

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021

*The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine*



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## OUR STORY

The General Secretariat of Christian Youth – Palestine began its mission and work when His Beatitude Patriarch Michel Sabbah, who worked with youth movements in the Middle East and internationally, created a youth movement in the Holy Land in 1964, so work began through parishes under the umbrella of the Council of Catholic Bishops in the Holy Land, and under the supervision and the administration of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

The Youth of Jesus' Homeland consists of 14 members (committee leaders and YJHP administration) and 42 committee members who serve about 3,500 Christian (approximately 7-35 years old) who belong to more than 18 parishes, many Catholic schools and different churches in eight Palestinian governorates.

The youth service was founded, from the beginning, on the apostolic work and volunteering, following the verse "I came that they might have life" (John 10:10) as its motto, out of its belief that the Lord Christ is the giver of life, and he calls us to live it in its entirety so that it is supported by God's word, the sacraments, and Christian values and principles. On this basis, Christian youth will change their lives, and work to spread faith and life to others in the Church and Palestinian society, which will enhance values in them in a way that can be turned into reality in all areas of their lives.

Mission: Empowering the youth by integrating them into society and the church by providing Christian education in all its programs, activities, camps, and programs that YJHP provides.

## قصتنا

بدأت قصتنا عندما وقف غبطة البطريرك ميشيل صباح خبرته في العمل مع حركات الشبابية في الشرق الأوسط والدولية، لخلق حركة شبابية في الأرض المقدسة عام 1964، من خلال العمل في الرعايا تحت مظلة مجلس الأساقفة الكاثوليك في الأرض المقدسة، وتحت متابعة وإدارة بطريركية القدس للآتين. تخدم شبيبة موطن يسوع حوالي 3500 طفل وشباب وفتاة مسيحيين (تتراوح أعمارهم تقريباً بين 7-35 عامًا) حيث ينتمون إلى أكثر من 18 رعية والعديد من المدارس الكاثوليكية وكنائس مختلفة في ثمان محافظات فلسطينية.

تأسست خدمة الشبيبة منذ البداية على العمل الرسولي والتطوع إذ اتخذت من الآية "أَتَيْتُ يَتَّكُونَ نَهْمَ الْحَيَاةِ" (يو 10:10) شعاراً لها، إيماناً منها بأن السيد المسيح هو واهب الحياة، ويدعونا لنعيشها بكاملها بحيث تدعمها كلمة الله والأسرار المقدسة القيم والمبادئ المسيحية. على هذا الأساس سيُغيّر الشباب المسيحي الكاثوليكي حياتهم، وسيعملون على نقل الإيمان والحياة للآخرين في الكنيسة والمجتمع الفلسطيني، مما سيُعزّز القيم فيهم بطريقة يمكن تحويلها إلى واقع في جميع مجالات حياتهم.



**Vision:** Advance the youth in spiritual, humanitarian, and social fields, so that they can be creative in conveying the annunciation.

**Values:** Celebrating and meditating on God's Word in many effective and modern ways. The realistic reading of the Palestinian and church society in which we live in, citizens and children, through specialized people, this creates a healthy environment filled with hope, love and culture to spread a Christian humanitarian message.

### ➤ Goals:

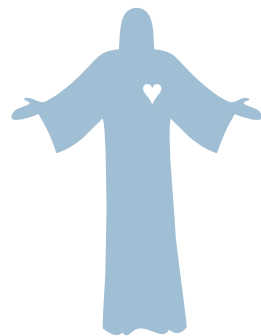
- The sons and daughters of the Youth of Jesus' Homeland – Palestine lives with a conscious and mature faith in front of all people.
- Creating a leading generation that takes responsibility in its community, church, and family.
- Encouraging the youth to work in the spirit of one team, on the example of the first Jerusalem group, "and the group of those who believed..." and working in a spirit of love in order to help in building distinctive Christian families that testify to the presence of God in our lives.
- Encouraging volunteer work and pioneering projects that build and influence the Palestinian community.





## YJHP LOGO

The new logo of The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine was launched in 2019. The Logo consists of four overlapping parts: The Young Jesus, The Cross with The Map of Palestine, The Ship with The Sail, and The Big Circle, and these parts symbolise:



- The Young Jesus: The young man who calls all young men and women to life "I came that you might have life" (John 10:10). Christ is life and calls us to live our lives to the fullest.



- The Ship with The Sail: It symbolises the Church, which invites everyone, especially the young, to board the boat, to accompany Jesus and to participate with him "to walk in the depths" (Luke 5:4).



- The Cross with The Map of Palestine: Immediately behind Jesus appears the Cross of Life, which grants "salvation to all people" (1 Timothy 2:4). The cross is a sign of pain and death, as well as a source of hope, strength and life.



- The Big Circle: It combines all the symbols, like Jesus on the cross, which brings us all together. The circle is always open to everyone. Everyone is equal in it, and its center is Jesus Christ.

## VERSE OF THE YEAR

On December 8, 2020, His Holiness Pope Francis declared 2021, a year dedicated to Saint Joseph, on the occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the proclamation of Saint Joseph, the patron saint of the Church.

The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine "Youth of Jesus' Homeland" chose this year from the words addressed to Saint Joseph by the Lord through the angel, namely: "Get Up, do not be afraid." These words are an appropriate expression for the situation in which the child's divine guardian was living, as we live with almost the same situations, difficulties, challenges and problems. Saint Joseph lived through fear, pain, and lack of understanding



of what was happening with the woman he wanted to marry in order to build a family full of love. What the angel asks of Saint Joseph is the act of resurrection: "Get up," which is an act of command, expressing God's infinite confidence in him, and God's life-giving work in Saint Joseph's life, and this act was used by Jesus himself later in his public life, and it is the same act that was used by Evangelists to express the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

The other words are: "Do not be afraid", an expression of God's love and God's trust in Saint Joseph. God puts all his trust in man asking him to overcome all his fears by taking the Virgin Mary to his home, protecting the child, and naming him "Jesus". Fear is one of the things that makes a person's life complicated and incomprehensible, and he cannot take a single step in a new stage because of his fear. Therefore, the angel asks Saint Joseph not to be afraid, because God is with him, and he will be his shield.

Almost every day in our lives, we talk to people who express their fear and anxiety about many things (which is a general fear). We are also often afraid: we may be afraid of what people think of us, we may be afraid of not having enough money, we may be afraid to express our opinions in certain situations, and there are special fears for each individual such as who is afraid of certain animals, certain insects, fear of failure, and some are afraid of rejection by others, loneliness, darkness, loss of a family member or loved one, illness, pain or even death!

We all need God's peace in the midst of the stresses in our lives. But how many times is the word fear mentioned in the Bible? "Do not be afraid!" It is the most frequent thing in the Bible. In fact, it has been said there are 365 "Don't be afraid!" In the Bible, the commandment "Do not be afraid" was said once for every day of the year! God always wants us to feel reassured, so He tells us this reassuring word: "Do not be afraid!"

Dear Youth, God calls us as He called Joseph. He loves us as He loved Joseph. He strengthens us as he strengthened Joseph. He calls us not to be afraid. He asks us to Get Up, to leave the past and our fears and move forward.

Let us be the act of resurrection, as Jesus did!

Let us be courageous, as is the gift of the Holy Spirit!

And let us chant out loud: "We are youth who are not afraid, and with the resurrection we will win."

## ANNUAL ACTIVITIES

### Renewing The Promise

Here we are again, The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine "Youth of Jesus' Homeland" renewing the promise of the members of the General Secretariat and Committees for Christian Youth in Palestine for the year 2021, "the last year of the current General Secretariat" by holding a mass at the Holy Family Church - Ramallah. The Mass was presided over by His Beatitude Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. During the festive mass, the General Chaplain, Fr. Bashar Fawadleh, and the General Secretary, Mr. Rafi Ghattas, along with the rest of the General Secretariat's members renewed the promise. After that, the General Secretary appointed the members of the committees who fulfilled the promise of service in the General Secretariat of Youth.





At the end of the Holy Mass, the General Secretary of The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine, Mr. Rafi Ghattas, gave a speech in which he presented the most important achievements of the General Secretariat during the past two years, then addressed his words to His Beatitude the Patriarch, saying:

"Young people are not the future, but the present of the Church today, and they alone will determine the future of the Church in Palestine." He asked the Patriarch to rely on the Youth of Jesus' Homeland and to give them a real role in the Church. The mass ended with the announcement of the verse of the year derived from the words of the angel to Saint Joseph, who said to him: "Get up, do not be afraid," in line with the declaration of the Supreme Pontiff to dedicate this year to Saint Joseph the righteous.

Before the Holy Mass, the Patriarch met with the members of The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine. In the meeting, the General secretariat fully explained its role, work and structure. In turn, the Patriarch expressed his admiration and praised the work of the General Secretariat in Palestine, stressing that this meeting is just the beginning of meetings dedicated to young people in the near future. During the discussion that took place between the members of the General Secretariat and His Beatitude, he indicated that the church sometimes talks about matters far from the youth, while the Christian youth in Palestine is the one that touches the reality of the local youth, stressing: "YJHP is the link between the Church and Christian youth in Palestine." He added: "Today we need leaders from the secular youth to be present in all aspects of the church. They are



the ones who touch the reality of the youth." He added: "The church does not consist of consecrated persons and clergy only, but they are here to serve the parish and together they form the church and youth are the living pulse of this church."

After the Holy Mass, His Beatitude, the Patriarch met with the members of YJHP and its committees, who presented him with a summary of the most prominent challenges and problems facing Christian youth in Palestine, and presented their most prominent demands and opinions on solutions, and its implementation despite all the obstacles, especially those related to the Israeli occupation, stressing that: "Christian youth have the right to live in dignity and freedom, and they must obtain their rights in various ways. He also said: "The Church bears its responsibility towards youth and families, as it always works to create possible opportunities and provide needs." Spiritual and materialistic for all the children of its parishes, but the church will not be able to provide all the needs alone, but the youth of the church must provide aid and initiatives for the success of the church's work in society." After the meeting with His Beatitude ended, they had lunch with all the members, and after that, the General Secretariat for Christian Youth in Palestine completed its internal work to prepare for the rest of the 2021 activities, especially the Lent activities.

The next day, on February 27, the General Secretariat met with Fr. Jamal Daibes and then with Mr. Maghnam Ghannam to discuss the strategies that the General Secretariat will work on and follow in its next work.



# ANNUAL ACTIVITIES

## Lent Activities



The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine annually organizes activities during Lent for all groups (Children, Elementary, Secondary, University, and Workers), but this year because of the spread of the pandemic, Lent Activities this year were limited to university and working groups.

### ► University Group

On April 16, 2021, the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine "Youth of Jesus' Homeland-Palestine" held an activity for the university group on foot in Wadi Qana near the village of Deir Istiya. The activity was titled "Now is the time," which aims to live the experience of the saints through the experiences they went through. These experiences motivate young people to face the challenges they face, by relying on the Lord without fear, because it is time for us to allow the hand of the Lord to touch our lives and heal us. Where 120 young men and boys from different parishes participated in this activity.



The activity began with the Holy Mass, which was presided over by Fr. Remon Haddad, Fr. Bashar Fawadleh, and the Deacon Wajdi Shawahneh. The General Chaplain of the General Secretariat, Fr. Bashar Fawadleh, said in his sermon: "Now is the time for us to live in the present moment and to leave what is behind us and move forward, and we have to open



our hearts so that the love of God grows in it and to let it be reflected in our relationship with others.

Then the route started with the tour guide, Saed Shomali, and the university committee, who organized five different stations during the route focused on identifying the lives of some saints and the difficulties they faced and how they faced them.

It included discussions and sharing of life experiences, with meditative pauses between the distinctive Palestinian nature. Deacon Wajdi Sahawneh, Deacon Ramez Twal, Deacon Louis Suleiman and Deacon Nadim Giacaman participated in exchanging with the youth their spiritual experiences and some challenges they went through and are still in their lives towards the priesthood. At the end, the leader of the university committee summarized all the ideas of the activity and linked it to the life of Saint Joseph, the righteous one, to whom the youth is dedicated this year, in line with the announcement of His Holiness Pope Francis at the beginning of this year.

### ► Workers Group

On April 9, 2021, the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine "Youth of Jesus' Homeland-Palestine" held for the first time after the spread of the Coronavirus, an activity for the working group on foot from the shrine of the Prophet Musa to Ain Al-Fashkha, and it was titled "Hand in Hand", with the participation of nearly 80 young people and boys from different parishes.



The activity began with a welcome speech and some ice breaking games in the parish of The Good Shepherd – Jericho. Then everyone celebrated the Holy Mass, which was presided over by the General Chaplain of YJHP, Fr. Bashar Fawadleh, and the General Chaplain assistant, Fr. Remon Haddad. In the sermon, the General Chaplain addressed the youth, saying: "We have an inner blessing, and it is the kingdom of God implanted within us, and this can be lived by getting to know Jesus, who walks with us "hand in hand" despite the difficulties, diseases, trials and epidemics we face. To be responsible for my freedom and to make God's presence active in society and the world."

