed at conveying a certain spiritual idea, which eventually resulted in the biblical verse of the activity "For whoever finds me finds life" (proverbs 8:35).



WORKERS

On 29 March 2019, a spiritual activity for workers' category was held under the title "My Pain vs. My Faith". Approximately 80 people from all parishes participated in this activity. It aimed to understand God's silence in hardships under all the difficulties they face in today's world and how to overcome them by understanding God's will. The program started with a spiritual meeting with Fr. Bernard Poggi at the Terra Sancta Parish Center in Beit Hanina. He focused on the need to discover God's presence in each person's life resulting in discovering God in silence. Then, the participants went to the Shrine of Our Lady Queen of Palestine "Deir Rafat" where the program continued with Fr. Bashar Fawadleh, the General Chaplain of YJHP. Here, he focused on the idea that fasting is a challenge, and that "choice, decision, and start" is what the young Christian needs today. The participants revived the practice of making the Stations of the Cross in the fields of Deir Rafat Monastery, and finally finished the activity with a special Mass by the seaside of Jaffa.



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"Do not deprive your youth of this friendship. You will be able to feel him at your side not only when you pray, but at every moment. Try to look for him, and you will have the beautiful experience of seeing that he is always at your side."

(Christus Vivit, 156)

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SUMMER CAMPS

INTRODUCTION

This year, every committee chose a specific theme for its camp. The children had the theme of pirates and the sea; the elementary spoke about social media and close friends; the secondary had television station; the university's theme was about recharging; and the workers had the theme of time.

The General Secretary Rafi Ghattas had some time in each summer camp to explain to the participants the new name and logo of The Youth of Jesus' Homeland – Palestine (YJHP), as it was officially launched in September 2019. The summer camps were mostly characterized by their spiritual evenings, which were practiced in Taize prayer service. Although this method was somehow a new practice to most of the participants, it added a spiritual twist to the camps. The daily Masses in all camps were headed by the General Chaplain Fr. Bashar Fawadleh. At the same time, these summer camps had various guests: priests, nuns, seminarians, and lay people. Shepherds Band played a major role in all YJHP activities, especially the spiritual evenings. Moreover, volunteer work was an essential idea to be part of the program so to engage the participants in the importance of helping others and society.

CHILDREN



Around 80 children from different parishes in the West Bank participated in the Children summer camp entitled “Shore... Sea”, which started on Wednesday 26 until Saturday 29 June 2019 in Our Lady of Fatima Church, Beit Sahour. The camp revolved around achieving the rank of Captain in the ship of Jesus through following His teachings and characteristics that the Holy Bible mentions. Accordingly, the participants took some of the biblical texts to reflect and concluded with the characteristics of Jesus that they can inspire in their lives. They also raised the flag at Reveille and lowered it at the end of the day simulating the actions the captain does in his ship. The camp included various new games aimed to develop teamwork, along with a huge map of Palestine in which the children would match the image of the miracle as the Bible illustrates just in the

right place on the map. Afterwards, the committee started explaining about this specific place focusing on the miracle to introduce them to Jesus’ Homeland and the places He visited. This is of course in addition to the spiritual evenings they experienced every night. During this camp, the committee carried out the second stage of the Bible Competition⁽¹⁾, where only one person from the participated parishes was qualified to compete in the final stage. The last day of summer camp, each child was crowned a ship master in the ship of Jesus, to bear witness to Christ and share His characteristics among people.



(1) See page79.

ELEMENTARY

“Close Friends” summer camp extended for four days starting from Tuesday 6 until Friday 9 August 2019 in Star Mountain, Ramallah. 85 youth from different parishes, ages ranged between 11 and 14, participated in this camp, in which they experienced the idea behind Jesus choosing His close friends whom shared the joy of Transfiguration feast. Throughout the camp, Sr. Muna Totah from Saint Joseph Sisters delivered the participants various spiritual meetings entitled: “Here I am God”, “Self Compass”, and “The Love of Jesus Changes me”. She focused on the method of searching and knowing oneself to know others, as well as the idea of knowing and getting closer to Jesus to be your close friend through the Bible along with the lives of the Saints. One of the

meetings covered social media and how it can connect us to God. The participants met their close friend Jesus Christ face to face in the Eucharistic adoration which was headed by Fr. Johnney Abu Khalil, parish priest of Taybeh, and Fr. Johnney Bahbah, parish priest of Jifna. Moreover, the participants were introduced to four different saints and their lives. Every Saint had its own station: the first station was about St. Joseph which was tackled by Fr. Joseph Sfeir, The Meronite Patriarchal Vicar in Jerusalem; the second station illustrated the life of St. Marie-Alphonsine by Sr. Pia Rawashdeh from Rosary Sisters Convent; the third station discussed





St. Emily de Vialar and her life presented by Sr. Muna Totah; the final station focused on St. Francis of Assisi which was introduced by Ms. Nadine Bitar from Catechetical Center of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Panel discussions and short videos were applied during the whole period of the camp to motivate the participants express their opinions and interact with each other. Although, the participants practiced Taize prayer service for the first time, there was considerable interaction.

SECONDARY

“On Air” summer camp started on Wednesday 31 July until Saturday 3 August 2019 in Star Mountain, Ramallah with more than 80 participants from various parishes. The theme of this camp was Television Station, which was opened with an official ceremony on the first day, and all the programs and discussions were presented within the TV Station. The main purpose of the camp was to let everyone live joyfully, and put God’s word in practice; that is, to live it in our daily lives, share joy with others, and contribute in welfare work and social



development. The participants were live stream with Fr. Ala’ Msharbash from Jordan on the show “Fr. With You” to answer young Christian questions through our camp show “Sky Phone”. Then, Fr. Bashar Fawadleh, the General Chaplain, spoke about real joy and how to find it through repentance and love. The committee organized a candlelight vigil and meditated on the mysteries of the Rosary. The participants, then visited Birzeit University, and the Christian young member of YJHP Dr. Ameer Khalil Ibrahim walked them through the faculties to learn about the university and the specifications it offers especially that this category will next enroll at university. The camp aimed to let youth live joy and contribute in



welfare. Therefore, the participants visited Beit Afram – Elderly House of Taybeh and were able to create a joyful environment with everyone, as they have also met with H.B. Emeritus Michel Sabbah, founder of YJHP. Deacon Bob Boulos raised the issue of differentiating between love and desire, which was a completion to the program “How to live joy” presented by the Seminarian Nadim Giacaman. The storyteller Hamza Al-Akrabawi played an essential role in the camp’s program as he spoke about Christian history in the Holy Land and the importance of Christians in building the Arabic and Islamic civilization.



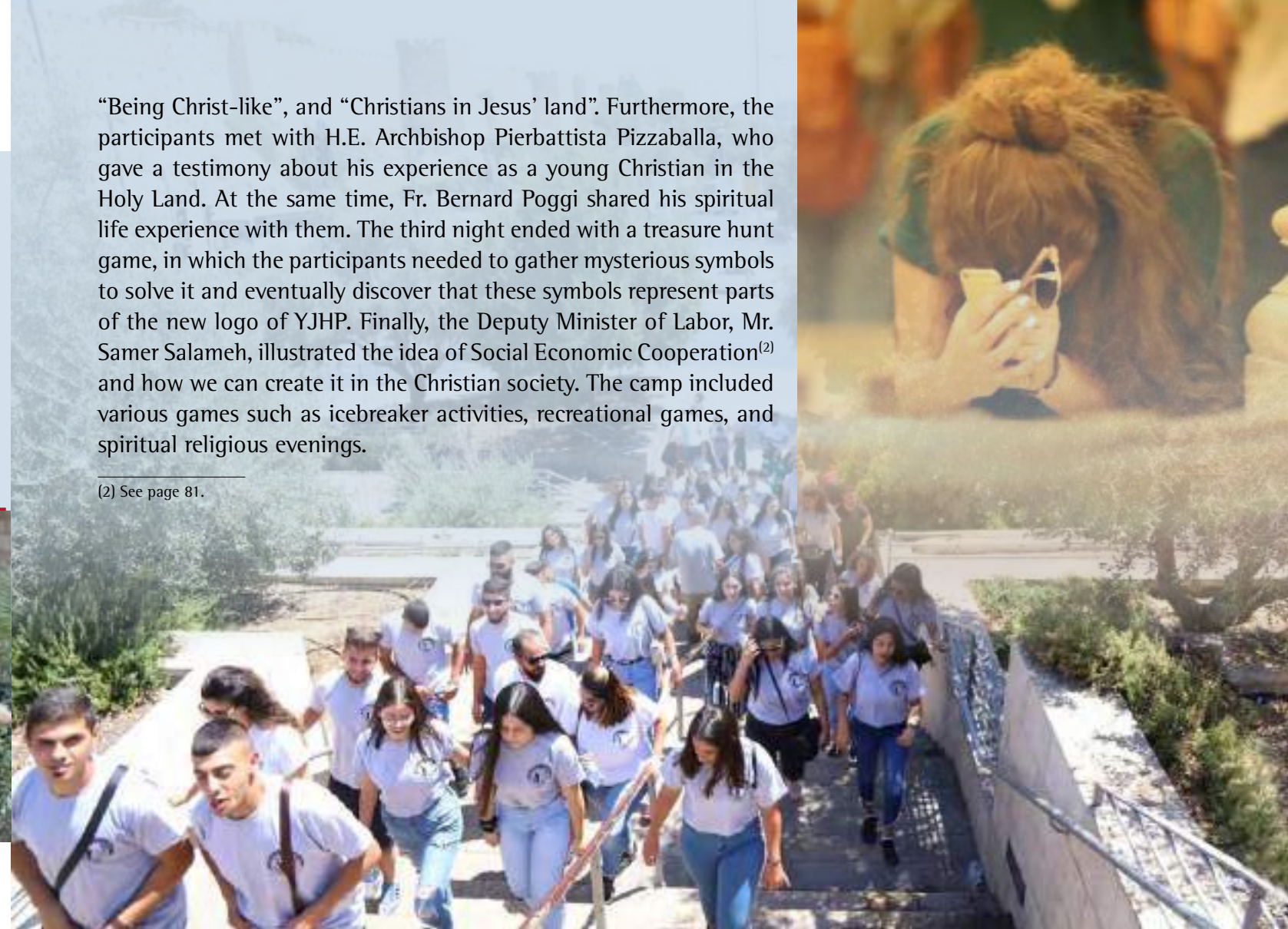
“Inside Out” was the title of the university summer camp, in which 85 participants from various parishes joined. It was executed in Tantur Ecumenical Institute, Jerusalem for four days beginning on the 11th of August until the 14th. The idea revolved around the necessity of opening up to the outer society and ending the internal closure we sometimes instill in ourselves. Fr. Imad Alamat was the guest of this camp. He held multiple meetings on “Insularity of youth and the challenges and difficulties they face”, “Social theology and what gathers between the teachings of the church and society”, as well as “Christian youth initiatives in universities and the policy of openness towards others”, in

which the participants were divided according to their universities and discussed ideas on how to start Christian initiatives in each one. Since the camp was held in Jerusalem, the participants had the honor of walking around some of the Holy places and streets to increase and install their love for the Holy Land. The camp also welcomed Pastor Munther Isaac, who in return highlighted the importance of Christian Palestinian Identity in the Holy Land. In particular, he discussed “The identity and the Christian presence”,



“Being Christ-like”, and “Christians in Jesus’ land”. Furthermore, the participants met with H.E. Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, who gave a testimony about his experience as a young Christian in the Holy Land. At the same time, Fr. Bernard Poggi shared his spiritual life experience with them. The third night ended with a treasure hunt game, in which the participants needed to gather mysterious symbols to solve it and eventually discover that these symbols represent parts of the new logo of YJHP. Finally, the Deputy Minister of Labor, Mr. Samer Salameh, illustrated the idea of Social Economic Cooperation⁽²⁾ and how we can create it in the Christian society. The camp included various games such as icebreaker activities, recreational games, and spiritual religious evenings.

