

## Easter homily 2016

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

**“Christ is risen! He is truly risen!”**

I wish all of you a blessed Easter, may the light and joy of Easter radiate within you and in your lives!

“The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!”(Lk 24:34).

We are here today at the end of the Triduum of the Passion of our Lord.

After a painful Friday and a silent Saturday, Easter Sunday’s light shines anew and joy bursts with the breaking of a new day!! Sunday, the first day of the week is the Lord’s Day, when He makes all things new.

Love, “is strong as Death,” (Song 8:6), that leads to the Tomb, very early in the morning on the first day of the week, when the women with flowers and spices went to anoint the body of their Lord buried hastily on Friday. They did not find the body of Jesus, the tomb was empty! Even today brothers and sisters, we are

witnesses, as all of the thousands of pilgrims and visitors who come here every day. They see the tomb is empty! Christ has conquered death!

Like the holy women, we seek the face of Christ, we thirst for his word, yearn for his presence and his peace. Our heart is restless! It is restless, because God apparently is not where we would like to find Him. We are looking for Him in our cities, in our often torn and broken families and in our places of conflict and violence. As with the holy women, we allow ourselves to be anxious, fearful of the emptiness and absence, but let us not be overcome by fear!

Let us, brothers and sisters, worthy of our heritage, be faithful witnesses, to be “the light of the world” (Mt 5:14) to all those whom the Lord puts on our paths, among them thousands of pilgrims and tourists who come to this holy place every day, seeking God, and with all these alienated, broken and bruised people suffering in the midst of war and violence, who are waiting and looking for opportunities for a better life, better home and a peaceful world.

## Embroidery Training Graduation Stepping into the future



International Women's Day is celebrated on March 8 every year around the world. It is a day to call for a change and to celebrate the memorial of the ordinary women who have played an astonishing role in the history of their countries. We, in Palestine have so many women that made a huge difference in the community and contributed particularly in the improvement of the society despite the lack of equality.

Caritas Jerusalem enhances women's role in the society by implementing women empowerment projects in Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza.



On the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2016, Caritas Jerusalem in cooperation with Women's Child Care Society in Beit Jala celebrated the graduation of ten young women who have attended the Palestinian embroidery training course for five months. This training was specialized in the unique Tahriri work done with couching stitch using Syrian silk thread. This kind of embroidery reflects the cultural heritage of Bethlehem and Beit Jala.

Mrs. Salwa Raba`, the director of the center thanked Caritas Jerusalem for its continuous support and she talked about the activities and services that are provided by Women's Child Care Society. "These trainings will allow women to be productive and assist their families financially". Said Mrs. Salwa



Fr. Raed Abusahlia, the general director of Caritas Jerusalem also expressed his gratitude to Caritas Spain who funded this project. "Launching small projects for women will empower them financially and socially" He said.

The ceremony came to its conclusion by exhibiting their handwork and distributing certificates.

This training is only part of the women empowerment project that Caritas Jerusalem is implementing. The whole project has targeted 86 women from Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem and Jericho in order to give them new life skills in the fields of beauty therapy, administration, sewing and embroidery.

### **Caritas Jerusalem honors the mothers**



On the 17<sup>th</sup> of March 2016, Caritas Jerusalem celebrated Mother's Day with the senior citizens of the Elderly Day Care Center (EDCC) and the senior citizens of the Antonian Charitable Society in Bethlehem.

The day started with the celebration of the Holy Mass in the parish of the Holy Land in Bethlehem presided by Fr. Raed Abusahlia, General Director of Caritas Jerusalem and Fr. Nirwan Al Bana, The Local Parish Priest. In his sermon, Fr. Nirwan has thanked both Caritas Jerusalem and the Antonian Society for their efforts and endeavors in organizing such an event for honoring the mothers. Fr. Raed addressed the mothers by saying "Mother is a Spring and Spring is mother" and thanked the Antonian Society for their hospitality.



Forty four elderly from the EDCC were invited to the Orthodox Ramallah Club hall to celebrate this very unique day. After the welcoming speeches the elderly danced on old traditional songs performed by Sabine's Band. Lunch was served for all; also flowers and gifts were distributed to the senior citizens.

We would like to thank the Antonian Charitable Society for the invitation and the local community for the gifts. We also would like to thank the EDCC staff members who spare no effort in making the senior citizens' living conditions much better.

### **Ewes and Lambs in Gaza**

Successful income generation projects give us in Caritas great satisfaction but rarely quite so immediate and enjoyable as these delightful ewes and lambs delivered to a poor family in February this year. Issa, one of Caritas staff who is familiar with animals and had researched the best value within the available budget, bought and delivered to the family two ewes, one with two lambs the other with one. The lambs were about two months old.



The following day I visited the family who are from a Bedouin background and know how to care for animals. They were thrilled with their five new healthy arrivals.

One of the young adult sons had gathered fresh grass and was feeding and stroking the ewes and lambs. The difference in his demeanour was noticeable. He was engaged, smiling and joking, so different from the dull, disinterested expressions on his face when I first met him. I had hoped that, in addition to the family income from this project, caring for the animals would give these unemployed young men a purpose and interest in life. I did not expect such an immediate result and it was wonderful to see. I asked when the lambs would be ready for sale. They said they will not sell any yet. The lambs are all females and they want to build up a herd.



They discussed vaccinations and other animal husbandry issues with Issa and as I observed this serious adult conversation I thought Yes! This is the right project for this poor family. It will generate income and much more.

Recent update is that the lambs are almost weaned and we will soon get a gift of cheese, the first edible fruits of this small income generation project.

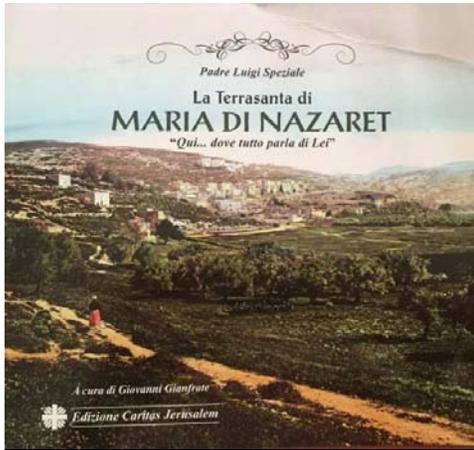
Sr Bridget Tighe FMDM

### **Two books about the Holy Land published by Caritas Jerusalem**



*A Guide to Bethlehem and the Holy Land* is a humble attempt by Prof. Qustandi Shomali and his wife Mrs. Sawsan to bring the most important sites of Bethlehem in particular and the Holy Land in general in 168 pages colored pictures and texts. Having such a book will add an extra attention to these places and will preserve the Palestinian identity.

La Terrasabta di Maria di Nazaret is a book about a pilgrimage on the footsteps of Our Lady; it was written by Fr. Luigi Speziale, who spent 50 years in the Holy Land. It is a good read of 164 pages with lots of colored photos printed by the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.



Both books were funded by Caritas Jerusalem to honor and encourage the authors and at the same time spread out the message of the Holy Places to all the pilgrims of the Holy Land.

The profit from the books will be used for charitable causes.

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