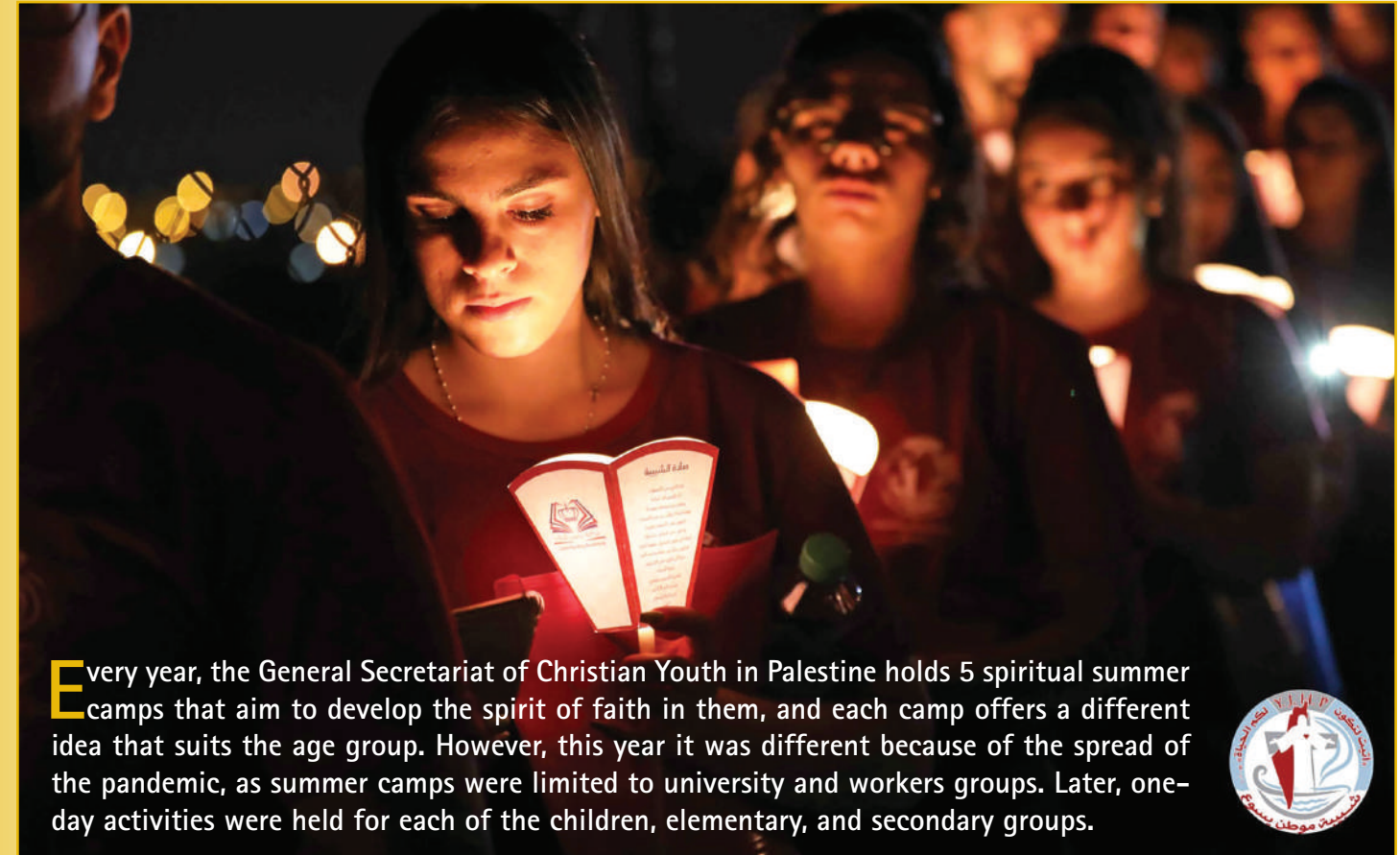
During the activity, there were discussions, in which the participants participated in their life experiences and the challenges they face, especially in the labour market. Then, the General Secretary Rafi Ghattas addressed a speech to the participants, stressing that the role of Christian youth should not be confined to the corridors of the church and its institutions only, but the most important role lies outside it, within society with all its spectrums, for Christian youth to live the true meaning of the salt of the earth and to be true witnesses in Jesus' Homeland.

Then the youth lived a unique experience with Christ by walking and reading the stations of the cross in the middle of the desert. Christ walked through hardships and difficulties to reach Mount Calvary. The activity ended with the end of the path down from the Dead Sea overlooking the area to Al-Fakhsha area, to end the meeting in the Latin Monastery of Jericho.



## ANNUAL ACTIVITIES

### Summer Camps and Activities



Every year, the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine holds 5 spiritual summer camps that aim to develop the spirit of faith in them, and each camp offers a different idea that suits the age group. However, this year it was different because of the spread of the pandemic, as summer camps were limited to university and workers groups. Later, one-day activities were held for each of the children, elementary, and secondary groups.





## ► Children Group

On Sep. 10, 2021, the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine "Youth of Jesus' Homeland-Palestine" held an activity for children entitled "Shipment of Love" that held in the Church of the Redeemer - Taybeh. which bears the verse "There is no greater love than this: that a person sacrifices himself for the sake of his loved ones" and where About 120 participants participated in it.

The activity began with a Holy mass presided over by the General Chaplain, Fr. Bashar Fawadleh, and the General Chaplain Assistant, Fr. Remon Haddad. Fr. Bashar indicated that we always need love in our lives and that the most appropriate place to fill our hearts with love is Jesus Christ; The place where love springs. After that, the participants were divided into two groups that included games on puffers, and part with Sister Mona Totah, in which she touched on the story of the birth of the Virgin Mary and her life with her parents.

The program included various games and challenges among the parishes, in which the parish of Ramallah deservedly won. The meeting ended with the celebration of the birthday of the Virgin Mary, which falls on the eighth of September. Through the celebration, the children released helium balloons towards the sky, carrying their requests and messages to the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary, who gave us her love, Our beloved Saviour, who himself loved her to the most.



## ► Elementary Group

On August 27, the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine held a for the elementary group at the Church of the Virgin, Sultana Al-Salam - Birzeit that entitled "You can get in my heart" with the participation of 130 participants. The activity began with the Holy mass, which was presided over by Fr. Louis Salman, with the participation of Fr. Nadim Giacaman, Fr. Bashar Fawadleh and Fr. Remon Haddad. He explained in his sermon the importance and benefit of having Jesus in our hearts, and in order to get him in our hearts we must be: "Most humble children, and we must show the love of Jesus present in my heart, as the preparatory instructed: "We are witnesses of Christ, and messengers of him, and we must bear fruit for him, for when we sow love, we shall reap love."

Later, a court was held in which the accused of Satan was the cartoon character Zaytoun, and he was accused of the following charges: Freedom; It is inanimate and not free - time; His time is not devoted to God - friendships; bad friends - sin; He is a sinner, how should he be close to God? Sister Shatha Haddadin shared with us how to understand and live with these charges that we can live with today; she said that "everything has a time, and every matter under heaven has a time", and that sin keeps us away from the heart of Jesus, but that does not mean surrender, but "in weakness lies strength". God strengthens us in the midst of our problems, and therefore we must keep Jesus in our heart, and choose distinguished friends to





walk with in our relationship with God. Then the participants were divided into teams to participate in various paragraphs represented by religious, cultural, and entertainment information. The meeting ended with a games part, and in the end, Zeitoun and Sister Shatha emphasised that our hearts remain open to Jesus and that we are always ready to live joyfully with Him.

### ➤ Secondary Group

On Sep 12, The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine "Youth of Jesus' Homeland" held its last summer activity for a secondary group entitled "60 minutes", which was held at Christ the Redeemer Parish - Taybeh, where nearly 180 participants from various parishes participated. The activity started with the gathering of the participants and playing some icebreakers so that participants from parishes engage with each other. Then, Ms. Yara Zayed presented a meeting aimed at regulating the time of the youth in secondary school, and the challenges they face in the age of internet and peer pressure. After that, participants were divided into teams for a bible competition in which teams were tested on their knowledge of the bible.

At midday, everyone participated in the Holy Mass that was presided over by the Vice of the General Chaplain of the youth, Fr. Remon Haddad, and Fr. Nadeem Giacaman. This was followed by a spiritual meeting with the General Chaplain, Fr. Bashar Fawadleh titled "No Filter" where he spoke about the tough challenges that the Christian youth at their age experience in this world and he gave his advice on how to face them.



After lunch, participants were divided into parishes to play games and each parish competed against the other in a fun and playful atmosphere followed by a small meditation and a thanks to God for all his blessings and gifts that he has granted us. At the end of the day, small gifts were handed out as a memory of this day.

### ➤ University Group

On August 4, the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine "Youth of Jesus' Homeland" set up its camp for the university group "My Faith x 7", which lasted for 4 days in The Cremisan Monastery - Bethlehem, where nearly 80 participants from various parishes participated. The camp dealt with the subject of the sacrament in detail and touched upon how the Christian youth live these sacraments in their lives and persevere in this Christian faith. The camp began with the Holy Mass, which was presided over by Fr. Bashar Fawadleh, who spoke in his sermon about the importance of the sacrament in our lives and how to work with them. The committee was able to get the camp's goal through meetings and panel discussions on some verses from the Holy Bible and evenings that took place in the "Taizé" manner.

During the camp, the General Secretariat hosted Mrs. Nelly Faddoul - a trainer certified by the International Board in Human Development - who began her meeting with a contemplative spiritual and then began her talk with a meeting to enable young people to know and appreciate themselves, in addition to their view of values and beliefs and their impact on life outcomes, and shed light on Highlight their



roles in life and know their mission and goal to achieve happiness. Then the participants visited the winery to learn more about the monastery.

The General Secretariat also hosted the deacon Ibrahime Bolus in this camp to hear the life experiences that the youth lived in the camp. During this meeting, he held panel discussions to discuss life matters and priorities in our lives and evaluation moments for the camp. Finally, the camp ended with a Holy mass presided over by Fr. Bashar Fawadleh and he ended his sermon with the phrase "My Faith"  $\times 7 =$  I am a believer and a student." At the end of his speech, he thanked the participants for the commitment and the university committee for the effort expended in the camp, asking God to reap the fruits of this camp in their daily lives.

### ► Workers Group

The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine "Youth of Jesus' Homeland" held its first camp for workers in the Cremisan Monastery – Beit Jala for 4 days from 20 to 23 July, entitled "Now to Where?" with the participation of more than 70 participants from all the parishes of Jesus' Homeland. "Hala Lewin" camp aims to guide the young man and develop the spirit of faith in him. The camp began with the Divine Liturgy, which was presided over by the spiritual guide, Father Bashar Fawadleh, who, in his sermon, linked the idea of immigration with the twelfth chapter of Genesis in the story of God's call to Abraham. Then, Deacon Abdullah gave a simple introduction to the idea of the camp for this year. During the camp, the idea of the camp was explained through meetings and evenings in the life of the Virgin Mary, who faced difficulties, but she was confident in God's will, and also through



the hours of prostration, and panels that revolve around our reality and current conditions, in addition to panel discussions on several topics, including abortion, uterine lending, embryo transplantation, sex determination, euthanasia and many other topics presented by Deacon Abdallah Dababneh. In this camp, the General Secretariat hosted Mr. Joseph Hazboun, Director of the Pontifical Mission Office in Jerusalem, gave a lecture entitled "Our History in Palestine", pointing out the importance of our presence in this land and the importance of proving our presence in this land. General Secretary Rafi Ghattas also presented a panel discussion entitled "Rebellious and Christian", stressing also the importance of our presence. Later, Mrs. Nelly Abu Aita shared with us her life experience through which she sent positive energy, joy and hope in us and said: "We must not choose while we are afraid, we must choose with love."

Mrs. Joumana Kaplanian talked about love and self-esteem, up to the topic of "My Relationship with God" presented by Sister Maryam Baabish through meditation on the Bible. On the last day, Father Issa Thaliya gave a meeting about love and religion. The camp ended with a Holy Mass presided over by Father Bashar Fawadleh, where he focused his sermon on: "Our relationship with the Lord "Now to Where" is always joy, and the living Jesus is the source of our joy" and with every pain there is new joy, new hope "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4) And so the camp ended with the question, "Now To Where?" Now is the time for joy, for love, for trust that God's hands are with us in every time and place and that His will is stronger than human will.