(2) See page 81.



WORKERS

The workers' summer camp was held in Christ the Redeemer Church, Taybeh under the title "Adventure of Time". 60 participants from all Palestinian parishes took part in this camp, and Fr. Ramzi Jreige from Lebanon was the guest throughout the whole period. The first meeting was entitled "Time and joy" which questioned many of the participants relating it to their time and life; as in how to spend time? What is the connection of time and routine, along with its cause? Since this category is yet to be married and due to the increased divorce rate in Palestine, Fr. Emil Salayta, President of Ecclesiastical Court in Jerusalem, introduced a topic about the importance of Holy Matrimony. The camp included various games such as icebreaker activities, recreational games, spiritual religious evenings, as well as wine and beer winery visits in Taybeh. The participants visited Beit Afram – Elderly House of Taybeh and did volunteer work in the town cemetery. The camp reached its peak the moment the participants gathered around and devoted to the Holy Sacrament which was completed with confessions and some hymns sung by Shepherds Band.



CHRIST THE KING EVENT



“Roots are not anchors chaining us to past times and preventing us from facing the present and creating something new. Instead, they are a fixed point from which we can grow and meet new challenges.”

(Christus Vivit, 200)



CHILDREN GROUP



The General Secretariat of YJHP launched the first event of Christ the King on Friday 8 November 2019 for children of first grades until sixth. More than 400 children from different parishes in the West Bank participated and for the first time children from Jerusalem joined too. The event was held in Good Shepherd Church in Jericho and was entitled “I’m walking your path, Son of a King”. It started by an official reception of Christ the King painting along with the military band, followed by dividing the children into different groups representing four stages of Jesus’ life. These stages are Annunciation, Christmas, Baptism, and Choosing the Apostles. Such stages are somehow similar to our regular life, in which the committee tried to deliver the idea that every child can become a king like Jesus Christ, King of Kings. The participants then celebrated Mass headed by Fr. Mario Hadchity, parish priest of Good Shepherd Church, with Fr. Bashar Fawadleh, the General Chaplain of YJHP and Fr. Remon Haddad, the Assistant of the General Chaplain. During the offertory, the children made an offering bringing forward gift that represent their parishes while others spoke explaining the reason behind this specific gift. In the last part of the event, the participants saw a special play performed by the Children committee and Mr. Rafi Ghattas, the General Secretary of YJHP, knowing that the latter wrote it. The play “The Magic Lamp” focused on a girl who is



trying to become a queen. Suddenly, she remembers Aladdin’s movie and how he found the magic lamp. Then, she finds this lamp in her room and a genie comes out to grant her wish of wealth to find out later that material wealth is not the way towards kingship. Therefore, she starts her journey of searching for the real king. The event was closed with a show performed by the Shepherds Band, Beit Sahour in which they sang some religious hymns.



ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY GROUPS

YJHP celebrated Christ the King event for elementary and secondary groups together in Ramallah Cultural Palace on Friday 22 November 2019. The event was entitled “The Code Chapter II” which is a completion to the great success last year accomplished. This year, the event started with Fr. Bernard Poggi who spoke about the ways we can be witnesses of Christ whether in our daily lives or work. He also narrated spiritual stories that attracted the participants. Then, the participants celebrated Mass headed by Fr. Bernard Poggi accompanied by Fr. Bashar Fawadleh, the General Chaplain of YJHP, Fr. Remon Haddad, the Assistant of the General Chaplain, Fr. Louis Khoury, and Fr. Khaled Gammoh. The Shepherds Band revived the Mass with special hymns as well. Jerry Ghazal, the Lebanese artist, sent a video greeting the elementary and

secondary groups of YJHP from Lebanon, which was a distinctive move. He urged that all the good deeds be offered to Jesus and that they do all their best to glorify Jesus' name. Right after lunch, Diala Abdallah, a member of Al-Zababdeh Christian youth ministry, performed a skit that impressed the participants. Then, the event reached its peak, where it was time for Eucharistic Adoration to let the participants live in the presence of Jesus, King of Kings through moments of reverence and praying. After meeting the King, the participants saw the second chapter of last year's play "The Code Chapter II". It revolves around the new journey of searching for the new mission after solving the first code and visiting the King. Eventually, this mission turns out to become missionaries and speak in the name of Jesus everywhere. So, the code is "Paul" according to the Apostle Paul, "the greatest missionary of all times". The event was closed with an amazing show performed by the artist Wassim Abdallah along with the Shepherds Band.

UNIVERSITY AND WORKERS' GROUPS

The event started at the sound of heartbeat with more than 400 participants of young men and women who came from different parishes in the West Bank and Jerusalem. This year, we had a special participation from Galilee parishes: Shafa'Amr, Haifa, and Nazareth. The event entitled "Is Your Heart with You?" was held in Ramallah



Cultural Palace on Friday 15 November 2019 in the presence of H.E. Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Apostolic Administrator, H.E. the Bishop Giacinto-Boulos Marcuzzo, a large number of priests, nuns, and deacons along with the seminarians of Beit Jala. After welcoming the guests and the participants, the event's special guest, Fr. Marwan Hassan, the General Chaplain of the Christian Youth in Jordan, focused on the idea of belonging to Jesus Christ and to His land. Besides, he assured that we are the roots of this place, and so, we need to strengthen our roots in Jesus. The participants, then, listened to Mr. Heiner Leck, who had the idea of Cooperative Banks⁽³⁾. He came especially from Italy to illustrate more on the ideas that have been discussed earlier during the camp and the festival. Next, our special guest, Sami Metwasi, the Palestinian theatre director and artist, shared his life experience through an improvised skit, which impressed everyone. It was followed by a special video message from Nizar Francis, the Lebanese singer, who spoke about the necessity of holding on to their heart and faith. Afterwards, the participants were ready for the time of Eucharistic Adoration headed by H.E. the Archbishop and the Deacon Firas Abedrabbo. The Prayer Committee along with various hymns sung by the Shepherds Band helped in energizing the adoration. The Archbishop then thanked the youth and the General Secretariat, as he highlighted the role of Christian youth in the Holy Land amidst pain and difficulties. He also emphasized that Jesus is always asking us to search for our hearts, and welcome Him to live inside.

(3) See page 81.

In the second part of the event and after lunch, everybody went back to the theater to see an improvised skit performed by the Palestinian Storyteller Hamza Aqrabawi. He spoke about the great role the Palestinian Christians played in passing and keeping the Palestinian customs and traditions until this day, emphasizing the right of their presence in this land. He also pointed out that many Arab Christians had the greatest credit for building the Islamic civilization. Then, the participants saw a performance of black comedy show. The play revolves around a young man who is willing to emigrate from Palestine; so he starts searching for the best place in the world while struggling between his heart and mind in a sarcastic comic style.

The event was closed with the Mass headed by Fr. Marwan Hassan, Fr. Bashar Fawadleh, and Fr. Remon Haddad, who was officially appointed as the General Chaplain Assistant. During the Mass, Fr. Bashar announced the names of the General Secretariat members of YJHP as they were called on stage to read and renew their pledges and take the blessing. Consequently, Mr. Rafi Ghattas, the General Secretary, read the names of the new committees' members for 2020. These members came on stage to pledge their commitment on serving YJHP. The priests handed out the youth cross to the members, which is a cross linked to the map of Palestine, as shown in the new logo of YJHP. The General Secretary then thanked all those who worked during last year emphasizing that "YJHP is in a continuous escalation since its establishment, and that it reached its peak during the huge festival held last September under the name 'Story of Ibn-El-Balad'", where he at last called them to work more to stay on top. The event, later, was closed with religious hymns sung by the Shepherds Band along with the artist Wassim Abdallah.

PRAYER COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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"Prayer is both a challenge and an adventure. And what an adventure it is!"

(Christus Vivit, 155)

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The prayer committee implements periodic prayer meetings related to a specific occasion, in addition to its usual work in all YJHP activities such as Holy Mass preparations in each activity, spiritual meditation and contemplation, and Eucharistic adoration in summer camps.

LENT MEETING “WHEN YOU PRAY”

Nearly 60 people participated in the monthly prayer meeting organized by YJHP prayer committee on Saturday 30 March 2019 in St. Joseph Church, Jifna under the title “When You Pray”. It was divided into two sections: The first part consisted of a simple explanation of the importance of Lent, especially fasting. Meanwhile, the second part focused on the important aspects of individual prayer, which are: Reverence, Humility and Repentance, Faith and Submission, Thanks and Glorification, as well as Silence. The participants then meditated in each of these points through audible and written contemplations. The aim was to help participants enrich their daily prayers so that they grow closer to God and deepen their relationships. The Adoration was headed by Fr. Johnney Bahbah, parish priest of Jifna, and in the presence of Fr. Bashar Fawadleh, YJHP General Chaplain. At the end, the participants took part in meditating the verse “when you pray” (Matthew 6:6), and a number of them expressed their happiness in participating and emphasized that the activity provided them the opportunity to pray, meditate and contemplate.



PRAYER MEETING “DO NOT LEAVE YOUR MOTHER”

On Friday 24 May 2019, the General Secretariat of YJHP held its monthly meeting prayer in Our Lady of Annunciation Church, Beit Jala, under the title “Do not leave your mother”. More than 100 people participated from different parishes, priests, and Seminarians. The prayer highlighted the role of Virgin Mary in the lives of saints to encourage participants to approach her and understand the grace of her presence as a mother in their lives. It included the rosary prayer and meditation in the role of Virgin Mary to set an example of a mother for every Christian on earth, along with various hymns. In conclusion, a video simulating the role of Virgin Mary in the lives of some saints was presented, which was followed by a rosary walk inside the church holding the decorated statue of Virgin Mary in honor of her during the month of May.

PENTECOST “PEACE FRUIT OF THE PENTECOST”

On Saturday 8 June 2019, the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem held a Vigil of Pentecost for peace entitled “Peace Fruit of the Pentecost” in St. Stephen, Dominican Convent (Ecole Biblique) Jerusalem with the preparation and arrangement of the General Secretariat of YJHP. The vigil was headed by the Apostolic Administrator H.E. Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa alongside with a group of priests, monks, nuns, seminarians, and young members of YJHP. The activity focused on the role of the Holy Spirit and its influence on the entire world, starting from the descent upon the Apostles while they were all together in one place, moving to its role in the lives of the first Christians and its descent on pagans and nations. Finally, the activity focused on the importance of the Holy Spirit in our lives today and the peace it offers. In addition, wheat ears were blessed and distributed to the participants as a sign of great fruit and wealth people gain from the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The vigil was distinguished by the presence of various groups of believers of all nationalities and ages.



THE FEAST OF CORPUS ET SANGUIS CHRISTI “EVENING WITH THE EUCHARIST”



In cooperation with YJHP, St. Jacob's church in Beit Hanina held a spiritual evening with the Eucharist on Saturday 29 June 2019. The celebration was headed by the Apostolic Administrator H.E. Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa along with nearly 100 participants of priests, nuns and believers. This spiritual evening had an hour of adoration and included various meditations, spiritual readings, hymns and confessions. It aimed to introduce people to the importance of the celebration of this feast. The celebration was distinguished by the large number of participants who confessed as well as the commitment to the end of the celebration despite the cold weather and the late hour.

