



Christmas Homily for 2015

An excerpt of the homily of His Beatitude Fouad Twal, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem and president of Caritas Jerusalem during Mass on Christmas Eve.

This year, we once again we come to Bethlehem to renew with joy and hope the memory of the birth of the Incarnate Word of God – the One whom the whole world cannot hold. Yet in spite of His power and greatness, his dwelling place was a small grotto and was borne by a Virgin. He came to show us the merciful face of God, urging us on several occasions through the Gospel, to: *“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Lk 6:36).*

Pope Francis has dedicated the year 2016 as a time for us to meditate on divine mercy in all its dimensions.

Mercy must include every person near and far, persons whom we like and dislike. It is easy to show mercy to those with whom we are related by blood, kinship, religion and race. However, it is difficult to extend the relationship to include the poor and marginalized, prisoners and the victims of violence and terrorism in Palestine and in our neighbouring countries.

Our hearts go to the millions of refugees living in camps and shanties, suffering from the biting cold; people fleeing from areas of conflict, many are drifting on vast waters aboard fragile boats, and the sea becoming a collective graveyard.

In our prayers, we think of the owners of demolished homes in Jerusalem and confiscated lands in Palestine, those affected by collective punishments and of the children and youth deprived of a bright future. We also think of the victims of all forms of terrorism everywhere. No matter who they are and where they come from, these people are all our brothers and sisters in humanity. Let their cries of anguish be ours, and we tear down the barriers of indifference...

Christmas is about loving, sharing and giving



Christmas is a month long event in Palestine. It begins with lighting the Christmas tree and attending the mass in Bethlehem and other areas in Palestine. Caritas Jerusalem makes its best to celebrate with those who most need compassion and caring, whether by giving gifts to the children, providing food coupons to the families, doing Christmas activities with the elderly or/and visiting several institutions to share love and joy with the institutionalized.



The youth department with its volunteers was very active in organizing, helping and arranging different activities during the Christmas month. They proved to the most marginalized people that they are not forgotten and Caritas Jerusalem cares about them.



On the 18th of December 2015, Caritas Jerusalem's volunteers visited several institutions such as Caritas Baby Hospital, The Antonian Charitable Society of Bethlehem, Creche Center for Orphans, Al-Shurooq School for Blind Children, St. Nicolas house, Jemima center for handicapped, Epheta and Al-Kalemeh Center in Bethlehem. The volunteers together with children and the elderly sang Christmas carols, danced, painted the children's faces and distributed gifts.



“It is very important to be there with the children and the senior citizens to celebrate Christmas and share the spirit of joy and love especially during the current political tension in Palestine” said one of Caritas Jerusalem's volunteers.

The volunteers celebrated other Christmas events in Birzeit, Ein Arik and Ramallah; they played games, sang Christmas songs and distributed gifts.



“Caritas Jerusalem tries to invest in the youth by teaching them the spirit of giving and encourage them in helping the marginalized not only in Christmas season but also all through the year.” Stated Caritas Jerusalem’s youth coordinator Tony Abdo



We were able to reach many children through these institutions; some of them are handicapped, others with special difficulties. As well as we reached senior citizens who have no one to celebrate with and provided them with food baskets.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Initiative Christlicher Orient for their continuous support and solidarity with Caritas Jerusalem and the people that we serve especially during Christmas time.

A Christmas day with the elderly



In December 2015, Miss. Lidia Sazyn from Caritas Poland visited Palestine to help us with the elderly in our Elderly Day Care Center. Together they prepared handmade decorations for the Christmas tree, sang Christmas carols and baked Christmas cookies. Later on, they were offered a hot and healthy meal followed by fruits and desserts.



Santa in Aboud Clinic

Another Christmas event took place in Aboud clinic by the Health department in cooperation with the Holy Bible Society on the 16th of December 2015. Two hundred students from several schools came to the clinic not only to learn about health issues but also to celebrate Christmas with Santa.

“It feels so joyful to spend Christmas time around elderly people and see their smiles” said Lidia, the volunteer from Caritas Poland

The visit came to its conclusion by distributing small gifts for each elderly from Caritas Poland.



The event started by a theater show performed by a very talented group of students about love, forgiveness, friendship, peace and conflict resolution as its theme.



Caritas Jerusalem takes this opportunity to thank Lidia and Caritas Poland for their coordination and friendship with us.



The students sang Christmas carols, danced and played different games with Santa.

“Even though we are passing through hard times in the region, these two hours made us feel like living in a wonderland” Stated one of the students



The event came to its conclusion by distributing 200 packets of Christmas chocolates.



Christmas is the greatest season

Food coupons for the needy

A simple way to help our lesser fortunate brothers and sisters is by donating food, especially in Christmas season. When you give money you never know how people use it. Therefore, the Social Services Department of Caritas Jerusalem in cooperation with St. Vincent de Paul charity and Latin Patriarchate Convent have started a Christmas campaign in order to help 105 families.

Caritas Jerusalem was able to provide food coupons to 105 families by the help of our local donors and friends. Such a campaign has lightened the burden of some parents who have limited resources and lots of responsibilities.

A big thank you from Caritas Jerusalem to our local contributors, the social services department, and the staff of Caritas Jerusalem for the endless support to the Christian families who cannot survive without generous people and friends like you.

Two Partner Visits



In December 2015 Mrs. Mary Lucas and Mrs. Elizabeth Funnel from Catholic Agency For Overseas Development (CAFOD) visited the Holy Land and assessed the projects on the ground, they visited Caritas Medical Center in Gaza and oriented Caritas Jerusalem team on Protection Mainstreaming.



On Friday, the 4th of December Caritas Jerusalem staff members met with them at Bethlehem Caritas Betharram Guest House and had a very productive workshop on Protection Mainstreaming (safe and dignified programming) in which the team was involved in various interactive activities and discussions.

We also had the honour of having with us Ms. Beatriz Searra from Caritas Spain who is a long term friend to Caritas Jerusalem and always does her utmost to support CJ with different projects and programs; she briefed the team about the way Caritas Spain operates in the Middle East.



Caritas Jerusalem is privileged to have international partners who truly care about Caritas Jerusalem's mission and are always ready to give us a helping hand in assisting our lesser fortunate brothers and sisters in Palestine. We thank them for their partnership in our various programs in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza strip.



Partners meeting



From the 14th to the 22nd of November 2015, a delegation from Caritas Jerusalem has visited Caritas International Belgium in Paris and Brussels to exchange ideas and observe the progressing of the synergy project in Jenin – northern West Bank in Palestine which aims to support the local economic development through partners' dialogue.

During the ten day work trip, they conducted several meetings with international donors in France and Belgium. These meetings aimed to discuss ways of cooperation and evaluate the running projects, especially house renovation in Jenin governorate.



The synergy project focuses on individual support to enhance family micro businesses, strengthen the local community to establish better community priorities, sponsor cultural and sportive events and organize vocational trainings. It is co-funded by the Belgium Government and Caritas International Belgium.

How can you help?

Support our activities

Your support is essential to provide long-term assistance to our beneficiaries.

Please see below our bank details to make a donation:

Bank Name: Arab Bank

Swift Code: ARABPS 22110

Account number: 457793/0/510 USD

Credit Account: Caritas Jerusalem

Branch No: 9110

At Arab Bank in Al-Ram

P.O.Box: 2445-Al-Ram