# CHRIST THE KING EVENTS



## Children Group

The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine, "The Youth of Jesus' Homeland" celebrated the Feast of Jesus the King for the Children Group entitled "The Kingdom's Ambassador" on November 5, 2021 at the Church of the Good Shepherd - Jericho. The celebration began with the arrival of the participants and the receipt of the passports of the "Jesus' Homeland Country Palestine" for the celebration of this day, and after entering the "Jesus' Homeland International Airport," the more than 350 participants from all parishes were divided into several teams, each with the name of its own Gate. Then, after preparing to travel, "the planes took off" towards different countries and the children entered the Terra Sancta school building to roam between the classes, which was in each classroom the embodiment of a different country.



During their visit to the countries, two things were focused on, the first is the features of this country and its connection to Christian history, and the second is a detailed explanation of the Holy Mass, including its significance and stages, and all the details related to the establishment of the Divine Sacrifice. At the end of the visit in each country, the participants would go to stamp their passports and stick the flag and some of the country's landmarks on the passport that was made specially for this trip.

After completing all the journeys and returning everyone to the land of "Jesus Homeland International Airport", everyone ate lunch, and then the last flight took off.

The audience sat on the plane seats and fastened their belts, then the last trip to travel to the Kingdom began through the play "The Kingdom's Ambassador" starring Rama Shomali, Rafi Ghattas, Boulos Joakim, and Karam Shalian, which revolves around the idea of school students who dream of being ambassadors when they grow up and the journey begins to search for The country that could receive them will eventually reach them with an invitation from a kingdom "not of this world" asking them to be ambassadors for it, so they conclude that it is a personal invitation from Jesus the King and they answer the call. This trip ended with a special show with the clowns Sesame and Zaatar, who in turn talked about the idea of belonging to the Kingdom in a comic and purposeful framework.





## Elementary and Secondary Groups

The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine "The Youth of Jesus' Homeland" celebrated the Feast of Jesus the King for elementary and secondary groups under the title "It Needs Update" on Nov 12, 2021 at Convention Palace in Bethlehem with the participation of more than 900 from all parishes. The celebration opened with the Palestinian national anthem and youth prayer, in addition to a group of hymns. After the reception, the activity began with Sister Mona Totah of the St. Joseph Congregation, who touched on the importance of the presence of Jesus the King in the life of the Christian youth, through whom we can live the kingdom of the Lord of glory in a heavenly way, emphasising what Jesus said about himself: "My kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36) that when the kingdom turns to serve the people, then lies salvation. The Lord Christ loves us even with our sins, and teaches us that love brings true happiness.

After the introduction with Sister Mona, the humorous play "Hey Siri" started by General Secretary Rafi Ghattas, Cecilia Kajo, and Fadi Touma, which spoke in a humorous way about the children of this generation's attachment to social networking applications, their addiction to them, and their belief that life stops at their personal pages. The plot of the play is the appearance of "Siri" in the form of a girl who discusses the young man about his activity on social networking sites, and in the end,



they pray that the young man needs an "update" in his personal and spiritual life, and this update works through the sacrament of reconciliation with Jesus Christ. After this play, they received the King of Kings Jesus Christ incarnated within the sacrament of the Eucharist and lived the most sacred moments with the presence of the Eucharist in their midst. Then the Holy Mass began, which was presided over by Fr. Remon Haddad, Fr. Bashar Fawadleh, Fr. Khaled Qamar and Fr. Nadim Giacaman. Fr. Bashar's sermon focused on the importance of the presence and renewal of four elements in our Christian life, namely baptism, prayer, love, and tolerance, through which the Christian youth can make Jesus live in his heart and walk with him towards monarchy.

At the end of the Holy Mass, Mr. Rafi Ghattas, gave a speech in which he focused on the importance of the youth presence in the church and directed his words to the elementary and secondary groups: "You are our youth's army and the fuel of our continuity. After lunch, Mrs. Sherihan Al-Hadwa was a guest on the stage to share in a humorous way her experience of living blind in our society, inspired by the verse of the year for Christian youth: "Get up, do not be afraid." In the end, the celebration ended with the artist Amjad Khair amid a great interaction from the participants.





## University and Workers Groups

The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine celebrated the feast of Jesus the King for both university and workers groups, entitled "Christ on Board" on Nov 19, 2021. This celebration started from Terra Sancta School in Bethlehem, where 600 participants of the youth gathered from all the homeland of Jesus Palestine, from Galilee and the Middle to Jerusalem and the West Bank, and they began to energise by dancing on YJHP's hymns, then the audience was divided into several groups, and the panel discussions revolved around some verses from the Bible that simulate the youth and their relationship and association with Jesus and His Holy Church. Then, all the participants went to the Church of St. Catherine to celebrate the Holy Mass, which was presided over by His Beatitude Patriarch Pierbattista Pizzaballa, whose Beatitude appointed the members of the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine, after accepting the resignation of the previous secretariat, which served for three years.



In the decree, which was read by the spiritual guide of the youth, Fr. Bashar Fawadleh, during the Ceremonial Mass in the Church of the Nativity, His Beatitude announced that Mrs. Nadine Bitar Abu Sahliah will serve as General Secretary and Miss Caroline Diab will be The Vice General Secretary for the next session, which will last for 3 years. This ceremonial mass, which was presided over by His Beatitude the Patriarch, accompanied by His Eminence Bishop William Shomali, His Eminence Bishop Paul Marketsso, and a group of priests and deacons, was attended by about 600 young men and women from all of historic Palestine. In his sermon, His Beatitude the Patriarch said that this youth gathering, whose main goal is Jesus Christ, makes us proud of the church's youth, adding: "We have to be affiliated, responsible, and committed to Jesus Christ, the Church, and others, so that our service is stable and not fleeting, so that we can truly live the kingdom of Christ on earth." His Beatitude also thanked what was presented by the previous General Secretariat, especially during the pandemic, saying: "This work of yours was a consolation to me, and this work must continue and grow, as it encourages us adults and gives us a boost of hope and energy, which makes you learn in





pastoral work because The Christian way of appearing, and shining is to serve with humility and love." After the Holy Mass in the Church of the Nativity ended, everyone went to the Conference Palace to complete the activity with great joy. There, the resigned General Secretary Rafi Ghattas announced the launch of the new website of the General Secretariat and added that the Youth Application (YJHP) would soon be launched and would be available on all mobile devices.

Then, Mr. Rafi Ghattas officially announced the end of the role of the General Secretariat in its current session and officially handed over the service of the position of General Secretary to Mrs. Nadine Bitar Abu Sahliah, who in turn gave a speech in which she thanked all the former members and spoke about her experience and ambitions that the General Secretariat for Christian Youth in Palestine would like to achieve. She sent a message to all the participants and told them: "Be strong with every experience you cross and create a message from it."

Then the daughter of the youth, Ronza Halawa, shared the experience of her victory over cancer, which she was able to overcome despite all the obstacles. She said: "Be strong in every experience you cross and create a message from it." She talked about how she went through an experience while she adhered to Christ and recalled the life of the apostles who adhered to the gospel and the message despite all the difficulties they faced at the time. She added that the disease made her realize the true blessings that Jesus the King gave her, which in turn made her triumph over this malignant disease. The celebration reached its peak on the stage of the Conferences Palace with the play, where it spoke about a ship abandoned by the captain and gave



the helm of leadership to those on it, promising them that he would come back. When they started to compete for leadership, then things started to become clear to the viewers in a humorous way, so the play talks about the division between the Eastern and Western Church and its consequences for the life of the ship, which represents the role of the Church. Then the Doban Dance Troupe from Jerusalem presented an amazing performance in which they presented dances that expressed the human diversity that the city of Jerusalem embraced hundreds of years ago. It is mentioned that these dances are part of the "Salal" show. The central celebration was ended when all members of the former and current General Secretariat came on the stage, participating in the hymns of the youth of YJHP, and they threw a large globe among the participants, which was moving on the grandstand among all the youth members, in an indication that the Christian youth can move the world and affect it through its service, its presence and its faith.





## APPOINTMENT OF A NEW GENERAL SECRETARIAT

“3 YEARS ARE DONE!”

On November 19<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Rafi Ghattas announced the end of the current session of the General Secretariat after completing three years. The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine renews and appoints a new General Secretariat every 3 years. Thus, Mr. Rafi Ghattas officially announced the end of the role of the General Secretariat in its current session and officially handed over the service of the position of General Secretary to Mrs. Nadine Bitar–Abu Sahlih, during the celebration of Christ the King for the university and working groups “Christ on Board”. During the meeting, His Beatitude Patriarch Pierbattista Pizzaballa appointed the members of the Secretariat of the General Secretary of Christian Youth in Palestine after accepting the resignation of the previous secretariat, which served for three years, represented by its General Secretary, Mr. Rafi Ghattas, and his Vice General Secretary, Ms. Mira Khader. Then, His Beatitude announced in the decree that the General Chaplain of the General Secretariat, Fr. Bashar Fawadleh, read during the ceremonial mass in the Church of Nativity, that Mrs. Nadine Bitar Abu Sahlih will serve as General Secretary and Miss Caroline Diab will be Vice General Secretary for the next three years. At the end of the mass, the resigned General Secretary, Rafi Ghattas, gave a word of thanks in which he focused on the importance of work and volunteering within the church field, especially in the youth, and said:



### MR. RAFI GHATTAS

First of all, I thank the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave us the opportunity to gather in this holy place, this place that witnessed the birth of salvation for the entire world. Exactly three years ago, I received an official decision from His Beatitude the Patriarch to appoint me as a General Secretary of The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine “Youth of Jesus’ Homeland”. At first glance, the decision was difficult, I was still in the fourth year of university, and I had plans and projects like any student at the door of graduation, and the question I asked myself was: Why me and why now? I am at a crossroads in practical and academic life, so why this choice? And between hesitation and confusion, the Bible was my answer, and I was then able to understand that God’s call to his humble servant, I accepted and

walked in these three years, and here I am finishing it now in front of everyone, and I say it frankly: During these years, I learned more than I knew, I was affected more than I influenced, and I changed more than I changed, I thank my Lord for this choice, and I hope that I have responded to the call as required, for every success is due to the Holy Spirit who works in us, and for every failure or default, I take responsibility and apologise for it.

During the first year of my service, we launched our new name, which was the result of years of thinking and work among many, which is “Youth of Jesus’ Homeland – Palestine” a name that has become a slogan and a way of our life, a name that we were able to spread in all parts of Palestine, so it became a title for Christian youth in this holy land, the home of Jesus.

Today, I complete these few pages of volunteering and service within the church field, and I live with the utmost pride in the affiliation that I planted in me first, and I tried to cultivate it within our youth.

And I had a dream that I saw far away, and God showed me it today soon. In my first word when I was appointed, I said that I dreamed we would gather as young people from all of Palestine from its sea to its river and from its north to its



south, and here we are today meeting youth from Galilee, the West Bank and Jerusalem in one place to renew the promise of survival for the reign of our King Jesus Christ ... but the heart remains incomplete, and the pain remains the master of the situation. With the absence of the youth of Jesus' homeland from Gaza due to the occupation's siege on our beloved sector, we continue to pray for them and salute them from the Nativity Church in the hope that we will meet soon, and Palestine has been liberated from this painful occupation.

My beloved brothers and sisters,

It is said that it is courageous for a person to give up a position he loved and worked hard for, but this courage is really painful, I lived the most beautiful moments of my life that I will not forget as long as I live, and that was due to our beloved God first and thanks to you secondly, and today I hand this precious trust to you who deserve it well, Mrs. Nadine Bitar - Abu Sahlieh, I pray for you and I am sure that the Holy Spirit will complete his work with us through you and we are all always in service.

Now, allow me to thank some people who were instrumental in the success of this era of the General Secretariat. First of all, your beatitude, I would like to express my gratitude for the trust you gave me during these three years. Thank you for everything and thank you for your support, and let me say again: we "The Youth" are the army of this church, we are the hope, the present and the future of the Christians in the Holy Land, and we don't want to be the last generation of the living stones in Jesus' Homeland, so your beatitude it is the time to work hardly with us and to give us the support to save our church.



Our Fr. Bashar, our brother, our friend and our guide, thank you for your great faith in the work of youth, thank you for your patience and endurance, and thank you for being a role model for us in the love of giving and in adhering to our church and our country despite all difficulties

Fr. Remon Haddad, the supportive person behind the scenes who always advises us and is jealous of our work and appreciates all our work. You were my dear brother and friend, so thank you for your great love.

Ms. Mira Khader and Mrs. Natalie Abdullah Shaheen, we started this journey together and formed the best group. We supported each other. We gave our time and our lives to serve this youth. Many times, our energy was drained,

but our Lord encouraged us. Thank you for your unlimited and continuous support in the life of our youth. I would like to thank my family, my mother, my father and my brothers, who have endured with me throughout the past three years. Anyone who volunteers in the church knows that his relationship with his family becomes only on occasions and his house turns into a place to sleep only, so you can imagine how my life was at home during the three years, thank you for your continuous support and I would like to give you good news from here, the situation will not change. Unfortunately, I will remain in the same situation, because the work of the youth will not stop.