LIFE EXPERIENCES AND TESTIMONIES



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"Why should we not speak of Jesus, why should we not tell others that he gives us strength in life, that we enjoy talking with him, that we benefit from meditating on his words?"

(Christus Vivit, 176)

”



Tamara Alqassis

*"I am the servant
of the Lord"*

(Luke 1:38)

*Life Experiences
and Testimonies*

World Youth Day 2019 in Panama

Palm Sunday reminds us all of the victorious entrance of Jesus Christ to our beloved Jerusalem. My name is Tamara Alqassis, a young Palestinian female from the city of Christ's birth, Bethlehem.

I am honored to speak to you about my two weeks' experience in World Youth Day in Panama, as a representative of Caritas Organization and Palestinian Christian Youth. A speech cannot really relate what I truly lived. My journey started with tears of joy once I received the news of participating in WYD. The country of Panama made an impression on me with its poor, humble communities. I think very fondly of the families whom I spent a whole week with. Although their living conditions are difficult, their hearts were filled with the grace of giving. It was evident during my stay with them. I often felt that I was among family and friends, as if I had never left Palestine. Thus, I give thanks for the generous families who remind me with the

penny of the widow that gave from her need; giving when in need is greater for God than the excess giving.

This trip also reminds me of the unity of Christian youth in front of His Holiness Pope Francis to deliver a message of love and peace to the entire world. My participation in WYD allowed me to deliver a speech that represents the feeling of every young Palestinian lacking peace in the Land of Peace. The gift of Bethlehem was a gift to the entire world. His Holiness' recitation of the Rosary narrated a story of our and the people's suffering. In fact, it narrates a story of determination to succeed and envisioning for a better future. We have, lately, followed Pope Francis' visits to cities of conflict such as South Sudan. This emphasizes the efforts of His Holiness in bringing love instead of hate, and peace instead of war.

Love and Peace is the first and supreme message that I and the Palestinian Christian

Youth delivered to the world. On a personal level, the two-week trip was one of the greatest experiences in my life. In Panama, I was introduced to Christian families and youth that share the same faith and love that we do. It is a great feeling to join with others for one, noble goal. I made new friends and am still in contact with a number of young Christians from different countries. I hope in the future that I can be a part of another initiative to share the idea of peace and Christian faith based on the message of peace. More than 700 thousand people gathered during the Mass that Pope Francis headed to pray and share the bread of life. Prayers of our devotion God were spoken in many different languages. However, the feelings of the human values were expressed in one language.

When I came to tell my parents that I was going to Panama to be with the Pope, they did not believe me. However, when I started preparing my passport and myself, they were thrilled. The first thing they told me; *"Tamara, you are great! You are speaking for every Palestinian and young person here, God bless you"*. Oh, how these words influenced me, specially knowing that the Christian family is the core of the society which raise youth to be the light of Jesus' love. This is a big responsibility! The entire

world will be looking at us since we are Palestinian Christian youth coming from the land of Jesus. Unfortunately, today the situation of Christians, especially Palestinian youth, is not pleasant; however, we, in the love of Jesus and the lead of the Holy Spirit, will reach the world and show them that we are people who love peace and life.

After I came back home, I reflected daily on the gathering of more than 700 thousand youth in Panama. I have determined to live my life as expressed by the image of the Virgin Mary when she said: *"I am the servant of the Lord."* This is an invitation to all Palestinian women to take the image of our Mother, Mother of the Universe, Virgin Mary in Purity and Chastity and say: *"I am the servant of the Lord"*, in her behaviors and manners. I was chosen last year to become the university committee leader in The Youth of Jesus' Homeland – Palestine. It helps me to communicate with youth and tell them about my experience in Panama and how we can persist and deepen in our faith – as well as being one; always and forever.

At the end, I sincerely thank all those who had contributed in making WYD succeed. I pray to God to bless our church leaders and rulers of the world to achieve peace.



**Deacon
Firas Abedrabbo**

*"The just flourish
like the cedars of
Lebanon".*

(Ps. 92, 13)

*Life Experiences
and Testimonies*

Taizé meeting in Lebanon, March 2019

It has been a unique experience, and that is for several reasons. First of all, this meeting was an occasion to reassemble in one group of young Palestinian Christians (men and women) who do not usually meet together in a church event, as they belong to different churches. Second, it was the first time for many of them to meet with other Christian young people, who are Arabs from neighbor countries of the Middle East knowing that it is not easy to access in ordinary life circumstances. Third, this experience helped the participants from different churches, who rarely, if ever, have prayed together, to learn how to be present in front of God as one. In addition, it helped

them discover that what unites us is our common faith in a loving Father; Jesus Christ the Savior, the Holy Spirit who gives life, and the Community of believers – the Church. This faith is strong enough to lead us towards visible and perfect unity, if we truly desire it with all our hearts because it is the will of God *"that they may all be one"* (John 17: 21), as every time we pray the Lord's Prayer we say: *"Thy will be done"* (Matthew 6:10).





Fr. Bashar Fawadleh

"From here everything started, I continue till this day to bear witness to the love that made it possible and spread that love everywhere".

Life Experiences and Testimonies

A reflection on the experience of participating in the ROACO conference in Rome

We often are unable to appreciate our blessings until they have passed and until we have an opportunity to discuss them with others. I think this is the best way of explaining what I experienced when I participated in the ROACO conference in Rome. It was my first time attending an international conference of this size. It was great not only because of the size and scope, but because it gave me an opportunity to rediscover the things which are most important to me in life, and how I could share those values with those in attendance; how to acknowledge them and thank God for them and share them with others. This is what I found to be at the center of what I presented:

1) I am a Palestinian: One cannot understand the meaning of being a Palestinian except when you share your concerns and challenges, your difficulties and your daily suffering as a result of the occupation, until it is put into contrast with your dreams and goals! At once you begin to discover that you suffer, but that at the same time you are proud to be a child of this blessed land. Surely there is grief within you, but you also realize that what fills your heart, is joy because you are Palestinian.

2) I am a Christian from Jerusalem: I have had the very moving experience of sharing with others what it means to be a Christian in Jerusalem every time I have led a contingent to participate in the World Youth Day

meetings. Those days are lived with great passion and jubilation because of the great witness you encounter in thousands of young people coming together, young people who are proud of their living faith. I had a similar experience at this conference where I addressed more than 30 Catholic institutions from around the world; carrying to them the message that we are Christians from Jerusalem; conveying to them the vocation that is Jerusalem. Jerusalem as a church and Jerusalem in her youth carries a vocation of belonging, of authenticity, of endurance and of pride. Jerusalem as a Church was born from the side of her Redeemer from upon the Cross of Calvary on Good Friday and in her youth, She was sent into the world to bring it life on the Pentecost; carrying the witness that death is not the end, the witness of the empty tomb! Being a Christian from Jerusalem means that we must say to the world: "From here everything started, I continue till this day to bear witness to the love

that made it possible and spread that love everywhere."

3) I am a Palestinian Christian: To come to the realization that we cannot separate our Christianity from our cultural and national identities is to assert who I am as both a Palestinian and a Christian. What I experienced in Rome, as I relayed the suffering of my people to all present, was that they began to understand Palestinian suffering with its Christian meaning: what it means to be under occupation because of a false application of scripture and all the consequences it carries with it, from the exodus of Palestinian Christians, from the violation of the basic rights to live, to work and to move, from the realization that many of our children have never been to Nazareth. Yes, I am a Palestinian Christian who attests to the Church of Jerusalem, today we live the Way of the Cross and we live to arrive one day to the Empty Tomb and its triumph. This is what it means for us to go from death to life.



Mira Khader

*"Youth in Action
in a Synodal
Church".*

*Life Experiences
and Testimonies*

International Youth Forum 2019

The Deputy of the General Secretary of YJHP, Ms. Mira Khader, participated in the conference organized by the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life representing the Latin Rite of the Arab Regions. 250 young people from all over the world participated in the post-synod Youth Forum.

The conference aimed to discuss the recent documents the church issued, so that youth can be involved in church based on the statement of His Holiness Pope Francis: "Youth are not only the future of the church; but also the present."

During the first day, the participants discussed the final document of the Synod of Bishops on "Young People, faith, and Vocational Discernment". Many Bishops participated and introduced the topic, where they involved the youth opinion through several panel discussions to result in a comprehensive and clear

opinion of the youth to church about this document and its impact on the local church.

On the second day, the discussion focused on the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "Christus Vivit" of the Holy Father Pope Francis last March 2019. This Apostolic Exhortation carries with it the spirit of youth that aim at reflecting its impact on the church and youth.

Ms. Mira said in an intervention: "an entire day to speak about this Apostolic Exhortation is actually not enough. We need months to be able to take advantage of the entire letters. To me and the world youth, we can call it 'a letter of love from Pope Francis to the young people' or 'an encouragement tool' or 'a reference point' or 'a document to revive the Bible in today's language'. It is a very rich exhortation, and it's our responsibility along with the church to publish the content to the whole world."

The last two days concentrated on searching for means and methods to share the outcomes of this conference with our countries and parishes. The Pope was interested in meeting the young participants because he cares about youth, listens to them and loves them. He, then, was given a document with all the outcomes of this conference, and in return he addressed the participants about this matter. When Ms. Mira met his Holiness, she did not hesitate to take off her Palestinian kufiya over her shoulders and place it on his shoulders as a sign of his solidarity with The Youth of Jesus' Homeland and the Holy Land. She illustrated the work and mission of YJHP to His Holiness, who in turn thanked her and gave the blessing to all YJHP children. The following is what she says:

These are the days I will remember. It is very touching to be present with other young people representing their countries to deliver their voices to the church, and at the same time the church is present to listen to them. This experience has made me reflect on the willingness of the church to listen to the youth and know their importance. Their

interest is not only in words, but in actions as I have seen the care of the priests and officials for this matter.

Our Holy Father Pope Francis is another story. His love for youth was obvious in his eyes especially when he greeted every one of us. We felt the warmth of love in his heart. The interest of His Holiness and the church in youth reminded me with God's care in His children. If the church cares about us this much then our beloved Father must care way more than this.

Finally, coming from the Holy Land was a great significant to the people I met. We live in the grace of the sacred country, and everyone wishes to reach our land. I was very proud each time I mentioned my hometown as I felt its special grace, which pushed me to represent my country properly. At the same time, this showed me the importance of connecting with the global church because we need Her as She needs us.

I finish by recalling the last sentence the Pope told me when he knew I am Palestinian: "I pray a lot for the Holy Land - Palestine, but I hope you pray for me too."





Barbara Tavares

*"Silver or gold
I do not have, but
what I have I give,
Jesus Christ".*

(Acts 3:6)

*Life Experiences
and Testimonies*

My experience in Jesus Homeland

My name is Barbara, I am 24 years old, originally from Brazil. I am a missionary in Salaam Catholic Community as a lay consecrated.

After 2 years in mission in Panama, I was invited to spend one month in Jesus homeland. What a joy, what an immense grace, to walk where Jesus walked, to share my time with the disciples of today of the Lord's land! From the summer camps for kids of Beit Sahour, Ein 'Arik and Birzeit, I got impressed to see so many young people as leaders serving the Church, organizing everything with so much enthusiasm and love, preparing everything with so much responsibility.

In these days I was so touched by the welcoming and generosity of all. As a missionary I always feel I need to give, to make things... but God's plans sometimes are different from mine and

even if I am not expecting, He surprises me. I always receive a lot more than what I can give, from Him and from the others. In this way, I experience what the Word says: everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother... for my sake will receive a hundred times as much. What an amazing God, what an amazing Father! In this same experience I also felt my limitations and difficulties. It was hard to live in such a different culture; I don't speak Arabic, it's my first time in an Arab country, I've never had the feeling of being minority as a Christian, food and customs are totally different for me here... Is this bad? Of course not, but it can cause some cultural shock. So in certain moments I felt somehow isolated from the world and alone. At the same time I knew I had brothers and sisters, the church

family around me. I also had accepted in my heart that God wanted me to live all this experience, embracing its graces and challenges, offering everything as a dear offering to the Lord. In my daily prayers I asked God “as I don’t speak Arabic, as everything and everyone is so new for me... how can I share your love with this people?” It suddenly came to my mind “God is simple, as love is simple. We, humans, complicated God and human beings got distant from Him. Love with simplicity, as God’s love is simple.” So I started to smile more, to look deep in the eyes of the kids and of the youth, I prayed for all of them all the time in my heart. I started to demonstrate my love with some affection, simple words, and joy. I tried to listen more to them, and God finally gave me the grace to reach their hearts, to step in and knock on the doors of the most sacred place of a person. We missionaries exist to cry with those who cry, to suffer what the humanity suffers, as well as to rejoice with their achievements.

Together we prayed, singing and worshiping the Lord, together we felt God’s love. In these days, I listened and felt the pain of young people who feel alone, who are afraid of the future, who suffer with the occupation, who seek God and who are thirsty for His love. On the other hand I also saw a Church that works hard for its people, priests and nuns who offer their lives and all their talents with so much joy and enthusiasm... everything is so living in my mind and in my heart. Finally, I found out that the treasures of the Holy Land are not just in the land itself, the people are the living treasures of this place too. After living all this experience, I leave this country, falling in love with it, and the people who got to the deepness of my heart, to the center of my prayers. I leave this country with a deep and infinite gratitude to God and to all those who welcomed me here. I can say with so much joy in my heart: thank you God for choosing me!! I also leave this country wishing that I could

have done more, I could have loved more. I receive so much from God and I wanted everyone to know that in Him we have all. Before Him all the walls that imprison us fall. He carries our crosses with us, and in Him we have freedom. When we fall and sin He rises us up, when we cry He cries with us. Our wounds are Christ’s wounds; Jesus is our best friend!

One last thing that I heard a lot in these days is the deep and open wound of the occupation. What to say about it? We can say many things, we can have many feelings, many painful memories of the past come to our minds, we pray, we silence, we hope, we believe! What/Where is peace? The real peace is a person, who has a face and a name: Jesus Christ, our savior. Well, I feel this pain with you, I suffer with you and I hope with you. I pray with you every day for peace in this Land and I will do it until the end of my life. All Christians belong to this land in some way, because here are the roots of our faith. But please, remember that peace

starts from oneself if we have Jesus in our hearts. Peace in my heart, peace in the world! As the today’s disciple of the Holy Land, as a sister in Christ, I would like to ask you with all my fraternal affection and love, please do not let faith die in this country. Keep up the good work you do, and keep up being creative and making the church attractive. Do everything for unity of Christians. Do not be afraid to make peaceful dialogues and look into the eyes of the different; they also need Jesus. Make noise for Christ, fall in love with Him as the first apostles did. Don’t be shy to pray and to give everything to Him; we are the now of God! Like Mary, may we be influencers of God’s love to the world. Brothers and sisters, don’t be afraid to give everything to Jesus. He doesn’t take anything from us, He gives us everything!! Congratulations for the great work you do and thank you for everything! We are united in this way in the joy of the living Christ!



Serene Karam

*"We Are One"
Program with
Catholic Action*

*Life Experiences
and Testimonies*

Youth Exchange and Pastoral Service in Spain

In July 2019, I travelled to Spain for a youth exchange with the Catholic Action. I was on a mission to represent the Palestinian Christian citizens of Nazareth in a youth conference. I was accompanied by a colleague, Boulus, from Jerusalem. Boulus and I were welcomed and hosted by Spanish families and their generosity was overwhelming.

During my stay, I met many families and especially youth and I learnt about their culture, country, politics, lifestyle and their faith. We exchanged much of our experiences, differences and similarities.

On August 1st, the parish of the hosting families took us to Avila where we participated in the Catholic Action conference. The participants included youths and families from all

over Spain. The conference included meetings, prayer sessions and fun activities. During this conference, I met many wonderful people who quickly became friends. We exchanged our faith experiences and our spirituality. It was an experience of a lifetime that I will treasure close to my heart. I feel I was blessed by this opportunity to meet brothers and sisters from another country.



YJHP MEMBERS

Osama Dukmak:

I didn't know anything about the Christian Youth Ministry until I joined the Christian Youth Ministry in my parish, Beit Jala and that was in my 2nd year university. I really loved it and tried to commit myself as much as I could and participate in the activities and the meetings, until one day YJHP asked for volunteers to be leaders for the elementary summer camp in 2018 and so I decided to go.

Love, faith, praying, humility, and laughing from the heart, were all present in the first summer camp I participated in. I loved it and decided to participate in the university summer camp and that's how my story started with YJHP. One meeting with YJHP is enough to change your entire life; it makes you understand how blessed you are to be a citizen of the Holy Land! It makes you understand how to live with Jesus Christ, and the reason of being Christian. The best thing of it is that you become a member of this family; a family that holds all Christians from the Holy Land praying and serving together."

Osama Dukmak from Beit Jala parish, and I study Medicine in my 5th year.

Nadine Husari:

My name is Nadine Husari, a young diplomat working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine in Ramallah. I wanted to leave my fingerprints on the world, and give witness to Christ. God gave me a lot of blessings and I wanted to invest in them. I felt for the first time I belong to a family that I chose, and was not imposed on me. Through my daily biblical meditations, I was able to live a personal relationship with Jesus. I figured that these meditations were missing in my life; and therefore, I wasn't living a joyful life. I never went to my parish's Christian youth meeting; maybe because I didn't feel I belong to my parents' parish. Although, I completed my BSc. and Masters degrees, I still had this emptiness and low sense of belonging. I felt this way until the day I went to Christ the King Event in 2018. There, they asked for some volunteers to carry the coffin of the young man whom Jesus told: "Young man, I tell you, arise!" (Luke 7:14). At this point, I carried my own coffin, my dead body. I felt God is calling me for a new life with Him saying: "Talitha kum" (Mark 5:41). After that, I filled in a membership application form to be a part of YJHP though I had no idea of their mission or work, but now, I'm a member of the media committee. I document every moment on Instagram and Snapchat as I try to be with YJHP members living their details of everyday life through the biblical meditations and all the social activities that I passionately prepare daily. In less than a year my life changed for better."



Fareed Mansour:

“Fareed Mansour, Taybeh, 25 years old. It is no coincidence that I’m a member of YJHP. I took a tough long road to reach that point. I started from the children group in the Latin Parish, Taybeh; then over the years I went to the elementary and secondary group. It helped me grow on the social and religious sides, although I didn’t commit to the meetings. I used to be a troublesome person or as they say “naughty” until my university level. My study and military conditions forced me to completely step away from the church and the Christian youth ministry, even Sunday mass. It was like being taken away from the soil of love and fertile faith, and was planted in beech seeds, where I had to survive. Here, I had to radically change my life; therefore, the moment I finished this level, I went back to the arms of the Christian youth ministry. The stereotypical image of the Prodigal Son had to be changed to the image of the returned to the arms of the church. I, then, found open wide arms to welcome me back home. Now, I am a member of YJHP, and I am still overwhelmed by my return to the church, who is encouraging me to put more effort towards the success of YJHP and its activities targeting larger number of Christians and encouraging their presence in the Holy Land.”

Shadi Shaheen and Natalie Abdallah:

“We were introduced to each other through YJHP volunteer works and meetings that we both attended. We both agreed from the very first that YJHP is essential in our lives no matter the future changes. It is not easy being married, having a job, a house and commitments because we are not only YJHP members; Shadi is the leader of Coordination and Development Committee, and Natalie is the Secretary of YJHP. However, when you love what you do, you give with all your heart and create time for this service and the people who share this message with you. YJHP is not only about the activities; it teaches you to love unconditionally, serve for free, how to pray and how to build a better relationship with God and the people around. It also teaches you to accept others for who they are and carry each other’s concerns with joy. YJHP is the family that we and our children will grow up in because it is life; and our lives will not get better without it.”



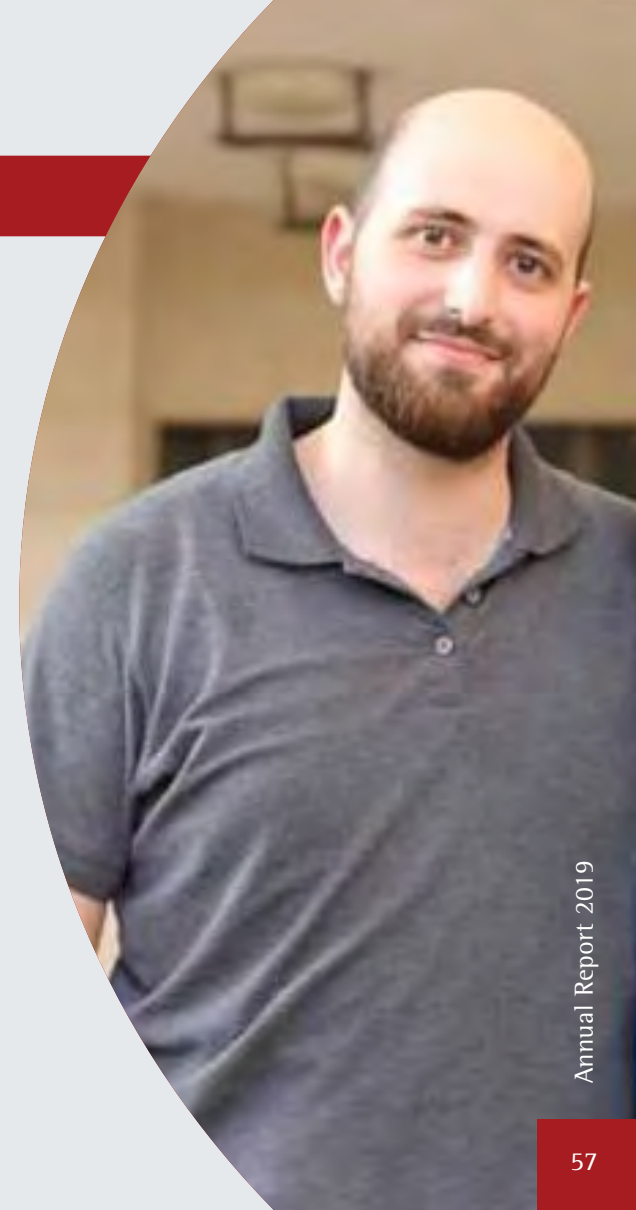


Nadine Bitar:

“My name is Nadine Bitar. YJHP for me is simply life. I felt a strong call to serve God in the Holy Land; and thus, I decided to study Theology in Bethlehem University. After I started learning, God’s call was very clear that He needs me to work in Christian Youth Ministries and not only in Catechism. I completed my BA in “Christian Youth Ministry” from North Park University in 2014. I worked with the Custody of the Holy Land in Terra Sancta Schools Central Office, but in the meantime, I stayed in contact with Fr. Bashar because YJHP is my passion. In 2014, I attended the first meeting of the General Secretariat of YJHP and I got attached to YJHP even more. After two years in Terra Sancta Schools Central Office, I still felt something was missing. So, I applied for an MA in Christian Ministry in North Park Seminary for two years. Today, I work in the Catechetical Office of the Latin Patriarchate - Jerusalem and I am a volunteer in the workers committee of YJHP.”