Let me give a special thanks to every priest, monk, sister and deacon who has been credited with the success of our youth. You cannot imagine how we are encouraged in you and strengthened through you, our prayers and we also pray to you until our Lord proves you with your message.

I would like to thank the youth of my parish, the youth of Saint Francis of Beit Hanina, in whom I grew up, grew up and developed in the church, and through whom I learned the meaning of belonging to the youth, and who brought me to where I am today.



And the biggest and last thanks go to my second family, to the people who love and adore them, to the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine "The Youth of Jesus' Homeland." When we talk about family, we mean it, with all the difficulties and challenges we went through, but we were able to achieve what was impossible. So, special thanks to all YJHP members and its committees, to the former general secretaries, to all the donors, and to all the people who prefer their names stay behind the scenes.

Without you, all this work would not have been possible...

I hope I didn't forget anyone, and I would like to end by saying:

O Lord, deliver us from evil. Long live and long live Palestine, Jesus' Homeland.

Youth of Jesus' homeland are ready all the time and our youth with Jesus will not pass away.

This Festive mass, which was presided over by His Beatitude the Patriarch, accompanied by His Eminence Bishop William Shomali, His Eminence Bishop Paul Marketso and a group of priests and deacons, which was attended by about 600 youth from all of historical Palestine, took place in St. Catherine's Church in the second part of the celebration of Christ The King. In his sermon, His Beatitude the Patriarch said that this youth gathering, whose main goal is Jesus Christ, makes us proud of the church's youth, adding: "We have to be affiliated, responsible, and committed to Jesus Christ, the Church, and others, so that our service is stable and not fleeting, so that we can truly live the kingdom of Christ on earth." His Beatitude also thanked what was presented by the previous General Secretariat, especially during the period of closures as a result of the pandemic, saying: "This work of yours was a consolation to me, and this work must continue and grow, as it encourages us adults and gives us a boost of hope and energy, which makes you learn in pastoral work Because the Christian way of appearing and shining is to serve with humility and love."

Then, Mr. Rafi Ghattas officially announced the end of the role of the General Secretariat in its current session and officially handed over the service of the position of Secretary-General to Mrs. Nadine Bitar Abu Sahliah, who in turn gave a speech in which she thanked all the former members and the previous administration and reviewed her experience within the General Secretariat, which began in 2014 where she felt from the first meeting with belonging to the Christian youth. And she said:



## MRS. NADINE BITAR

My large family, the youth of the homeland of Jesus, there is no word that can describe my pride in being part of this effective church entity by protecting the greatest throne of my kings, the throne of Jesus the King who gave us the authority to carry his message every day of our lives and to always stay on his covenant. Each one of us is called to the sacred service, each one of us is as much a part of this service, each person completes this body so that we may become an integrated and affiliated youth. In the beginning, all thanks and gratitude to God, who called me this invitation to serve the church and the believers. This service that always renews our love and belonging to the universal Church.

Let me also give special thanks to all the members of the previous secretariat, headed by General Secretary Rafi Ghattas, Vice General Secretary Mira Khader, General Chaplain Fr. Bashar Fawadleh and the General Chaplain Assistant Fr. Remon Haddad for the confidence they gave me to complete a successful journey witnessed by the entire archdiocese until the voice of the youth of Jesus' Homeland reached neighbouring countries. I pray to God to be my helper and for the Holy Spirit to use us all in proclaiming the kingdom.

I am happy to be in a church that supports the role of women in church service. My dream was as a little girl who lived in the Christian neighbourhood within the walls of the city of Jerusalem. It is the same neighbourhood from which Saint Marie-Alphonsine came out, whose feast the church celebrates today. I carried my dream and walked a long road that was difficult and easy, tired and relaxed, but all the time it was fun. I met Fr. Bashar in 2014, and he started his youth service journey. One meeting with the young people was enough to make me feel that I belong to this group, just as Jesus said: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." The love that united us in 2014 planted in me the passion of love for youth that continued until I came to stand here in front of you today as General Secretary of the Youth of Jesus' Homeland, which showed me the love of Jesus and accompanied my journey abroad when I am



specialising in studying "Christian Youth Service" in America, until I returned to the land of holiness. On this occasion, allow me to thank Fr. Bashar Fawadleh, who accompanied my educational journey step by step for six years. My dream is coming true, especially in the youth, women have an important role. In 2016, General Secretary Rawan Zahran was the first woman who held this position, and now, thanks to the confidence of the previous secretariat, today I stand in front of you to continue the journey from my dear brother Rafi Ghattas.

I hope to see the youth of Jesus' homeland in every home, school, and parish. Our young men and women carry the banner of the country of Jesus Christ, with love, and bear witness to his word and message. My dream is to see the Bible in its rightful place, in our hands. We aspire to reach every young man and woman who has been pushed away from their faith by the pressures of life. Today we are gathered from all parts of Jesus' homeland, from the far north to the far south. From Bethlehem we send a message with one voice.

The time has come for us to be one hand, subservient to one shepherd, the son of our country, Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of lords. The time has come for us to be one youth belonging to its Christian faith first, then the church and the country. The time has come for us to be stars in our service, just like the Christmas star, directing the universe towards Christ. The time has come for us to be like olive trees in the Church of Gethsemane, rooted in our land and witnesses to our Saviour Jesus Christ.

**The Youth of Jesus' Homeland, we are ready all the time.**



## 2021 APPOINTMENTS



From that day, the work of the new members of YJHP who were appointed for the upcoming three years based on the decree that was read by Fr. Bashar Fawadleh which was as follows has just started.

- General chaplain ➤ Fr. Bahsar Fawadleh
- General Secretariat ➤ Mrs. Nadine Bitar – Abusahlia
- Vice General chaplain ➤ Fr. Remon Haddad
- Vice General Secretariat ➤ Ms. Karoleen Diab
- Middle East Coordinator ➤ Mr. Rafi Ghattas
- Secretariat ➤ Ms. Rasha Odeh
- Workers Committee Leader ➤ Ms. Helda Zayed
- University Committee Leader ➤ Ms. Sandi Daibes
- Secondary Committee Leader ➤ Mr. Fadi Touma
- Elementary Committee Leader ➤ Ms. Faten Isayed
- Children Committee Leader ➤ Ms. Rana Massis
- Prayer Committee Leader ➤ Mr. Charlie Batarseh
- Media Committee Leader ➤ Mr. Salem Abdallah
- Coordination and Service Committee Leader ➤ Mr. Loai Bshariah.



# 2021 Activities and Achievements

## ► Bible Competition

The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine held a Bible competition during Lent in which 100 people participated through social media. The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine always aims to develop its members spiritually and teach them God's words. This competition aimed to encourage young people to read the Bible during Lent. Recently, fasting has become just a routine or an old annual habit, and it has begun to lose its essence and value, especially among youth. Based on its awareness of this dangerous situation and its knowledge that fasting without praying and without reading God's word does not work and does not yield, The General Secretary wanted to motivate young people to dive into God's words by holding this competition. Where the young people were given the time to read the entire Gospel of St. Mark, and at the end of Lent, the competition was held on social media.

After its completion, the winners of the competition were announced. Zain Khouryeh won first place, three people won second place; Raed Sherida, Bishara Sherida, Francis Sherida, Basil Khoury and Grace Khoury in third place, and Jessica Saadeh in fourth place. Several prizes were distributed to the winners of the four places: smartwatch for first place, the Last Supper sculpture for second place, and Bluetooth headphones for third and fourth places.



## ► Parishes Visits

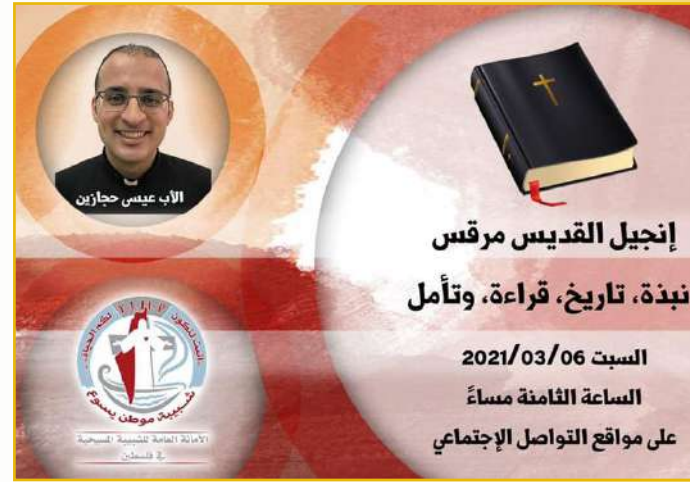
The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine is always interested in building good relationships with parishes. The parishes have the greatest role in the youth's development, it is the biggest supporter and first assistant of the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in its role that it provides to the youth. In January, the General Secretariat administration visited the priests of the Latin and Roman Catholic parishes and the Franciscans. During the meeting, they talked about the work of the General Secretariat, its role, what it offers to its youth, its service, and the slogan of the youth of Jesus' Homeland. After that, the General Secretariat talked about the needs of the parishes and the recommendations that it requests from the General Secretariat in order to be implemented. The General Secretariat emphasised that there should always be joint cooperation between parish priests and parishes with the General Secretariat, as this cooperation plays a major role in developing and improving the service that is provided by the General Secretariat.





## ► Get to Know More About the Gospel of Mark

On March 6, 2021 at eight o'clock in the evening, The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine organised a special meeting via social media with Fr. Issa Hijazin, priest of Our Lady of Fatima Parish -Beit Sahour, and the Bible teacher at Latin Patriarchal Seminary. In this zoom meeting, he talked about the Gospel of St. Mark. During this valuable meeting, many questions were answered: Who is Saint Mark? What was his role in the early church? When did he write his gospel and why? What distinguishes the Gospel of St. Mark from others? How do we read the Bible correctly and how do we meditate on its texts? Fr. Issa Hijazin distinguished himself in his answers to these questions, besides to some questions posed by participants and viewers.



## ► Evening with Saint Joseph

On March 19, on the occasion of the feast of Saint Joseph, The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine celebrated it through an evening of prayer via social media from the Church of Our Lady of Fatima - Beit Sahour, in the presence of Sister Mona Totah, one of the sisters of Saint Joseph, to talk also about her life experience.

It began with prayers and requests raised by Mr. Charlie Batarseh, Prayer Committee leader. A short video was shown linking our life, which is full of challenges and difficulties, to the life of Saint Joseph, which was not without difficulties as well. Sometimes we try to escape from reality because of the difficulties in our lives. Although running away one day we will find that it will not be the solution and sometimes we forget that Christ told us, "Our life



on this earth is full of challenges, and we will not reach the kingdom unless we carry the cross and enter through the narrow road." Many saints lived through these confusions, including Saint Joseph." St. Joseph was a modest and righteous carpenter, but he too lived in great confusion when he found out about his pregnant fiancée, but he heard the Lord's voice, understood the truth, believed, and took up his cross. Saint Joseph chose the difficult path, so he chose to emigrate and escape. He chose fatigue and instability for the sake of God, but in return God gave him the grace to be a father to the Lord of lords and a good husband to the mother of all the world. We must always remember the life of Saint Joseph, every time we fall into distress or fear, and remember God's words that tell us, "Rise, and do not be afraid."

Then, Mr. Charlie Batarseh spoke about the slogan of The Youth of Jesus' Homeland for 2021: "Rise, and do not be afraid," which the angel said to St. Joseph in the dream is scattered in the Bible. First, in the first chapter in the Gospel of Saint Matthew, when he said to him, do not be afraid to bring your wife to your house. And in the second chapter, when he said to him, "Get up and take the child and his mother from here to Egypt, and once from



Egypt to here after the death of Herod the Great." And then talked about the importance of these words in our reality today. These words do not expire as if they are an eternal message to us.

Then Sister Mona Totah talked about her life experience. At the beginning, she said, "My life is like the life of any young girl and boy who go through moments of confusion and difficulties, and moments of strength and courage in their lives." After that, Sister Mona Totah spoke about her family, who raised her in faith, and about the Saint Joseph school, from which she learned the meaning of faith. "Honestly, I never thought I would ever become a sister," she said. After I finished my school studies, she said, I entered Bethlehem University to study child rearing. She said that the sentence "Get up, do not be afraid" had an echo in my life. It was the first time I heard it from Sister Mary, one of the sisters of Saint Joseph, who handled me in my childhood. She said, "When I was young, I had a problem finding friends, and this sister always said to me: "Get up!" O Mona, do not be afraid, I am with you." And she said, I always felt empty inside. After all the prayer journey that I went through and my service in the church, and the many signs that touched my life from people, a book, and a dream. Then I discovered that my true calling was to be a sister. After that, I left everything behind me and acted like St. Joseph heard the voice of the angel telling me to get up and do not be afraid. After 14 years in monastic life, I still hear the Lord saying to me: "Get Up, do not be afraid."