Charlie Batarseh:

“YJHP is a living example to the truth of the “body of Christ”, as the gospel says: we are all parts of the body of Christ. Every one of us is important and has their own role; their different role and special message, just like the different body parts. Although they differ, they complete each other and without them, the body is incomplete. The same goes for YJHP; it makes us feel that everyone of us has their own role, their own place and goal. It also makes us feel that we are indeed family and a whole united body. We support and complete each other so we can be united to reflect the true image of Jesus to those around us. YJHP helped me better understand the role God wants me to do in my church and my life.”



OTHER ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR



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*"God's gifts are interactive;
to enjoy them we have to
be ready to take risks".*

(Christus Vivit, 289)

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APPOINTMENT OF YJHP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

On 14 and 15 February 2019, the General Secretariat of YJHP appointed its committee members for the year 2019 during the Holy Mass “Real Love Mass” in Christ the Redeemer Church, Taybeh. The 55 members from all parishes along with their committee leaders pledged after announcing all the names and then participated for two days in a leadership and spiritual meeting. The meeting started on the evening of Thursday with Fr. Johnney Bahbah who drew the participants’ attention to the fact that the activities should be based on the Holy Bible, and was followed by an entertaining night. The first day ended with “Meeting with the True Love” during the special moments the participants lived with Jesus Christ in the Eucharistic Adoration. The next morning and after the morning Mass, the members participated in a spiritual meeting on the characteristics of a Christian Leader with Fr. Johnney Abu Khalil. They then visited Beit Afram – Elderly House of Taybeh and were received by H.B. Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabbah.



Finally, each committee met with its members to prepare for the upcoming activities and set the agenda of 2019. The participants ended the two-days meeting with the Director Imad Atallah who presented educational and entertaining activities to help them present the information they need to deliver in an interactive dramatic way.

“The first Servants” Course for the leaders of Christian Youth Categories in the Palestinian Parishes

The General Secretariat organized “the first Servants” course for the leaders of Christian Youth categories in the Parishes from Thursday the 9th until Friday 10th of May 2019. This course aimed at enhancing and developing the abilities of the leaders in the parishes to advance their service to Christian youth members on all levels. Around 70 people participated in this course that was held in The Episcopal Technological and Vocational Training Center, Ramallah. The first workshop was with the former General Secretary Mr. Moghannam Ghannam who tackled the characteristics of the Christian leader followed by a meeting with the General Chaplain of YJHP Fr. Bashar Fawadleh under the title “My Bible is a foundation to my life and to the Christian Youth”. After an entertaining evening, the participants ended their first day with a spiritual evening with the cross. On the other hand, Friday was divided into two parts: practical and spiritual.



The first included the Trainer Riad Mustafa who trained the participants on the importance of teamwork as well as the role of the leader through goal-oriented games. In terms of the spiritual side, Sr. Ghada Ni'meh spoke about leading personalities which was divided into three meetings: leading personalities in the Old Testament, the New Testament, and in today's world. At the end of the course, the Christian youth leaders were divided into categories; leaders of the children category met with Sr. Mariam Ba'bish, leaders of elementary and secondary categories met with Ms. Nirmeen Odeh, and leaders of university and worker categories met with Ms. Kholoud Hilaneh. Each category talked about how to prepare Christian Youth meetings in the parish, set an annual plan, and choose subjects according to the needs and interests of each category. With the participation of the committee leaders of YJHP, the participants discussed the challenges they face as leaders in their parishes. The day then ended with a Holy Mass.



PARTICIPATION IN PALM SUNDAY PROCESSION

On Sunday 14 April 2019, one week before Easter, YJHP along with thousands of Christian believers who came from various parishes of Palestine and the entire world participated in the traditional procession for Palm Sunday starting from the Franciscan Church of Bethphage located on the Mount of Olives proceeding to the Church of Saint Anne in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Mr. Fareed Mansour from Taybeh Parish narrated his experience in World Youth Day 2019, Panama and how it affected him as a Palestinian Christian from the Holy Land.

At the end of the procession and in front of Lion's Gate, YJHP asked the participants to kneel down and pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

In addition, Ms. Tamara Alqassis from Beit Jala Parish and the University committee leader in the General Secretariat of YJHP told her experience in WYD 2019, Panama representing Caritas Jerusalem Organization. Bishop Peter Burcher had the initiative with Caritas Jerusalem to produce more than 1 million rosaries so that Pope Francis can give every young people in WYD Panama this gift of the olive wood rosary.

Just prior to the blessing by H.E. Mgr. Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the General Secretary of YJHP Mr. Rafi Ghattas asked everyone to participate in praying the Youth Prayer.



EXTERNAL PARTICIPATIONS

The Secondary committee leader in the General Secretariat of YJHP Ms. Josleen Shaheen participated in a workshop in Amman under the title "Towards inclusive societies for all groups in society in the Middle East". This workshop was conducted only for one day dated 5 April 2019 at the invitation of CAFCAW in the presence of Rev. Dr. Victor Makari and Ms. Maya Khadra, the project coordinator, as well as a group of Christian and Muslim youth from Palestine and Jordan. The workshop focused on the importance of coexistence despite the differences of religious, ethnic or gender, in addition to the solutions for inclusive societies and the necessity of concentrating on the national identity despite the differences "Difference makes others unique"



JECI – MIEC MIDDLE EAST COORDINATION CONFERENCE

MIEC Conference was held in Lebanon from 9 to 13 August 2019 under the title “You will be my witnesses”. The Secretary of General Secretariat of YJHP Mrs. Nataly Abdallah and the Children committee leader Ms. Karoleen Diab participated in the conference that was held in Srs. St. Joseph de Lyon Convent. The conference focused on several important areas in the light of rapid changes that our Arabic societies witness along with studying its impact on the Christian youth that is heavily influenced by. It also urged them to create a sense of responsibility towards changing their societies and work on developing sense of revival (intellectual, cultural and political).



“WE ARE ONE” PROGRAM WITH CATHOLIC ACTION

Youth Exchange and Pastoral Service in Spain, Italy, Malta and Romania



The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem through the Christian Youth Ministry, The General Secretariat of YJHP and in cooperation with and invitation of Catholic Action, a Palestinian Christian delegation participated in summer camps in various countries of the world. This program aims to encourage the international youth exchange program between Jerusalem Diocese and the rest of the world. 8 members of YJHP participated in the summer program hosted by local or global initiatives related with Catholic Action.





WORLD YOUTH DAY 2019 IN PANAMA

Rafi Ghattas – The Holy Land Review



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"The Gospel asks us to be daring, and we want to be so, without presumption and without proselytizing, testifying to the love of the Lord and stretching out our hands to all the young people in the world"

(Christus Vivit, 235)

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YJHP WITH ALL CHRISTIAN YOUTH OF THE WORLD IN PANAMA

Palestinian Christian youth trip to World Youth Days in Panama 2019

From the annunciation in Nazareth, the Incarnation of Christ in Bethlehem and the Resurrection in Jerusalem, 43 Christian youth under the name of YJHP participated with all Christian youth of the world in WYD with His Holiness Pope Francis in Panama under the theme: *"I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."* (Luke 1:38)

In 1985 Pope John Paul II initiated World Youth Day to give youth space in the Catholic Church and enhance their role. From that moment, the Christian Palestinian youth rushed to participate in all WYD that is celebrated every 3 years.

Since the announcement in Krakow, Poland 2016 by Pope Francis of the next WYD in Panama 2019, the preparatory committee, who works under the umbrella of The Assembly of the Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land, started working to reserve a seat for the Holy Land to participate in Panama; and this is what happened.



After about two years of logistical and spiritual preparation, the Palestinian delegation was ready to travel for 25 hours to reach Panama in Central America carrying from the Holy Land the Christian youth's aspirations and wishes to offer at the altar with the Pope and more than 700 thousand Christians of the world.

Since the first day of WYD and the arrival of the Palestinian delegation - that includes representatives of the Christian youths from most parishes of Palestine; from the Upper Galilee to the West Bank passing by Jerusalem - in Panama, they were able to prove themselves in front of all the Christian youth of the world. They remained in Panama for 16 days from 22 January until 7 February 2019.



FIRST WEEK

In the first week, the Palestinian Christian youth experienced WYD while living with the poor Panamanian families that hosted them in their home. With the beginning of the preparations to welcome His Holiness Pope Francis, a meeting entitled "The Christian Catechism in Youth's life" was conducted and gathered the Christian youth of Palestine and the Christian youth of Lebanon and Egypt. There, they all shared their experiences of life and faith particularly in the difficult situations the Middle Eastern Countries are currently going through.

YJHP gained the privilege this year of raising the Palestinian flag with all the flags of the participant countries while welcoming the Pope. The General Chaplain of YJHP and leader of the Palestinian delegation in Panama, Fr. Bashar Fawadleh said: "the Palestinian Christian youth did not miss any chance to participate in WYD since its initiation. However, this year was very special in spite of the small number of participants compared with that



of previous participations, where we reached around 400 people. YJHP received considerable attention by the organizers and the Panamanian church. We had the honor that Ms. Nirmeen Odeh, a member of Birzeit Christian youth, shared her life testimony in front of the Pope and all the Christian youths of the world on the stage. In addition, Ms. Dana Salah from Ramallah city represented the Asian Continent through having lunch with our Holy Father along with another 8 people from the entire world. Moreover, Mr. Kamel Matar from Bethlehem and Ms. Tamara Alqassis from Beit Jala gave a speech on behalf of Caritas Jerusalem on the matter of the one million rosaries given as a gift from Pope Francis to all participants. Besides, the Archbishop of Panama welcomed the participant delegation and promised to visit the Holy Land with the Panamanian Christian youth according to our invitation."



A Message from YJHP to His Holiness Pope Francis

“Yes, this is what I will do” was the response of His Holiness Pope Francis to the private conversation between him and the young female, Nirmeen Odeh.

Nirmeen Odeh, 20 years old from Birzeit and the former committee leader of the Workers’ category in YJHP, had the chance to share a short life testimony in front of Pope Francis and all the Christian youth present from all over the world.

With her Embroidered Palestinian dress, she went to meet the Pope and speak with him. Nirmeen says: “they are moments when time stands still! You are now standing in front of the representative of Jesus Christ on earth and the successor of St. Peter. I see him in this way and he, in turn, sees me as the representative of the land of the Incarnation. These are Holy moments I will never forget in my life”. She continues: “the organizers asked me to greet Pope Francis. I didn’t believe it at first, until I approached him with plenty of thoughts in my head that I would love to tell him about. But then, he smiled at me to overcome my fear. Indeed, once I got there and started speaking with him, I had an indescribable feeling; a feeling of comfort and warmth. I was encouraged, and told him about the thoughts in my head. It’s like time stopped. I took a closer look at his eyes, and he reached out and whispered: “Yes”. He shook his head and continued: “this is what I will do”. Then the beautiful conversation was over.