And she ended her speech by sending a message to the youth of Jesus' homeland, saying: "Jesus asks you today to Get Up and to Not Be Afraid. You are the future of the homeland of Jesus, and you have to build my trust."

The evening ended in a short video that continued what Sister Mona Totah started talking about, it talks about the opinion of the saints about Saint Joseph.

### ► Palm Sunday

As every year, the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine participated in Palm Sunday in Jerusalem. The General Secretary of the Christian Youth in Palestine, "The Youth of Jesus' Homeland," Mr. Rafi Ghattas, gave a speech in the presence of His Beatitude Patriarch Pizzaballa, the Apostolic Nuncio, the Franciscan Custos of the Holy Land, and a group of priests and monks with the faithful prior to start the traditional religious procession from Beit Faji in Jerusalem.

During his speech, he said, "Before, more than two thousand years ago, Christ came with his few followers and wanted to enter this holy city. The people of this city welcomed him with a great celebration. They cheered him, praised the God of Zion, and threw their clothes on the ground to bless it as he passed over it. Their number was few, they did not come from all over the world, Some of them came from all over Palestine, but most of the attendees were from here, from this city in particular, the city of Jerusalem!

And today is just like that time!

Here we are today, circumstances decided that the country would not receive many pilgrims from all over the world to welcome their Christ inside the Holy City, but here we are the sons of Jerusalem, the grandchildren of those who received Christ two thousand years ago, we repeat the same tradition with a youthful spirit and raise our olives and palms high to welcome the Lord of lords, Jesus Christ in our Jerusalem, our country, and our hearts, and we will be the first witnesses next week to his resurrection from the dead.

This special occasion and these current circumstances in particular makes us remember that Christ came here, to our land alone, our Almighty God embodied in our country and walked in it, preached, and taught, then completed his mission in





the earth, in this city in particular, his holy blood mixed with the dust of this city that shook its land was angry and weeping, and the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and then it was announced that the sacrifice would be hung on the mountain of Calvary not inside the temple.

Pope Francis had previously announced that this year is dedicated to the righteous Saint Joseph, and we are now with Saint Joseph, remembering what the angel said to him: "Get Up, do not be afraid." This verse was taken by the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine, "The Youth of Jesus' Homeland" as a motto for it to accompany it during this year with all its activities, and today the angel of the Lord renews his saying while we are in front of the greatness of this city: Get up, do not be afraid! Whoever walks with Christ on the path of his cross will surely reach the dawn of the Resurrection, even after a while...

From Jerusalem, we send our greetings today to all those from foreign countries who were unable to participate in this celebration and all the pilgrims, especially our people and brothers in the West Bank and Gaza who live metres away from here but were prevented from reaching Jerusalem... We pray to our Almighty Father to gather all the believers from everywhere next year, let us celebrate Palm Sunday and continue our journey towards the resurrection of our beloved Saviour.

My dear brothers and sisters, more than two thousand years after the entry of Christ, here we are, the children of Jerusalem, we are back again to be the only ones who welcome Him as in the first time. To be Palestinians, walking in the footsteps of Christ in the same paths he took and smelling the scent of his fragrance in our country, let us always remember that we are the true guardians of this city! Let's stay here and raise the olive branches that remind us of our solid roots in this earth and let us glorify the Holy Name in the highest and let us say together with the fullness of our hearts while we are filled with the Holy Spirit who descended on the Apostles in Cenacle to say: "Hosanna! Hosanna to the Son of David. Hosanna! Hosanna to the King of Kings."

*"The youth of the homeland of Jesus...  
We are ready for long, and our youth with Jesus will not pass away..."*

## ► And it is Time to Evolve, Change

The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine "The Youth of Jesus' Homeland - Palestine" always looks forward to developing its youth in all possible ways. It believes in Christian youth to continue its mission in the coming years. In light of this subject, the Coordination and Development Committee in the General Secretariat saw the urgent need to work first with the youth leaders for all the committees and its members, so it organised a development program for one day for each committee according to their needs with the aim of enabling the committee members to provide a better Christian service within the youth and their parishes.



The first development meeting was held on April 10, 2021, with the Prayer Committee through Zoom app due to the Corona pandemic. The Prayer Committee asked to learn more about the Church's leadership and responsibilities and accordingly Mrs. Nadine Bitar-Abu Sahliah, who works at the Christian Education Office of the Latin Patriarchate, met the Committee for two hours, they talked in this meeting about the Church leadership and the role of the laity in improving our churches.

On April 17, 2021, the Elementary and Secondary committees met



together in an intensive one-day meeting in Holy Family Catholic Church, Ramallah, with Mrs. Laila Daibes, an expert in adolescent affairs, in adolescent psychology and way of thinking in addition to how to deal with adolescents and social counselling, as adolescence is a sensitive age to deal with them in general and especially when it comes to Christian service, many face different forms of changes in their daily life and routine, for this reason; It was important to help our leaders learn more about adolescent psychology and discover new and innovative ways to work with them.

As for the university and working committees, we always notice, through the various meetings with the youth, the conflicts that young people suffer when it comes to the Christian faith. Many of them do not understand the foundations of our true faith. On April 23, 2021, an intensive four-hour meeting was held for these committee members in Holy Family Catholic Church, Ramallah. The meeting dealt with discussions on "Biblical teachings and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity" with Fr. Bernard Boge, the head of Latin Patriarchal Seminary. As for the second part of the meeting, Dr. Estephan Salameh, advisor to the Prime Minister of Palestine, was a guest lecturer in a distinguished meeting with the committees to talk about his personal experience in "preserving our Christian faith in social and civil institutions: healthy lifestyles."

As for the Children Group, which is considered the largest in the Christian youth in Palestine, and because the General Secretariat believes that this category will help in building its future, their



presence is essential for Christian services for the coming years. Therefore, the Children Committee met on May 7, 2021, at Holy Family Catholic Church, Ramallah, with Ms. Sandy Totah, an expert in children's affairs, on "Child Psychology and Self-Confidence" to help leaders better understand children and work with them according to their age. The committee also met with Sister Mona Totah, one of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, to learn more about communicating God's word to children through "Bible Games"

And certainly, there was the same for the Coordination and Development Committee. On June 4, 2021, at Holy Family Catholic Church, Ramallah, they met with Mr. Omar Harami of the Sabeel Center for Palestinian Liberation Theology, to learn about "creative thinking", to help committee members to create new programs and support the ideas of other committees. Because of the difficult tasks entrusted to this committee during the various activities, they sometimes miss the spiritual aspect of the secretariat services. Therefore, they also met with Fr. Salem Lolas, one of the priests of the Latin Patriarchate, to talk about the importance of their logistical work to serve the youth and its positive impact on our youth.

These programs are essential to all Secretariat's committees, as they help keep youth services delivered in a vibrant and productive manner. The General Secretariat seeks to develop and invest in people instead of buildings. It invests in its leaders to maintain the continuity of its services and to preserve God's word and work throughout the youth of Jesus' Homeland program.



## ► Helping Youth To Create Their Future Scholarships

The General Secretariat of Christian Youth - Palestine always provides assistance to its youth in order to survive in the land and help them flourish. As part of the efforts made by the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem to provide everything it can for its youth, it provided the Jesus' Homeland University Scholarship through the General Secretariat, Christ the King Bookstore, and with the support of several institutions that support youth pastoral work. The Jesus' Homeland Scholarship was offered twice during the year to the committed youth in the parishes, who always work to serve and help the parishes in its role. The youth are the cornerstone of Christian parishes, and they are the cornerstone of the service provided by the youth of Jesus' Homeland. In offering this scholarship, the General Secretariat of Christian Youth - Palestine wanted to offer them a reward for everything they do in order to thank them, strengthen their affiliation, and in order to encourage them to learn and study, which also plays a major role in their prosperity.

The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine presented the first one in February, targeting all Christian youth in Palestinian universities, and priority was given to students affected by the Corona pandemic. The number of students who benefited from this scholarship was 28 students from different universities.

الى ابناء شبيبة موطن يسوع في جامعة بيرزيت

الأمانة العامة

للشبيبة المسيحية في فلسطين

“شبيبة موطن يسوع”

تدعوكم للتسجيل في

منحة

موطن يسوع الجامعية

المنحة لطلاب البكالوريوس

ولفصل دراسي واحد فقط

ينتهي التسجيل بتاريخ

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After that, the second scholarship was offered in September in particular to Birzeit University students, and the number of beneficiaries from among the youth was 20 students.

Through these scholarships, assistance was provided to 48 students. These scholarships had a significant impact on the beneficiaries, and these were some of the responses from the students who benefited from these grants:

- By awarding me the scholarship you have lightened my financial burden which allows me to focus more on the most important on other matters such as: focus on diligence, learning. Your generosity has inspired me to help others and give back to the community. I hope one day I will be able to help students achieve their goals just as you have helped me.
- I extend my sincere thanks to all the supporters of this scholarship and for your cooperation. This cooperation that I received made me aspire to be a cooperative and diligent engineer in my work and provide assistance to everyone who needs my help.
- I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your endless support to the Christian Youth in Palestine. Your support to the University students is totally appreciated especially during the covid-19 Pandemic which was Hard in every aspect.



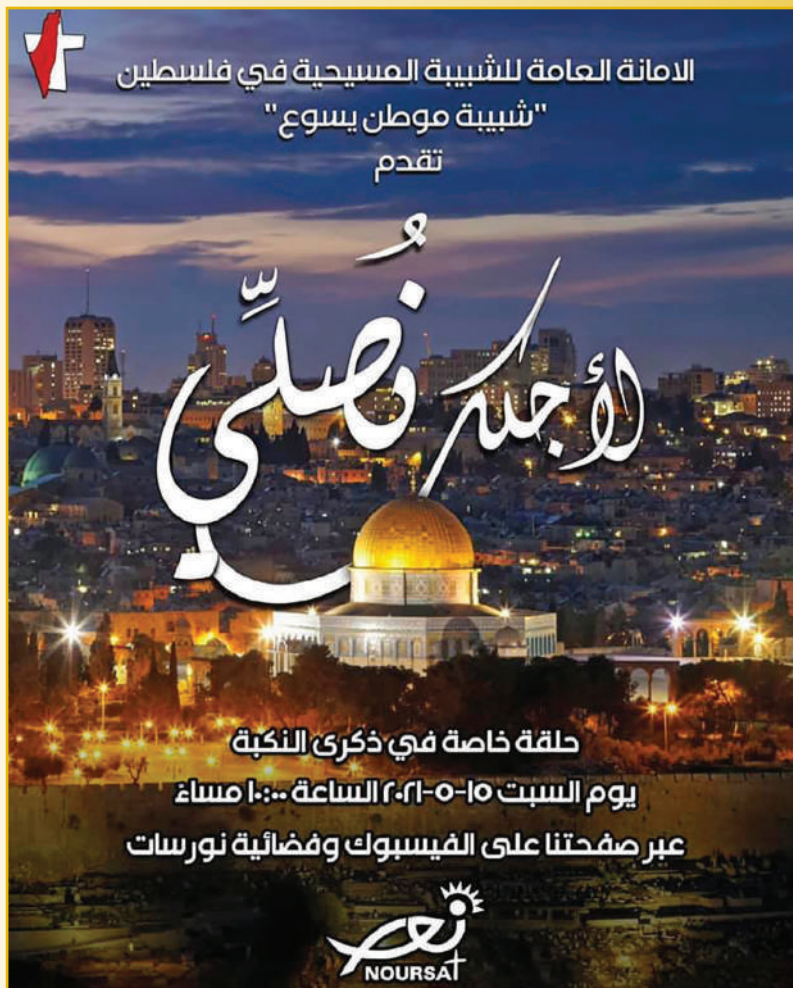


## ► For You We Pray Episode

On May 15, the memory of the Nakba for 73 years, On the occasion of that fateful day, and from the city of Jerusalem, from the heart of the holy city, for Palestine, Jesus' Home-Land, and for the city of prayer the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine held, through the General Secretariat's Facebook page and on Noursat TV, a special episode, entitled "For You, We Pray", presented by Secretary General Rafi Ghattas.

Mr. Rafi Ghattas started the episode by talking and linking the torment, pain and killing of Jesus in this city two thousand years ago, who despite all of this did not escape and continued his journey until death to reach the resurrection after that. Thus, we are the sons of Palestine, since 73 years ago, we have been walking with Christ on the path of His suffering, bearing the cross of pain and the cross of occupation, but we are confident that after this pain and struggle we will reach the Resurrection.