Afterwards, the organizers gave Nirmeen the microphone to start her speech which was supposed to be pre-recorded, but due to technical error, the record did not work. Hence, she had to improvise saying: “lucky for me I thought I needed to memorize the speech and had no idea about the recording until one night earlier.” She adds laughing: “maybe God wanted me to be prepared for this technical error.”

The following is the speech Nirmeen presented in front of His Holiness Pope Francis on the stage of WYD, Panama:

I have always been this shy but curious bookworm. I finished my studies with an idea engraved in my mind that the most important thing to do in life is to gain knowledge. Although I was born

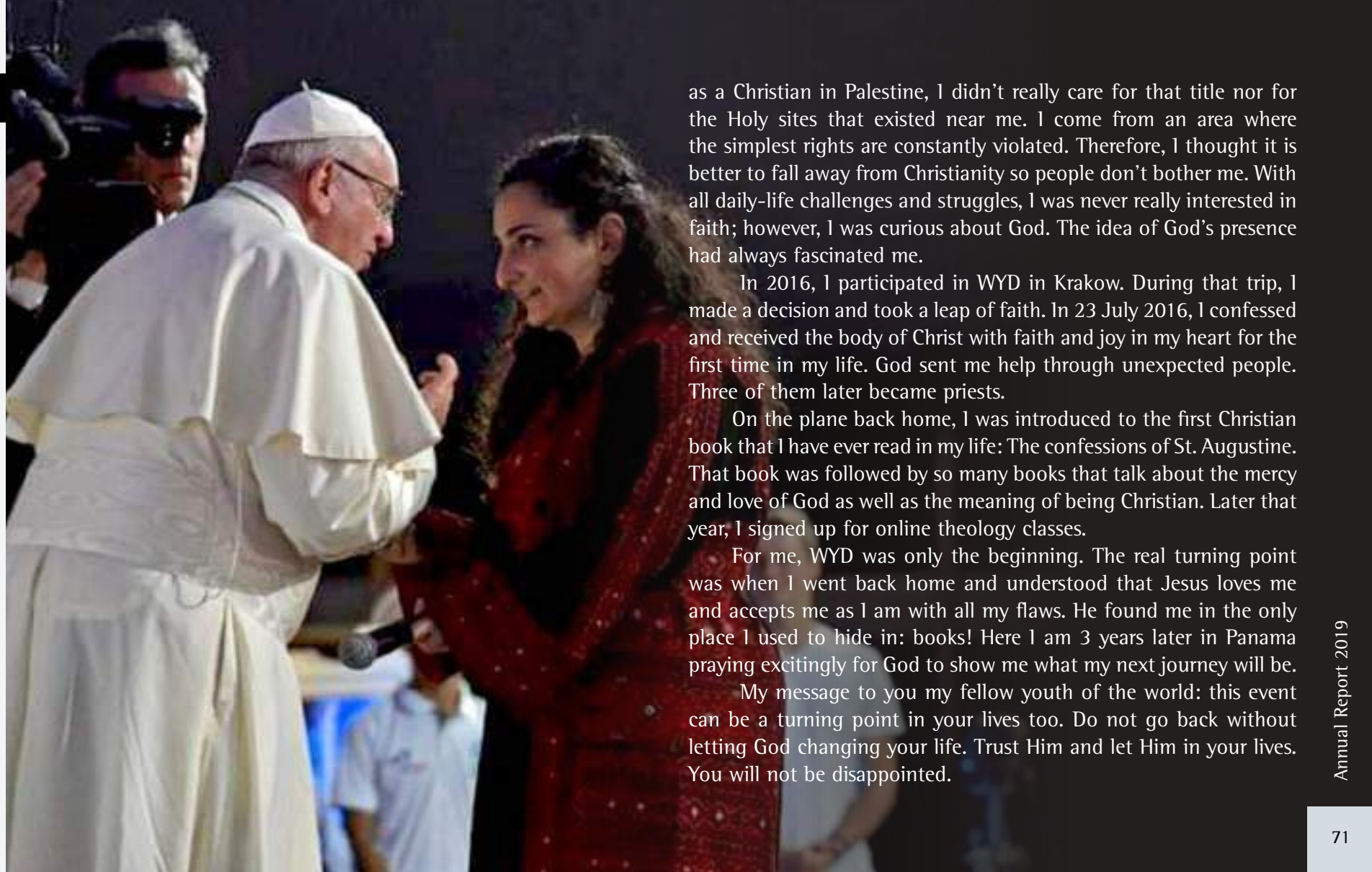
as a Christian in Palestine, I didn’t really care for that title nor for the Holy sites that existed near me. I come from an area where the simplest rights are constantly violated. Therefore, I thought it is better to fall away from Christianity so people don’t bother me. With all daily-life challenges and struggles, I was never really interested in faith; however, I was curious about God. The idea of God’s presence had always fascinated me.

In 2016, I participated in WYD in Krakow. During that trip, I made a decision and took a leap of faith. In 23 July 2016, I confessed and received the body of Christ with faith and joy in my heart for the first time in my life. God sent me help through unexpected people. Three of them later became priests.

On the plane back home, I was introduced to the first Christian book that I have ever read in my life: The confessions of St. Augustine. That book was followed by so many books that talk about the mercy and love of God as well as the meaning of being Christian. Later that year, I signed up for online theology classes.

For me, WYD was only the beginning. The real turning point was when I went back home and understood that Jesus loves me and accepts me as I am with all my flaws. He found me in the only place I used to hide in: books! Here I am 3 years later in Panama praying excitedly for God to show me what my next journey will be.

My message to you my fellow youth of the world: this event can be a turning point in your lives too. Do not go back without letting God changing your life. Trust Him and let Him in your lives. You will not be disappointed.



A MILLION ROSARY FROM BETHLEHEM, PALESTINE TO THE WHOLE WORLD FROM LAND TO HAND



“Each young person can be daring enough to sow the seed of the message on that fertile terrain that is the heart of another young person.”
(Christus Vivit, 210)

At the request of His Holiness Pope Francis, with a generous contribution from Bishop Peter Buercher, and in cooperation with Caritas Jerusalem, a million and a half olive wood rosaries were produced in Bethlehem by Palestinian families especially for World Youth Day in Panama.

On the wooden cross of the rosary, the name “Bethlehem” was engraved along with “JMJ” which symbolizes World Youth Day in Spanish.



These rosaries were put in the main bag of WYD and was given to all the participants and volunteers during the evening Vigil. Sr. Bridget Tighe FMDM, General Director of Caritas Jerusalem, Mr. George Handal, the Financial Director of Caritas Jerusalem, as well as Ms. Tamara Alqassis and Mr. Kamel Matar, members of YJHP, gave a speech in both languages; Arabic and English, about the olive wood rosaries made in Bethlehem.

The following was the speech Mr. Kamel Matar and Ms. Tamara Alqassis read:

In the name of peace and compassion we stand here today to bring you a heart-felt message from the faithful hearts of the people of this holy land. We seek to spread our deeply rooted aspirations to live in peace and love, a peace which the land of our Lord's birth now lacks.

We are young Arab Palestinian Christians from Jerusalem and the Holy Land. We greet you on behalf of our companions here with us and on behalf of all the youth of the Holy Land. We bring you greetings from Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth and all the holy places that bear the memory of the mystery of Redemption, our and your Redemption, and of the entire world. Our message to you, youth of the world gathered here with our Holy Father Pope Francis, is a message of peace. We seek to ensure that the Christian presence in Palestine and the Holy Land that has continued since the time of the Apostles and the first Christian community until today will continue.

The Holy Land and its people are suffering today from a continuous conflict which makes the Land of Peace and Redemption a land without peace. Therefore, the Holy Land needs your prayers. Pray that God may grant us all peace, justice and equality. Jerusalem is the city of God, a Holy city of three



religions; Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It is also the spiritual home of all of you and all Christians in the world. Jerusalem today is not a city of peace. Thus, we ask you to pray for the peace of Jerusalem and its people.

Finally, we remind you of the gift that Pope Francis gave you: two olive wood rosaries, made in Bethlehem, worked by your brothers and sisters, Christian Arab Palestinians.

Please pray the rosary that God may grant us freedom, independence and peace.

END OF WORLD YOUTH DAY 2019

On the morning of Sunday 26 January 2019, Pope Francis announced at the end of closing Mass, the end of World Youth Day 2019 in Panama City. He concluded that Lisbon, Portugal would be the venue for World Youth Day 2022. By this, the historical days that Panama City and those who live in experienced was finished.



SECOND WEEK

After a full week program YJHP has lived; it was time to go sightseeing in that tropical region. The Christian Youth visited many tourist attractions in Panama, such as The Embera Indigenous village and the Caribbean coastline. In addition, they visited many beautiful churches that are centuries old.

The participants learned about Panama's old and new history through their visits to the significant historical and strategic sites, such as the Panama Canal that connects the Atlantic Ocean with the Pacific Ocean.

During their last days, YJHP visited FANLYC; a non-profit organization that provides various services to children diagnosed with cancer. They volunteered through playing with the children and helping officials in the things they were working on.

With a lovely gesture, the Archbishop of Panama along with the General Secretary for Youth welcomed the Palestinian Christian youth in the Archdiocese of Panama. Then, YJHP thanked the Archbishop for their hospitality and presented a simple gift of an olive wood cross with a relic of St. Marie-Alphonsine Ghattas. They also thanked him for his visit to Bethlehem prior WYD, where he met some of the youth representatives. Subsequently, the Archbishop accepted the invitation of bringing the Christian youth of Panama to the Holy Land as a pilgrimage and meet YJHP members.



LIFE TESTIMONIES

On the last Sunday, the preparatory committee prepared a spiritual retreat in one of the Franciscan monasteries in Panama, where the participants ended their trip through living the most beautiful and spiritual moments.

"At first, I applied only to travel, as I didn't care about the spiritual matters. But, I didn't expect that Panama would change my life. Today, in this retreat, I confessed for the first time after receiving the sacrament of confirmation. We had a great feeling in this place!" Salem Abdallah, a young man from Birzeit said. Meanwhile, Natalie Matar from Shefa-'Amr in Galilee illustrated: "Well, ever since I was little I knew I am Palestinian (from the Holy Land), but I hadn't realized it until I came here. When the Christian youth asked about our country and origin, and we used to say that we are from Palestine, they were very delighted and happy because they were speaking with someone coming from the land of the Incarnation. It was here I realized the true blessing I am currently living, and therefore, I will go back home with a very important message to tell: 'Be proud of your Christianity and live your faith properly, as we are from the land of Christ!'".

FROM PANAMA TO JESUS' HOMELAND

After spending 16 days in Panama, the delegation returned home carrying messages and wishes of the whole world. They went back with bags full of prayers from the Christian youth of the world to leave at the empty Tomb of Jesus. They also returned home with lots of unforgettable situations.

A new family was formed in Panama. Here they are today in their beloved homeland telling everyone the experiences they lived, and preparing for a new journey towards the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal to meet again with the Christian youth of the whole world in WYD 2022.