The episode continued with songs and hymns with the voice of the chanter Maroun Helou, who was hosted by the General Secretariat in the episode, followed by the reading of the evangelical text



in the midst of all we suffer from injustice, occupation and pain. After answering these question and during the episode, they discussed the importance of Jerusalem for all of us as Christians, the position of Christians as a minority within this city and their affiliation with this holy place, the Antichrist for the Christian Zionists who are rejected by most churches, and many topics that emphasise the importance of the Christian presence and its religious and historical connection in this City. During that, a report prepared by the General Secretariat in Jerusalem was presented about the Christian presence in this land in the homeland of Jesus and about their roots that are here and that will never know surrender so that Christ remains alive in us. After commenting on the report, and at the end of the episode, the father sent a message to Palestinians in Gaza who are suffering and said to them, "We are with you." He also greeted every Palestinian and told them to stay in this land, to build a better future, to teach our children about this city and the importance of our presence here Then the episode was concluded with a speech from Mr. Rafi Ghattas, and Fr. Bashar Fawadleh offered a prayer for the Lady of Palestine, and at the end a part of hymns and songs.

from the Gospel of Saint Luke by Fr. Bashar Fawadleh, who then mentioned important and historical events that occurred in this city and about the connection of Christ with his homeland and land.

The General Secretary of Christian Youth in Palestine hosted Fr. Jamal Khader, General Secretary for christian Institutions in Palestine and Priest of Ramallah Parish, was hosted to answer some questions. What is our role under these difficult circumstances? And how can we live the teachings of Christ



## ► Coming to you Episode

Coinciding with the end of the Virgin Mary month, the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine held an episode entitled "Coming To You" for the children and elementary groups on May 29, where the episode was broadcast on social media sites in addition to Orient Channel. The episode started with a welcome from the leader of the elementary committee, Rasha Odeh, explaining the purpose of the episode. Where the first part of the episode aimed to talk about the life of the Virgin Mary, who lived and glorified in the homeland of Jesus, and in the second part there were many challenges and competitions that were answered by calling the number that was displayed on the screen or participating by answering the episode question that was at the bottom of the screen "Where was the Virgin Mary born?"

In the first part of the episode, a video was shown of a member of the elementary committee, Maysan Zahran, who filmed it in the places where our Mother Mary lived, talking about the life of the Virgin Mary. Our mother, the Virgin Mary, is like any Palestinian child born in Palestine. It started in the city of Nazareth, the city of the Annunciation. The city of Nazareth is the city in which the Virgin Mary participated in salvation. Then she moved to the village of Ein Karem, where the angel announced the Virgin Mary with Elizabeth's rope, and our mother Mary was happy with this news. Then she moved to Bethlehem to talk about the Church of the Nativity, the place where Jesus Christ was born. Then, talked about the cave of milk that turned white because of a drop of milk from the Virgin Mary when she was breastfeeding her son, the baby Jesus, and then she talked about the miracles that the Virgin Mary accompanied to Christ with. The events sequenced to the greatest moments of Christ on earth when the path of his suffering began in Jerusalem when his mother met him on



were divided into several parts, including: What does the attached picture represent, complete the verse, and choose the correct answer, right and wrong. The episode was very popular, as we were unable to meet them in person because of the Corona virus and to preserve their health, so this episode was a way out for them to enjoy and benefit from the information and the activity. And there was a special peace for the people of Gaza, as they could not communicate because of the war, and they had a great role in the previous episode of Jesus the King.

the way to the nation. And then in the Church of the holy sepulchre, the place where Mary lived with her son Jesus his last moments, and the life of Mary was transformed from the mother whose heart was pierced by the sword to the mother who preached, triumphed, and announced the resurrection of her son.

Then she went to Mount Zion, the place that witnessed the beginning of the establishment of the Eucharist, leading to Pentecost and the dormancy of the Virgin Mary, and the video ended by talking about the Virgin Mary's assumption to heaven.

The second part of the episode was interactive, the participating children had to answer the various questions, choosing a number out of 40 and answering the question. There were questions about the Virgin Mary, cultural questions, and questions about Jesus and the apostles, and the way the questions were presented, the questions





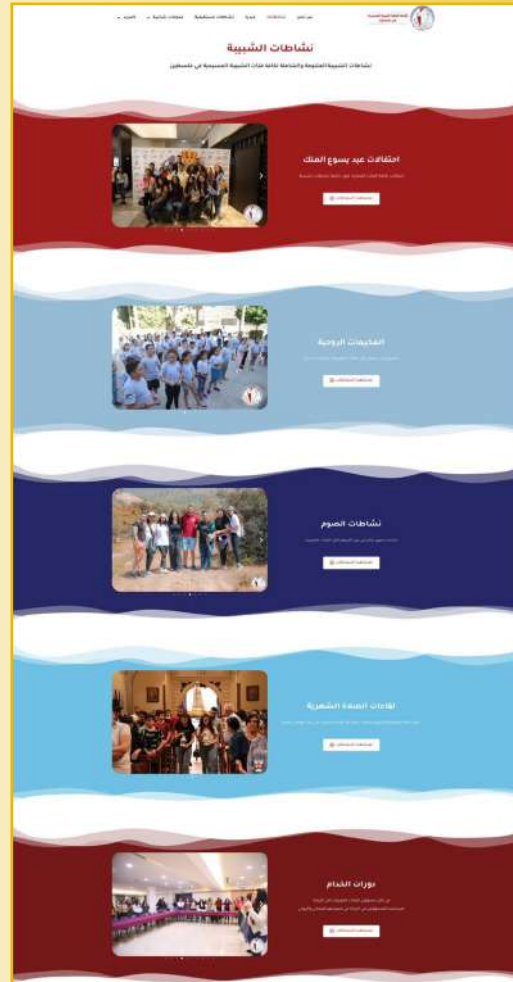
## ► Website

The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine launched its website "Yjhp.ps" on November 19, 2021. The website was developed by the Website Administrator Mr. Paul Youwakim during 2021. During that year, many useful pages were added to the site for all youth members of all committees and browsers. This website helps browsers to get to know the General Secretariat's services that it provides in addition to its vision, mission, goals, and values, as well as communicating with it through the messages page. The website contains pages dedicated to prayers such as: the Rosary, the hours of prostration and page for the Popes' letters.

The website contains pages specialised in the activities held by the General Secretariat for Christian Youth. There is a media page that specialises in displaying all activity reports with pictures to convey the idea of the activity more clearly. The plays and hymns of the youth are shown on it. There are pages where youth news is published. The General Secretariat always tries to create job opportunities and facilitate the application for these opportunities, so a special page has been added for the job opportunities on the website on which available job opportunities are added.

The site acts as a link between the youth's social media pages, such as Facebook and Instagram by uploading all the pictures and news of the various youth activities and others.

YJHP website also helps the committees to upload all the minutes and meetings that help the administration in following up on all matters of activities and preparations, and it makes it easier for the committee officials to prepare.



## ► Anghami & 2021 Hymns

### Stand before your cross

- On the occasion of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine launched its new song entitled "Stand before your cross", sung by Joan Asmari, the lyrics of Father Bashar Fawadleh, composed and distributed by George Salsa and his choir, and edited by the Shepherds Band.

Some of the song's lyrics  
standing before your cross  
hopping in your love  
You called me with your voice  
You are my beloved son



I asked you to protect me  
From the harm of the wicked  
You said to me: Do not be  
afraid; I have redeemed you.



### Always For You

- On the occasion of the Feast of Christ the King, the General Secretariat of Christian Youth issued a hymn called "Always For You", sung by Wassim Abdullah. The hymn talks about how we always dedicate our youth and our lives to you, to Jesus Christ, our King. He called us to follow Him, and He created us in His image, and as long as He is our Master, we will forever be with Him and for Him.

Some of the song's lyrics  
{My Lord, as long as you are with me...  
I always obey you}.  
You who told me...  
from the belly I called you  
Oh God, I have sinned...  
and erased from the path of sins  
Let me be on my happy day the salt  
and light for the beginnings



## ► Research Study in coordination with Juhoud

In partnership with the Pontifical Mission in Jerusalem and in cooperation with the General Secretariat of Christian Youth - Palestine and the Christian Education Office of the Latin Patriarchate, Juhoud for Community and Rural Development carried out a study entitled "The Reality, Concerns and Needs of Christian Youth", which targeted Christian gatherings in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza. This study is one of the most important contemporary and recent studies carried out on the needs and interests of Christian youth in a holistic manner, which aimed:

- ❶ Knowing the needs and reality of Christian youth in order to design programs that suit their needs and aspirations.
- ❷ Determining their interests in development projects, which include economic and social empowerment projects, employment, small projects, awareness-raising, training and community leadership, and ways to encourage them to participate and benefit from these projects.
- ❸ Determining the challenges and difficulties facing Christian youth.
- ❹ Determining the topics that young people need in guidance, counselling, Christian education and Christian youth leadership.

Focused meetings with young men and women groups were carried out in 16 gatherings in the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip within the following criteria:



The age group should be between 18-35 years and not be limited or focused on a specific age group, as it was preferable that each group includes university students, employees or business owners, representatives of youth clubs, scout teams, active women's centres in gatherings, and those who are interested.

In addition, to confirm the qualitative and quantitative information, 12 meetings were held with representatives of institutions and legal persons to confirm the results and hold them accountable about the Christian reality, its challenges and future aspirations.

The meetings included asking a number of guiding questions that help in motivating the participants to answer, so that the following topics and questions are covered:

- The reality of Christian youth from an economic and social perspective.
- Christian identity and belonging.
- Fears and feelings of insecurity.
- Christian education and educational and guidance topics.
- The trends and needs in the various civil and political activities.
- Trends and needs in economic and social development activities.
- Challenges facing youth and available opportunities.

In addition to focus groups with young people, answers (quantitative survey) were collected and analysed with 350 samples by distributing a questionnaire to more than 800 young men and women in all regions with the aim of filling it out, and the questionnaire was filled out electronically (online survey) through social media ( Facebook Messenger) while ensuring equal distribution between males and females, and this information was treated with strict confidentiality only for the purposes of the study by the advisory team and institutions supervising the study.





Table1: Distribution of Youth Sample Across Governorates and Localities:					
Governorates	Numbers	Percentage	City/ Village	Numbers	Percentage
Bethlehem	112	31.5%	Bethlehem	53	14.9%
			Beit Sahour	32	9.0%
			Beit Jala	30	8.5%
Jenin	79	22.3%	Jenin	10	2.8%
			Zababdeh	61	17.2%
			Jalamah	1	0.3%
			Burqin	6	1.7%
			KafrQud	1	0.3%
Ramallah	78	22.0%	Ramallah	36	10.1%
			Ein Arik	3	0.8%
			Aboud	4	1.1%
			Jifna	12	3.4%
			Birzeit	7	2.0%
			Taibe	16	4.5%
Jerusalem	36	10.1%	Jerusalem	35	9.9%
Jericho	16	4.5%	Jericho	15	4.2%

Nablus	14	3.9%	Nablus	14	3.9%
Tubas	10	2.8%	Tubas	10	2.8%
Gaza	10	2.8%	Gaza	10	2.8%
Total	355		Total	355	100%

Table 2: Age Group, Gender and Marital Status:	
Age Group, Gender and Marital Status	Percentage
17-29	59.2%
30-39	31.5%
40-49	7.0%
50 and above	2.3%
Total	100.0%
Male	48.2%
Female	51.8%
Total	100%
Single	63.4%
Married	36.6%
Total	100%



## ► I Never Die, I Enter Life -Fr. Toufiq Buhedar-

Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, the patron saint of Father Monsignor Tawfiq Bou Hader, was repeating: "I never die, but I enter life." And here is Father Tawfiq entering eternal life on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October, the day of the anniversary of the announcement of his patron saint as a tutor in the Universal Church. Fr. Tawfiq spread the love of giving in the youth's heart, in addition to the love, joy and hope in every person he met, anywhere in the world. He is one of the founders of the congregation "Jesus is my Joy" in Lebanon, the founder of the Youth Pastoral Office in the Maronite Patriarchal Department and its supervisor since 2011. Our father Tawfiq worked hard on his Christian mission wherever he was. He built bridges between the youth of Lebanon and the world, and he worked to build strong friendship and close cooperation with the Youth of Jesus' Homeland in Palestine. He was the main motivator, guide, leader and servant of the youth and taught us to love the youth and to be the heart of the Church, which must always beat and remain young.

Fr. Tawfiq dreamed of visiting the land of Jesus' homeland, the land of Palestine, and he repeatedly expressed his desire to visit the places where Jesus taught, preached and performed miracles. He also expressed his desire to ascend the Mount of Calvary to walk with Christ towards the Holy Sepulchre and carry his light into his hands. However, God's call was earlier than the end of the occupation, so he passed away to the heavenly throne, placing whomever he loved in the Father's hands.



During the year 2020, the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine worked with Monsignor Tawfiq on the "From Jerusalem, Peace to Beirut" initiative, after the great explosion that shook the Lebanese capital and shook the hearts of everyone. The youth of Jesus's homeland were able to provide moral and material support to about 30 families through father Tawfiq.

Today, after we bid farewell to our beloved monsignor, we turn our eyes upward from everywhere in the homeland of Jesus, and say: "From Jerusalem, peace to heaven."

Peace to the one who loved the youth, believed in its mission, made youth his first and last concern and devoted his whole life to spreading the word of Christ in their hearts. He deserved to be told to him: 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' (Mathew 25:23).





## ► Strategic Plan

This three years strategic plan is considered one of the main milestones that was conducted by the Chaplaincy of the Youth of Jesus' Homeland – Palestine. This strategy includes a response to the Christian youth needs and challenges which emerged during the last years.

Over the years; The General Secretariat of the Chaplaincy of the Youth of Jesus' Homeland has worked to adapt its interventions with the needs of Palestinian Christian youth and has been striving to meet their various needs. However, it has recently become necessary to work on a long-term plan that adopts updated methods in order to communicate with the reality of Palestinian Christian youth and to respond to the challenges and dramatic changes that have occurred during the last ten years.



This strategic plan was conducted through using a participatory approach that included the youth and priests in the different parishes in addition to mainstreaming the different decision-makers' opinions. The descriptive approach was adopted by conducting focus groups and interviews with many parish priests and youth groups in the parishes, in addition to working closely with members of the General Secretariat.

During the design of this strategy, a challenge emerged, which is the presence of different actors and many studies and statistics on the reality of the Christian community in Palestine, especially the Christian youth, and for this reason one of the difficulties was to repeat the steps of working



with the same groups in the same areas, and therefore the results of other studies were used. Which contributed to documenting information and results and coming up with common results.

Therefore, a compilation of different studies was made to include their results within this strategy such as;

- ❶ The study "Survey of Christian Organizations in Palestine: Social and Economic Impact" carried out by the consultant Mr. George Akroush and funded by the Pontifical Mission and in cooperation with Dar Al-Kalima University in 2021.
- ❷ "A community study on the needs, challenges, aspirations and the way forward for Christian youth in Jerusalem" carried out by the Consultant Mr. George Akroush and funded by the Coordination of Catholic Aid Organisations (CCAO) sponsored by the German Association of the Holy Land (DVHL) in the year 2019.
- ❸ Finally, the study "Analysis of the Reality, Needs, and Interests of Christian Youth in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip" which was carried out by the Juhoud Foundation for Community and Rural Development with the assistance of a group of consultants.

The main goals of the strategy are:

- ❶ Contribute to spreading the Christian faith by bearing witness to a conscious and mature Christian faith in front of all people.
- ❷ Developing the General Secretariat for the Chaplaincy of the Youth of Jesus' Homeland – Palestine by creating a leadership



generation that bears responsibility In his community, church and family.

- ③ Develop and empower young people in various fields to be role models for future generations.

List of required steps to implement this strategy are:

- ① To conduct monthly coordination and monthly meetings with the members of the secretariat and follow-up of plans by the coordinator.
- ② Working to hold coordination meetings with parish priests and asking them to participate in implementing parts of the strategy as described in the plan.
- ③ It is necessary to meet with the patriarch in order to inform him of the results of the strategy and the necessity of hiring a coordinator in the patriarchate for the general secretariat.
- ④ The need to find funding opportunities to complete the work of the strategy and carry over the parts that have not been applied for subsequent years. And the separation of the budget of the library of Jesus the King from the budget of the Secretariat.
- ⑤ The need to work on developing internal guides, including the administrative manual, the financial manual, the volunteering manual, the media and communication plan, and the code of conduct.
- ⑥ The necessity of distributing the ta6outh through local coordinators
- ⑦ The necessity of building the capacities of the members of the secretariat through an intensive training diploma.
- ⑧ Work on the monitoring and evaluation system by the coordinator of the General Secretariat in order to ensure the implementation of activities on a monthly basis.
- ⑨ Work must be done to modify the roles and responsibilities in the plan according to what the secretariat deems appropriate and through coordination with the secretariat coordinator.



## ► Last Workshop!

The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine held its last workshop at the end of its 3-year session, before the start of the celebrations of Christ Jesus the King and the appointment of the new General Secretariat, an intensive workshop was held for members of the secretariat and committees on Thursday and Friday, October 21 and 22, 2021 at Murad Tourist Resort–Beit Sahour. The workshop began with a meeting of the General secretariat members with the current administration represented by the General Secretary Rafi Ghattas and Vice General Secretary Mira Khader,





who confirmed the progress of the general plan to prepare for the upcoming celebrations of Jesus the King to be held at the beginning of November. After the general meeting, all the committees met separately and completed their preparations for the upcoming celebrations. The first day ended with an evening of entertainment for all members of the General Secretariat and its committees. On the second day, the meeting began with Deacon Bob Paul, who gave the youth a lecture entitled "Discipleship on the Methods of Hunting Humans According to the Strategies of Jesus Christ." and he gave an example of one who followed these strategies; the late Monsignor Tawfiq Bu Hadeer, who passed away a few days before the workshop was held, had a special relationship between him and the youth of Palestine in pastoral and youth work. At the end of the first part of the second day, all participants celebrated the divine sacrifice on the occasion of the feast of the youth of the saint, Pope John Paul II, which was headed by Father Bashar Fawadleh and Father Remon Haddad. The prayer was offered as a relief to the late Monsignor Tawfiq Bou Hadeer. The workshop was completed between the committees to conclude the necessary preparation for the upcoming celebrations.



## ► A Holy Mass on the occasion of Our Lady of Palestine

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of October, the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine participated in the celebration of "Our Lady of Palestine", the feast of Our Lady of Virgin Mary at Rafat Monastery in Jerusalem, the ceremony in which thousands of Christians from different regions of Palestine were present. The celebration was also held on the occasion of the launch of the first stage of the Ecclesiastical Synod, which was launched by Pope Francis on the nineteenth of the same month in Rome. The Synod aims at spiritual renewal in the Church around the world, under the emblem of "Communion, Participation and Mission."

The mass was presided over by His Beatitude Patriarch Pier Battista Pizzaballa and with Heads of Churches in the Holy Land. His Beatitude spoke in his homily that communion in the Holy Land has several faces: between Christians of different churches, between different monastic groups, and with people of other faiths and religions. Patriarch Pizzaballa also called for the need to shift from the situation of frustration and despair to the state of joy and hope by being open to others and by caring and listening to them.





## ► It is Not A Passing Phase!

**M**y journey started when I was 6 years old. I was going to the Divine Liturgy every Sunday and immediately after the Liturgy I was always going to the Sunday School. I don't remember ever having missed, and certainly I participated in all the summer camps that had a great impact on my life. Its great impact makes me remember so many situations from it.

And when I became 11 years old, here I started a new stage, the "preparatory group" and the first change was, and after 3 years, I entered the secondary group. During these 6 years, I always helped the nuns with the preparation of the meetings, and I was there before the meeting, and after helping them. I was a very lucky person, because the youth had a great influence in every step of my life and character.

The second change occurred when I entered the university group and became one of those responsible for the preparatory and secondary groups, and here I began to learn how to be responsible in a good manner in order to be influential on the youth in a way that brings them closer to our Lord and the Church, and this has always been my goal.

Certainly, the General Secretariat for Christian Youth, "the Youth of Jesus's Homeland," was an integral part of all these stages that I mentioned. Because the General Secretariat in the past had always done activities, camps and celebrations for Christian youth, and I had always participated in these



**Mira Khader**

activities and camps. There was always something that drew me to these activities, the effect of which would be eternal.

After years of participation and service in the church, the most powerful change in my journey with the Christian youth occurred. It was during a camp for the General Secretariat of Christian Youth - Palestine in 2014, it was a camp for parish officials, during this camp I felt a great belonging to the place and the people, and I felt a love for the service and the way of work provided by the General Secretariat. I had a great desire at the time to join and to be a part of this service that is offered with love. Then I found that God's will was like

mine. After this camp for a while, I was nominated to be a representative of the parish of Zababdeh after the previous person's service had ended. I didn't remember that I even thought about it. However, I accepted this invitation without thinking. It was the most important vocation in my life that will not be forgotten and will not stop.

My journey began with the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine in the year 2014-2015, by being responsible for the university and working committee in Palestine. This year was full of simple activities and the spirit of teamwork (one of the main reasons to succeed in any activity). Then in 2016, it was a very special year for us, the Youth of Jesus' HomeLand (YJHP), we participated in the World Youth Days in Poland. This experience was full of special experiences, but what made the most impact was that one night we slept in an outside place waiting for His Holiness Pope Francis with love. When I attended the mass and heard his words, I felt a great inner and spiritual feeling, that one of my dreams became true, which is to meet Pope Francis one day.

In 2016 and 2017, I was the head of the elementary committee, and in 2018, I was the head of the secondary committee. I worked with wonderful people, we worked together even on small details, and stayed up late. We were also tired, we cried and laughed together! We gave everything we have to serve God and the church. We always used to say that the way we work is crazy! A work that is full of love, and sacrifice. Our work was full of planning, organizing, and strong management

for every event that happened within each activity or camp! These years were very important for two main reasons: firstly I was always close to God and secondly my personal life became healthier and filled with people whose hearts were full of love and service. During these years, YJHP family was the closest to my heart, and still, my attention was directed to it without any other disruption. Every time when I get tired, I say to myself that I don't want to continue, that I want to quit, but also every time our Lord does not allow me to deal with these feelings, and my heart doesn't obey my mind, because I can't stay away from this service.

I want to mention the name of one of the camps that I was responsible for during my service, a camp that had, in particular, a great impact on me. It was a secondary camp entitled "Flash Your Lights". The general idea of this camp was that, "The car flashes the light when it wants to change its wrong way", and we also had to flash the light and change our way to go to the right path that will lead us to Jesus. Every part of it supported this idea. This camp was full of meetings, activities, games, ideas, and verses from The Holy Bible and the sayings of the saints. Even the words of the hymn we wrote had a part saying "It is time to take my decision, my life changes, you are the one who is with me now and every day" and we called it "Our Youth Friend". The impact of this camp was great because of the real changes that we saw in people who were almost lost in their period of life, so the fatigue of this camp was crowned with the real joy!



In 2019, I was chosen to be the Vice General Secretary. Great responsibility with the YJHP administration! I hesitated a lot, and as usual I could not refuse, on the contrary, I said "yes" and strongly! And this decision was one of the most beautiful decisions I made in my life. I lived in cooperation among the members of the YJHP administration and with great love towards each member of the family of Jesus Homeland! It was a very special spiritual and social life. This life encouraged us to complete the crazy work we used to dedicate in the camps and activities from the children category to the working category, with new hymns, and a huge festival in Palestine! And every time we used to feel fear before any activity, the activity was successful as if the hands of our Lord were present in it! Our Lord accompanied us in every step without exception. One of the most beautiful feelings is to see the blessing in the work and effort you provide and to feel that there are actually many people who have touched a real change in their lives and have become closer to the church because of the army of Jesus' homeland.

2019 was a special year for me. In 2019, I was one of the representatives of the Middle East in the Vatican. There I met Pope Francis. That moment is impossible to forget. I remember the longing and the waiting to see him. It is not possible for me to forget the words of His Holiness the Pope to me. He said to me: "The youth of Palestine and the youth of the Holy Land are always in my prayers". And this year, and its adventures with me were completed at the moment when I decided to travel to study my MA in Britain. This means that

I was supposed to leave the youth! In those moments, I felt sad and indeed I travelled, but my heart was always with my family and for this reason, after accomplishing my studies in Britain, I came back and completed this journey with the YJHP.

It is very difficult to write about my experience I lived with my family "the youth of Jesus' HomeLand", it is difficult to express the times that I went through with them. It wasn't only for days or months, it was for years. Years full of work, adventure, joy, courage, and great love without any interest. We always used to say "together we can", because when we are together, the Lord is always with us. And then, the word "impossible" does not exist between us.

My wish for this family is to grow more and more, and for the youth's journey to continue without interruption. I am sure that this is the same will of our Lord; to always be close to Him, to work with love and without any return, in order to attract those around us to live this love. Very soon, I will marry the one with whom I spent many days in youth, and youth was and still is a large part of our lives. The family that we will build together, will surely be part of the youth of Jesus' homeland and the youth of Jesus' homeland will always be in my heart forever. We always used to say, "The youth of Jesus' homeland ... We are ready all the time." And now I say to those after me, always be on this promise that we made together, because our Heavenly Father is always ready to strengthen us to grow."