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"At this stage in life, the young are called to move forward without cutting themselves off from their roots, to build autonomy but not in solitude"

(Christus Vivit, 137)

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“STEP
FOR
GRACE”

CHILDREN BIBLE COMPETITION



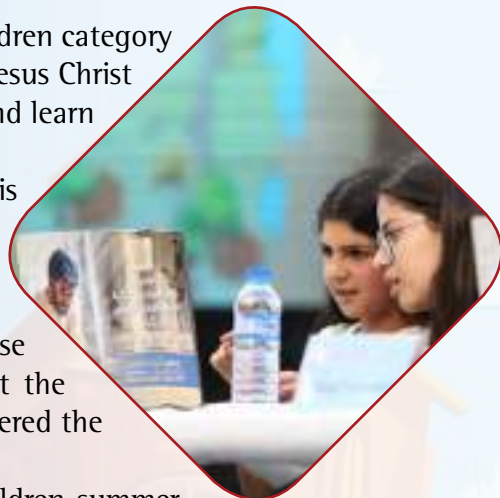
The children committee organized the competition to encourage the children category to read the Bible, understand it, and identify the details of the life of Jesus Christ as well as the people who lived with Him. It is our responsibility to know and learn those details as we live in His land.

The committee chose this title “Step for Grace” because through this small step of daily reading one chapter of the bible and answering the questions, the child will receive a great blessing and will have valuable information about Jesus Christ.

The competition started by distributing booklets to the parishes. These booklets contained 140 questions from the Old and New Testament. At the beginning of April, seven parishes participated, in which the children answered the questions, and three participants from each parish were qualified.

The second phase of the competition was completed during the children summer camp “Shore... Sea”. The competition was very competitive among the participants of the same parish that at the end of it one child from each parish was nominated for the third and final phase.

The final phase was completed during the “Story of Ibn-El-Balad” festival and the 55th years celebration of the establishment of Youth Ministry in Palestine. The third day of the festival was dedicated to the children category, which included many activities ending with the Bible competition “Step for a Blessing”. In this phase, the competition focused on the gospel of Luke and 6 participants represented their parishes were competing against each other. It consisted of three rounds; the first and second round included questions with multiple choices. Three contestants with the least points were eliminated, and The Shepherds Band played some hymns between both rounds. Meanwhile, the final round included the critical questions in which the first three winners were crowned.



COOPERATIVE BANKS (PALISCO)

Cooperative bank aims to promote and support the creation of a cooperative credit system that is based on the principles of voluntary and open-membership and democratic organization, knowing that the resulting cooperative credit system should be oriented towards the (legal and economic) principles of the Italian cooperative credit system and the ideas and programs of Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen. The origin name of PALISCO is *PAx LibertaS COoperatio (Peace, Freedom, Cooperation)* with its founders Dr. Heiner Nicolussi Leck and Comm. Giorgio Merigo who accompanied the Palestinian people in development of credit cooperative bank. Its main objectives are to improve the population standard of living, boost local economy, and create independence from non-profit organizations, international aids, and commercial banks.

Therefore, Palisco had the opportunity to present the scope of its work as well as the cooperative bank spirit and concept to the youth of YJHP during the “Story of Ibn-El-Balad” festival and the University summer camp. In these two meetings, they explained the importance of collaboration and cooperative and how it can create a virtuous economical circle. As a result, the support of Palestinian youth can create an independent sustainable economy, respecting the value of life.



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"The life that Jesus gives us is a love story, a life history that wants to blend with ours and sink roots in the soil of our own lives."

(Christus Vivit, 252)

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مهرجان قصة ابن البلد



STORY OF IBN-EL-BALAD FESTIVAL

"STORY OF IBN-EL-BALAD" FESTIVAL



The General Secretariat of YJHP came out with the idea of the festival through youth initiative to celebrate 55 years of its establishment, and the launch of the new General Secretariat logo. The festival aimed to open the largest Biblical Exhibition in the Arab region with a 220m² space which was presented for the second time after Lebanon. The festival is called "Story of

Ibn-El-Balad" because the country has a long story and history. This story has heroes, and our own country's hero is the true Son of this land; Jesus himself, who lived in our country for 33 years. He was born here, grew and lived with us, taught and loved us to the maximum extent. The festival highlighted the activities, programs and initiatives of the Palestinian Christian Youth Ministry through a number of performances and activities during its four days. It provided the participant and visitor an idea about the initiatives and activities the youth and Christian organizations conduct on the church and national levels in the service of youth and society. In addition, the festival provided a bright and encouraging image to youth, families and children to hold fast to their land as well as the image of a better future here in this country.



Under the patronage of Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh, and the Assembly of the Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land (ACOH), we held a four-day festival called “The Story of Ibn El-Balad” on the grounds of Holy Family parish in Ramallah. The opening ceremony was attended by the special counsel to the Prime Minister Dr. Stephan Salameh and the Emeritus Patriarch of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Msgr. Michel Sabbah, representing ACOH. The General Secretariat of The Youth of Jesus’ Homeland invited the many attendees, including many government officials, bishops, priests, nuns and of course many of the youth of the Holy Land. The large crowd, estimated at 1,500 people was comprised of many people from the various parishes, cities and villages. The Catholic scout groups helped to create a festive atmosphere with a musical procession. We also had for the first time the unveiling of a Biblical Exhibition.



In his speech, the Secretary General welcomed the youth, where he talked about the history of the youth movement and mission in the church which first began with his Beatitude Patriarch emeritus Michel Sabbah. He then unveiled the new logo of the youth, explaining the symbols which comprise the logo while also officially announcing the new name of the youth. After a moving talk by His Beatitude, the opening program continued with a concert by Dalal Abu Amneh from Nazareth as well as a performance by Douban Professional Dance Troupe from Jerusalem.



The second day of the festival was marked by two workshops, the first was entitled “The anniversary of the historical meeting between St. Francis of Assisi and Sultan Muhammad al-Malik al-Ayyubi” which was moderated by Dr. Amir Ibrahim from Birzeit University. Father Dr. Jamal Khader, General Director of the Schools of the Latin Patriarchate in Palestine and Dr. Ahmed Rafik Awad from Jerusalem University also participated by speaking about the historical encounter. The workshop targeted the “Tawjihi” high school students from four schools in Ramallah and Al-

Bireh Governorate namely: Sisters of St. Joseph, Al-Ahlia Secondary School, Catholic High school of Al-Taybeh and the Evangelical Episcopal School. After participating in the talk, the students continued to visit the Biblical Gallery.

The second workshop was entitled “The Reality of Christian Youth, Concerns, Challenges and Hopes” and was held in the afternoon of the same day. The workshop was moderated by The General Secretary of YJHP, Mr. Rafi Ghattas as well as Mr. Samer Salameh, Deputy Minister of Labor in the Palestinian Government. The speakers in the panel included: Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac and Mr. Chris Zaknoun. They were very elaborate and helped to keep the students engaged in the dialogue.



In the evening we held a “Biblical Dinner” which was prepared by the Saint Vincent de Paul Society of the Holy Family Parish in Ramallah. They made dinner based on and inspired from the foods in the Bible. The dinner included entertainment, as well as an evening of hymns performed by the Shepherds Band. At the end of the dinner there was a play entitled “The Deal” prepared by the Jerusalem Youth.

The third day was dedicated to children, with the participation of more than 400 children from the different parishes. The day started with a play from the Diyar Academy, followed by activities and games. Then the children were divided into teams which continued to participate in many different activities, including the Biblical play entitled “The Code”. The Children’s Committee concluded its special day with the Bible Competition “Step for Grace”. Michelle Wissam from Jenin parish won first place, Jana Mohanad from Zababdeh parish won the second place, while the third place was awarded to Lamar Ibrahim from Taybeh parish.



On the evening of the third day, the festival hosted the artists Khaled Al-Masu and Suleiman Mukarker who put on a family-friendly standup comedy. The comedy was immediately followed by a special show by the Zababdeh Dabkeh Troupe for Folklore.

The third day was concluded with an evening of hymns and an hour of Eucharistic Adoration, animated by choir of the Latin parish of Aboud.

The last day of the festival was dedicated to the Biblical Exhibition where we had schools from the various villages come to spend some time in the exhibit. Thus, YJHP concluded its first festival, "The Story of Ibn-El-Balad". We also had a total of 15 booths at the festival which were selling baked goods, food, drinks, books and other religious items. The Pontifical Mission in Jerusalem was the diamond sponsor of the festival. The Latin Patriarchate of the Jerusalem, Custody of the Holy Land, and General Secretariat of Christian Schools in Palestine were the golden sponsors.



THE FESTIVAL AIMED AT:

- ❶ Launching the new logo of the General Secretariat of the Christian Youth "The Youth of Jesus' Homeland – Palestine" YJHP.
- ❷ Highlighting the role of youth in society and in the church specifically.
- ❸ Presentation of the achievements of the General Secretariat of the Youth in previous years from 1964 until today.
- ❹ Provide an opportunity for all participants and institutions working for the youth to introduce their activities and programs in their booths.
- ❺ Highlighting the reality of Christian youth and its interests in the workshops.
- ❻ Highlighting the 800th anniversary of the historical meeting of St. Francis of Assisi with Sultan Muhammad Al-Malik Al-Ayyubi and the embodiment of interfaith dialogue "workshop" as well as the historical presence of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land.
- ❼ Highlighting Palestinian youth success stories (artistic/ social/ economic...)
- ❽ Encouraging and supporting the local institutions and the artisans of handicrafts by the presence of the Kiosks.



FESTIVAL FEATURES:

- ❶ A modern Biblical Exhibition that simulates for visitors, through visual and audio presentations, an explanation of and contexts of the Old and New Testament.
- ❷ A diversified exhibition of activities which brought together institutions working with the youth, vendors of local products, popular food and drink, handmade accessories, photography as well as others.
- ❸ Special invitation to the representatives of the State of Palestine, Arab and Foreign ambassadors, Church representatives and representatives of the private and civil sector and local government operating in Palestine which allow them to see the work being done with and for the youth.
- ❹ Allocating special angles within the festival to support women and youth charities to show their services.
- ❺ The exhibition included events and workshops: a simulation of decision makers from official and governmental agencies, the private sector, ecclesiastical and spiritual initiatives, social and artistic presentations by prominent Palestinian personalities.
- ❻ Media coverage in all the newspapers, radio stations, local news channels, Television and social media.



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"Jesus is risen, and he wants to make us sharers in the new life of the resurrection."

(Christus Vivit, 32)

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CHRIST THE KING BOOKSTORE

Brief:

The bookstore was established in 2011 by an initiative of the General Secretariat of Youth Ministry, YJHP with its General Chaplain Fr. Aziz Halaweh at that time. It functions under the administrative of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and took its name for YJHP's patron.

In December 2018, we opened the door for a unique and the only section "SACRUM" in Palestine. This section provides different altar furnishings and church supplies including Mass kits as well as Liturgical vestments and sacred vessels.



Mission:

Our mission is to provide a wide range of Christian books to encourage the healthy Christian exchange of ideas. We also seek to raise awareness of the importance of increasing one's knowledge of faith.

We offer spiritual, cultural, historical, and philosophical materials to serve Christian families, youth, parishes, educational institutions, priests and nuns. The bookstore is one of the main sources to cover the costs of many of YJHP executed programs and activities during the year.



Vision:

Our vision is to create a Christian culture aware of its spirituality through the various theological books we offer especially Catholic and Orthodox ones.



Accomplishments:

The bookstore was able to increase the number of customers through its interaction via social media. This year, we have joined Instagram as we saw that youth nowadays are spending more time using this application compared to the rest. Through this application, we began our daily scriptural reflections and book quotes to keep one's brain healthy and stimulate their creativity to grow in faith as we walk with Jesus.

In order to reach the new generation, we need to cope with the new developments. Hence, we started bringing more Christian youth accessories so Christians can get more familiar of the presence of God in their daily lives, and encourage youth to proudly express their faith in society.

Moreover, the bookstore created a unique brochure that helped in reaching out to new customers and introduce



our school with, celebrating the 5th anniversary of the establishment of Christ the King Bookstore. These books enriched our religious section in the school library, which had the significant impact of increasing students' awareness in their Christian faith. The school nuns, administration, and faculty especially our Christian teachers appreciate your generous gesture."

It is now possible to have books in different languages. During the current year, the bookstore took a baby step in offering books written by local authors in a foreign language to the Christian community. We saw that this step will bring the community's attention to the importance of living in the Holy Land, the Land of Jesus, and belong to it. At the same time, it is a step to let different cultures understand the Christian community in the Holy Land through our bookstore.

In reference to the Sacrum section, we have been buying clergyman shirts from companies abroad. However, over the course of this year, we were able to make our own clergyman shirts in cooperation with Shabibeh Store in Jordan. The purpose of this shift was to make it easier to bring clergyman shirts with less time and cost.



them to our main work. This move helped capture more attention especially that we focus on benefiting Christian youth in the Holy Land.

Just as last year, we thought that it is important to develop the habit of reading among the students and especially with this



new generation. Therefore, in cooperation with the Open Doors Organization and with their generous donation, we decided to give around 13 schools a 1800 NIS gift card each to purchase books from the bookstore. Through this operation, we were able to help each school to improve its library and influence the students' academic achievements. Most importantly, it played a great role in the students' personal and spiritual lives as they build a close relationship with God in a materialistic life. The following is a statement from the principal of St. Joseph Secondary School – Ramallah, Mrs. Shireen Mughannam:

"Please accept our sincere thanks and appreciation for the valuable religious books you have provided





Book Fairs:

During the past year, the bookstore was able to be present in various places to sell its books and to motivate the community to read by offering them a wide range of religious books to choose from. The more we connect with people, the better Christians we shall have. Following are the locations the bookstore organized its fairs at:

Terra Sancta School, Bethlehem	April
During Holy Week, Haifa	Mid-April
Easter celebration, Emmaus	Late-April
Christ the King Event, Ramallah	November
“Story of Ibn El-Balad” Festival, Ramallah	September
Kairos Conference, Bethlehem	December

BEST-SELLING BOOKS OF 2019

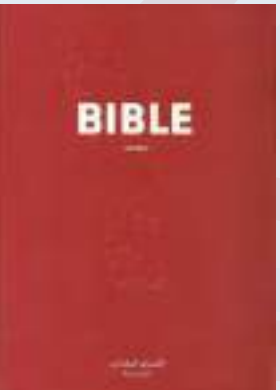
➤ The Holy Bible

Publisher: Dar al-Mashriq
Distribution in Palestine and Jordan; Christ the King Bookstore, Shabibeh Store



➤ Youcat Bible

By Austrian Bishops' Conference (ed.), Georg Fischer SJ, Dominik Markl SJ, Thomas Söding, Bernhard Meuser, Michael Langer



➤ Catechism of the Catholic Church



➤ Bic Aswad

By Jerry Ghazal



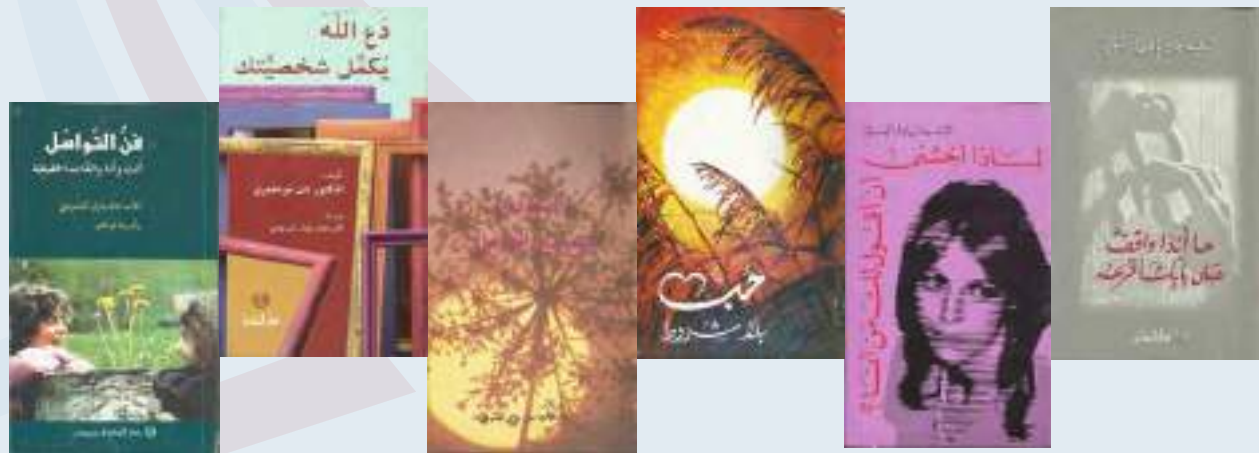
➤ Daqqit qalb (Heart Beat)

By Fr. Fadi Rouhana



➤ They were devoted to prayer; Christian family prayers

By The Assembly of the Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land



➤ Fr. John Joseph Powell book series



Biblical Exhibition:

On Friday 6 September 2019, the Biblical Exhibition was opened in the Story of "Ibn El-Balad" Festival on the grounds of Holy Family parish in Ramallah by influential figures in our country such as H.B. Emeritus Michel Sabbah, representatives of the Prime Minister Office, bishops, priests, nuns, government officials, the police, local institutions, and other legal people. The exhibition lasted until Monday 9 September 2019.

The unique and creative exhibition is considered to be the largest exhibition in the Arab region with



a 220m² space, and was presented for the second time after Lebanon. It narrates the passage of Biblical figures through a consistent timeline beginning from the book of Genesis up till the book of Apocalypse. To illustrate more, the exhibition is divided into four sections, two of which are the Old Testament, while the other two are the New Testament. The first two illustrate the people and events that happened in the Old Testament, and the way that God used to appear to His people either in mountains or deserts. Meanwhile, the last two sections, which are considered to be the most

important ones, explain the time when the people meet Jesus Christ, and how the Word of God was proclaimed to the whole world through the early evangelization until nowadays.

During the four days, the exhibition was able to welcome more than 3000 people from the West Bank and few visitors from Galilee. More than 25 schools visited the educational and spiritual exhibition. The visitors were Christians and non-Christians of different ages; children and youth ages from 8 until 35 years old, families, elders, important figures, priests, nuns, seminarians, and schools.



The exhibition simplified the Old Testament with its diagrams and graphics on the display panels in addition to the explanation the tour guides provided. It also made the Bible and especially the Old Testament easier for believers to read and recognize God's plan of Salvation. Finally, it urged the visitors to reflect and confirm that Palestine is the Land of the Bible, and that these Holy Scriptures are written in the Holy Land.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine The Youth of Jesus' Homeland Financial Report from 01/01/2019 to 31/12/2019

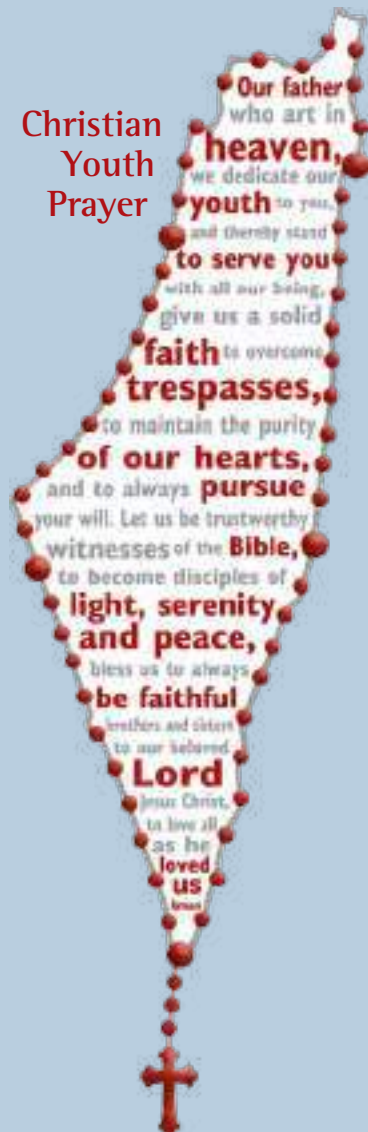
Donations, Contributions & Other Support	CNEWA - Pontifical Mission	\$34,978	
	Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem	\$29,863	
	German Lieutenancy through Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem	\$20,370	
	open doors	\$16,462	
	Luxembourg Lieutenancy through Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem	\$2,181	
	The clerical Society of the Most Holy Trinity	\$2,000	
Total	Other Contributions	\$2,000	\$107,854
Expenses	Youth Services & Expenses	\$72,637	
	Employees' Expenses	\$3,390	
	Legal & Professional Services	\$2,042	
	Utilities Expenses	\$57	
	Communication	\$8,621	
	Stationary & Supplies	\$4,073	
	Occupancy	\$7,653	
	Transportation	\$797	
Total	Financial Aid Expenses	\$199	\$99,469
Net Surplus / Deficit			\$8,385

Note: CNEWA - Pontifical Mission made a belated donation (Which is included above) in the amount of (\$9,991) on Jan.09, 2020 to support 2019 summer camp.

The Story of Ibn Al-Balad Financial Report from 01/01/2019 to 29/02/2020			
Donations, Contributions & Other Support	CNEWA - Pontifical Mission	\$14,987	
	German Lieutenancy through Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem	\$10,000	
	Custody of the Holy land	\$5,000	
	The General Secretariat of Christian Educational Institutions	\$5,000	
	Open Doors	\$3,323	
	PalTel	\$1,704	
	Rosary Sisters - Jerusalem	\$1,413	
	Pharmacare LTD.	\$1,000	
	Ethar Insurance Company	\$992	
	Juhoud Community & Rural Development	\$500	
	Other Contributions	\$1,611	
Total	Income From Entrance Fees	\$5,403	\$50,933
Expenses	Youth Services & Expenses	\$17,779	
	Employees' Expenses	\$226	
	Legal & Professional Services	\$10,688	
	Utilities Expenses	\$936	
	Communication	\$8,213	
	Stationary & Supplies	\$9,299	
	Occupancy	\$16,486	
Total	Transportation	\$57	\$63,683
Net Surplus / Deficit			(\$12,750)
Note: Deficit of (\$12,750) will be covered from the surplus of the Christ The King Bookstore.			

Christ The King Bookstore Financial Report from 01/01/2019 to 31/12/2019			
Donations, Contributions & Other Support			
Donation	Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem	\$29,708	
	The Clerical Society of the Most Holy Trinity	\$1,000	
	Other Contributions	\$132	\$30,840
Sales Income	Sales Revenue	\$145,251	
	Cost of Goods Sold	\$-70,808	\$74,442
Administrative Expenses			
	Youth Services & Expenses*	\$13,084	
	Employees' Expenses	\$31,915	
	Legal & Professional Services	\$2,151	
	Utilities Expenses	\$2,685	
	Communication	\$10,707	
	Stationary & Supplies	\$3,011	
	Occupancy	\$2,257	
	Transportation	\$445	
	Other Expenses	\$973	
	Financial Aid Expenses	\$1,075	\$68,302
Net Surplus / Deficit			\$36,980
*Note: Youth Services & Expenses includes (\$12,750) for closing deficit of The Story of Ibn Al-Balad Festival Project.			

Christian Youth Prayer



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