*Mira Khader, All the Love...*



**Majdi Abdallah**

I participated for the first time in the activities of the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in a summer camp for the elementary group in the Talitha Kumi monastery. I don't remember anything of this camp other than the joy that came from Christ. Then, in 2016, I participated in the "Follow Me without anything" camp. This camp was for me an essential camp because it gave me the ability to move from one holy place to another in short periods of time. I remember our journey from the place of the Annunciation in Nazareth to Tiberias, Cana, Capornaum. What made this camp so important to me was that at that time I had many questions and I had lost the meaning of being a Christian. Unfortunately, I even

denied my faith and rejected it publicly because I really did not understand why we should believe, why God created us, and why we suffer. In 2017, I participated in a youth camp, and I found a lecture presented by Fr. Iyad Twal that the Church wants us to ask and to believe, not contrary to reason and logic, but through them we can reach true faith.

In 2019, I participated in the "Adventure of Time" activity. I remember feeling God's love within me through the participants, and then I made the decision to believe even if I did not find answers to all my questions. Then I participated in the working committee in order to follow him and live his words in my life. but unfortunately, I came back to doubt and moved away again for a whole year. This year was the hardest in my personal life. The most difficult was not financially or career, on the contrary, it was the best, but it was the worst because I rejected the presence of God in my life despite my knowledge of his presence by my side, I rejected him! Nevertheless, God kept his promise and did not abandon me. In the working group camp, "Now to Where?" 2021 When I went to it I didn't know where I was going, but by participating in this camp, I fully realised everything, I realised his love for us. Through the youth and through my church I knew God more and more, my personal prayer became an essential part, and through reading God's words, I say with full faith and certainty, as Andrew said to his brother Peter: "We have found Christ."

*Majdi Abdallah, 26 years, from Zababdeh.*



In 2019, I found myself searching for my calling in this life. I wanted to be closer to God and experience his glory. So, I decided to join the youth group in my area, and church became my second home.

On May 9th, 2019, I attended a course organised by the general secretariat called "The First Servants" course for the leaders of Christian Youth categories in the Parishes. At that time, I didn't know anything about the YJHP and its activities. I was just eager to go learn and gain new experiences. Little did I know that this experience will change my life forever. In those two days, I got to meet incredible people from all over Palestine who I immediately felt connected to and I felt that I was on the right direction to find my calling. After the course I made sure to attend every activity that they organised and later in November, I became a member of the secondary committee in YJHP.

YJHP is where I found my calling, to be a servant of Jesus and spread his love. I am so honoured to be a part of a family that is united by the love of God. With this family, the amazing memories we made, all the laughter, the love we have for one another will always be engraved in my heart.

*Yara Abuzuluf, 21, from Beit Sahour.*



**Yara fibu Zuluf**

### ► Noursat Interview (Karoleen)

On November 10, In the program "The Light with Us" that presented by the Christian Youth in Lebanon, the General Secretariat for Christian Youth - Palestine was hosted in the fourth paragraph of the episode, and it was shown on Tele Lumiere and Noursat TVs, in which the leader of the children Committee for 3 years, Miss Karoline Diab, who was appointed at the end of 2021 as a Vice General Secretary talked about the activities of Jesus the King, which are held by the General Secretariat for all groups annually, and in particular the activity of the Kingdom's ambassador for children group for this year. After this, Miss Karoline started talking in detail about the activity in which approximately 350 children from the parishes of the West Bank and Jerusalem participated in the Church of the Good Shepherd in Jericho.

Then she explained the purpose of the event and its spiritual idea, which aimed to convey the idea that we are the ambassadors of the





Kingdom of Jesus on this earth through our participation in the liturgy and the activities of the church. She stated that this idea was embodied by travelling around the world, so the children entered the Terra Santa school building to move around between the classes, which in each classroom was an embodiment of a different country, and each class focused on the landmarks of that country and its connection to Christian history, in addition to a detailed explanation of the Divine Liturgy, including its significance, stages, and all the details related to the establishment of the divine sacrifice to conclude the spiritual idea through a play that embodies the importance of being his ambassadors in this land.

She stated that this meeting is the largest gathering of the children group after two years due to Covid pandemic, so we made all activities on social media during these two years, and this meeting made the children feel great joy during the activity. There are many reasons for the great success achieved by this activity, which were based on the cooperation that existed between the Children Committee and other committees and parishes leaders. Then she mentioned the importance of the month of November for the youth, in which the General Secretariat ends its activities for each year. In particular, this year, the celebration of Jesus the King for the university and working group, in which the youth from all of historic Palestine participated, and after 3 years of service and creativity provided by the General Secretariat for 3 years, has been appointed a new General Secretariat to continue the creativity that built before them.

The General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine extends its heartfelt thanks for the interest they have shown in the work and service it provides to the youth.



## ► Christmas Gifts

After a year full of activities and work, and on the occasion of Christmas, the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine sent gifts to all members of its committees in appreciation and thanks for the efforts they provided during the year. The gift contained a luminous mirror containing the Logo of the General Secretariat in the middle, so that when they saw it, they would remember and see the image of Jesus inside them, and in order to reflect it throughout the days, because we will remain on his covenant.





## ► Christmas Dinner



In a Christmas and family atmosphere, the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine "Jesus Home Youth" welcomed all its current and former members and employees of Christ the King Bookstore in Christ the Redeemer Parish-Taybeh for the Christmas dinner. At the beginning of the meeting, Mrs. Nadine Bitar- Abu Sahlieh, The General Secretary of The General Secretariat, welcomed all the attendees, focusing on the idea of a one family that works hard and passionately in order to spread God's message, for which he embodied in the Grotto of The Nativity - Bethlehem. Then Fr. Bashar Fawadleh, the General Chaplin and the priest of Christ the Redeemer Parish, blessed the table, and the atmosphere was filled with many interesting games among the members of the General Secretariat. In conclusion, the new administration thanked all who served during the last session as administration and committee leaders. This current session of the General Secretariat of the Christian Youth in Palestine "Youth of Jesus' Homeland" began its work at the end of November and will continue for three years. The names of the committee members will be announced during the coming period.





# Christ The King Book Store

## ■ Message of Hope



Christ The King Bookstore

We are glad that the message of Christ the King Bookstore is a message of hope for the present and the future. The presence of the bookstore is directly connected to the message of the evangelization in which we are all called to after the Resurrection. Therefore, this bookstore is a mean of evangelization in our church in specific and in society in general, which is in total connected with the virtue of hope.

Christ the King Bookstore is considered a special place where any Christian can grow and advance in wisdom, grace, and understanding of the presence of God in his/ her life to live it accordingly and reflect it to others.



**Fr. Bashar Fawadleh**  
Director of Christ the King Bookstore

### Hope is based on two important points:

- 1 Listen to God's Word through deep reading of the Bible accompanied with individual and group prayer (liturgy). This prayer is derived from the teachings of the Holy Bible, lives of saints, martyrs of the church who witnessed Jesus Christ in their lives and died having the hope of the Resurrection, as we mention them in our daily morning and evening prayers.
- 2 The active participation in the Holy Sacraments especially the eucharist, in which we live God's providence and salvation that was accomplished by the Death and the Resurrection of our Lord and God, Jesus Christ who said: "behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Mt. 28:20)

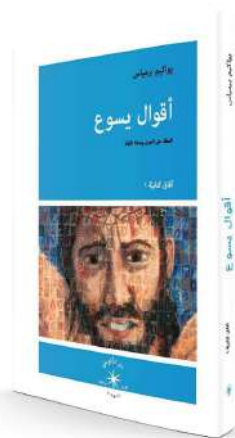
I wish you all a life filled with hope, knowledge, and closeness to God's Heart.

## ■ Activities during the year:

- A set of religious books were distributed to some scouting groups in Bethlehem Governorate as well as to Saint Joseph School, that's because we believe we should contribute in every way possible to the benefit of our students and the community family.
- on 17/7/2021, Father Bashar Fawadleh, the current general manager of "Christ the King Bookstore" and the spiritual guide of YJHP, gave a lecture to the cubs and flowers of Terra Sancta scout - Bethlehem, as part of their scout camp programs, after that he gifted each participant a Christian teaching book 'for children' with a rosary.
- On 5/7/2021, and during the annual spiritual exercise for priests in Galilee, a set of spiritual books were presented to the Latin, Roman Catholic, Armenian Catholic, and Maronite priests who were participating in the spiritual exercise.
- In cooperation with the Open Doors Organisation for the third time, and to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of "Christ the King Bookstore", We granted ten of our Christian schools a gift card of 2,250 NIS to buy books from our bookstore, in order to enrich their libraries with all the students' need of holy and spiritual books, to encourage the students to read more and to help them build a closer relationship with GOD.
- At the end of 2021, the bookstore participated in the first Christian Book Fair in I'llillin between December 17-22, 2021, at the Roman Catholic Church there. They were provided with a wide range of religious, spiritual and theological books which could motivate the Christian community to read more.







This year, "Christ the King Bookstore" are celebrating the tenth anniversary of "Christ the King Book Store" establishment and construction as a spiritual and cultural edifice within the Palestinian Christian community. It is considered as one of the unique libraries of its kind in the Holy Land in general, because of its spiritual diversity that helps develop our young men, daughters and families a Christian education based on the Bible, sacraments, tradition and the teaching of the Church.

Accordingly, we would like to inform you about supporting school libraries and students in Palestine, as shown by purchasing from our store, to enrich your writings and students with everything they need in order to create projects and spirituality.

- The amount is 2,250 shekels only.

We ask the Lord to give you grace for a better education for our children.

New collaboration:

2021 was also distinguished because we started a new collaboration with "Dar Alaquini" from Egypt, we purchased most of their publications and displayed them in our bookstore. These books were highly acclaimed by the bookstore visitors.

It is noteworthy that Dar Alaquini is a publishing house belonging to the Dominican Fathers in Egypt, concerned with publishing the most important studies in theology, the Bible and contemporary global spirituality.



## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### The Youth of Jesus' Homeland – Palestine

Statement of Activities for the year ended 31/12/2021

Donations, Contributions & Other Support			
	Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem (LPJ)	\$	49,307
	Caritas Poland	\$	4,982
	Manna & Salwa NPO-San Jose	\$	4,000
	Open Doors	\$	2,771
	Terra Sancta College – Bethlehem	\$	1,531
	The Clerical Society of the Most Holy Trinity	\$	2,500
	Other contributions	\$	5,122
	<b>Total Donations, Contributions &amp; Other Support</b>		<b>\$ 70,213</b>
Operating Expenses			
	Youth Services & Expenses	\$	37,896
	Employees' Expenses	\$	4,012
	Legal & Professional Services	\$	8,708
	Utilities Expenses	\$	101
	Communication	\$	11,666



	Stationary & Supplies	\$ 7,859	
	Occupancy	\$ 33,050	
	Transportation	\$ 2,692	
	Financial Aid Expenses	\$ 12,785	
	Other Expenses	\$ 4,991	
	<b>Total operating Expenses</b>		<b>\$ 123,760</b>
<b>Net (Deficit) for the year</b>			<b>\$ -53,547</b>
	Christ The King Bookstore Surplus for the year	\$ 21,290	
	YJHP and Christ The King Bookstore Carried forward surpluses from previous year	\$ 34,069	
<b>Carried Forward Surplus for year 2022</b>			<b>\$ 1,812</b>



### Christ The King Bookstore Statement of Activities for the year ended 31/12/2021

<b>Donations, Contributions &amp; Income</b>			
Donations and Contributions			
	Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem	\$ 27,092	
	Open Doors	\$ 2,017	
	<b>Total Donations and Contributions</b>		<b>\$ 29,109</b>
Sales Income			
	Sales Revenue	\$ 123,459	
	Cost of Goods Sold	\$ -74,592	
	<b>Net Sales income</b>		<b>\$ 48,867</b>
	<b>Total Donations, Contributions &amp; Income</b>		<b>\$ 77,976</b>
Operating Expenses			
	Youth Services & Expenses	\$ 567	
	Employees' Expenses	\$ 29,678	
	Legal & Professional Services	\$ 2,776	
	Utilities Expenses	\$ 2,112	
	Communication	\$ 7,656	
	Stationary & Supplies	\$ 1,329	
	Occupancy	\$ 1,412	
	Transportation	\$ 2,244	
	Financial Aid Expenses	\$ 3,181	
	Other Expenses	\$ 5,731	
	<b>Total operating Expenses</b>		<b>\$ 56,686</b>
<b>Net Surplus for the year</b>			<b>\$ 21,290</b>





*For the General Secretariat of Christian Youth in Palestine 2021 was a special year, 2021 was a year full of achievements and development. The General Secretariat has achieved remarkable development and progress in its children and in the activities and events it holds to serve the youth so that they are effective in society and have a prominent and clear impact. So we would like to say thank you to everyone who has helped us throughout the year. We thank you for your time, efforts, and your donations. We are sure that these achievements would not have been possible without all that you have given for us and our children. Your encouragement that you have given us will enable us to progress, develop and achieve our goals which are being achieved through you day by day.*

*May God keep showering you with his blessings. God sees your efforts, and he will bless it, by his Grace. Your labour will not be in vain.*

*May God's name be glorified in all what you do!*





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