

**An Excerpt from the Midnight
Christians Homily of Archbishop
Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Aspostolic
Administrator of the Latin
Patriarchate of Jerusalem for
Christmas 2018**

“Jesus was born in Bethlehem” (Mt 2:1): This is not only an historical-geographical indication but a divine choice. Being born here, in a particular place, in a city of this land is what God has always wanted, as He loves the cities of men. If the Bible begins in a Garden, then it ends in a city, the holy Jerusalem. And the very life of Christ, which begins here, from birth to death, will be a continuous journey through cities and villages: the desert was, for Him, a necessary, but not definitive, pause. ...

On this night, celebrating the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, we proclaim, together with the angels, love for this land, for its cities; we want to respond to the vocation received to be here as architects of peace, prophets of hope, convinced and convincing witnesses of sharing and dialogue.

With Jesus, we want to inhabit this land, not to abandon it. We want to share the pains and anguish, the joys and hopes, and that all walk together on the path of salvation. We declare ourselves prepared for every effort, every commitment, and any initiative that makes our cities open and hospitable, where everyone can find a home, a job, a worthy and good life. We ask the Child of Bethlehem and His Parents who came here looking for lodging, to help us stay in the city; we ask for help to continue being, like them, the presence of peace in this land. Because our cities without Christians will be more impoverished and our Christians without their cities risk losing the way.

<https://www.lpj.org/homily-of-archbishop-pizzaballa-christmas-2018/>

The Season of Giving

During the blessed season, Caritas Jerusalem’s Social services Department enabled the celebration of many vulnerable Christian families in the Holy Land and helped them enjoy their Christmas to the fullest.

Christmas is the season of giving, God gave us his only Son and we ought to give back to others who are in need especially the children who look forward to celebrating Christmas with new clothes, toys and a festive dinner.



A girl in her new clothes

Therefore, Caritas Jerusalem’s Social Services Department organized several activities to bring joy into these children’s homes and to their families.

Many local donors and Jerusalemite families contributed generously in supporting their less fortunate brothers, sisters and neighbors in order for children to celebrate Christmas and welcome the New Year with renewed hope and optimism.

123 families received food coupons and 20 children received gifts by the generous donations granted to Caritas Jerusalem.

One mother said after she received the coupon: “This is a beautiful gift from baby Jesus to our family”



A boy in his new clothes

A friend of Caritas Jerusalem donated money so that needy children from Jerusalem could have new clothes for Christmas.

One mother said about this beautiful experience: “I can’t describe to you the joy that I saw in my children’s eyes when they heard that we were going to pick the Christmas clothes”.



A boy in his new clothes

Through these campaigns the Social Services Department was able to alleviate the financial burden on families who do not have the additional funds to celebrate Christmas and the New Year.

Wounds of Siege and War



The Doctor dressing the wounds of an injured patient

Ahmed is a 13-year-old child from Rafah Gaza.

He was shot in his left leg during the demonstrations taking place near the fence. When the Mobile Medical Team met Ahmed for the first time, he was very depressed and in acute pain. “I find difficulty in walking, and I cannot move easily. The injury prevented me from living my normal life” Ahmed explained. The team started treating him both physically and psychologically. They were happy to notice the difference with each session. Each time Ahmed comes to the clinic, he is more confident and determined to recover even faster. The doctor mentioned, “Boosting his self-confidence and belief in his ability to recover is what matters most. Ahmed is significantly improving, and his wound is healing well”.

A decade of blockade, occupation, wars, poverty and loss of freedom of movement and travel have impacted millions of lives in the Gaza strip.



The pharmacist giving a patient the appropriate medicine

Because of the siege, people in Gaza lack many fundamental rights and most importantly basic and primary health care system that is capable of helping thousands of wounded people during time of crisis. We, in Caritas Jerusalem filled the gap in medical services through the Medical Mobile Team (MMT) project.

The MMT consists of an outreach vehicle that was able to reach different areas in Gaza, especially marginalized areas that have little or no access to medical services to treat the injured from the recent demonstrations of “March of Return”, in addition to any patients needing primary health care.



The laboratory technician is performing the needed lab analysis

Until December 2018 the medical team was able to reach 6000 patients in 13 locations in the 5 Governorates of Gaza.

Caritas Jerusalem participates in the first training of trainers for Caritas Internationalist Management Standard (CIMS) coordinators



“The TOT training enriched my knowledge from different angles. Now I know better what makes a resilient organization, the true meaning of accompaniment, various teaching techniques and many theories. Now, I believe I can share my new acquired knowledge with more confidence to my colleagues in Caritas Jerusalem and the region (Middle East).

The new tool of the CIMS and the progress of the work done to simplify things also is a great achievement. I appreciate all the efforts and the good work that were put towards this training that was packed with activities and advanced skills. All I have to do now is to internalize the things that I have learnt and pass it on to others, tailor made to their own life context. In addition, I am fully aware that I have the CI team behind me if I face any difficulties or challenges to guide, encourage and support in my journey.”
Harout Bedrossian, Caritas Jerusalem

The first training for trainers (TOT) for Anglophone coordinators took place on 19-23 November in Bangkok. The training was attended by 21 participants each representing Africa, Middle East and North Africa, Asia and Oceania.

The training purpose was to improve the knowledge about CI MS tool and develop facilitation and training skills of the trainees so that they become trainers in their own region. The five days of training were rich in activities and things to learn for the trainees.

The first day was about the link between the CIMs, Catholic Social Teaching and the Caritas founding values and their most important elements such as: accountability, good governance, transparency and stewardship. In the afternoon there was a presentation on Integral Organization Model. The discussion was about what is an organization and how it functions. The focus was on the key elements of an organization, such as management style, systems, organizational structure, strategy, staff and skills.



From left to right Aloysius John CI, Moira Monacelli CI, Annamaria Vrackova CI.

The second and third day were dedicated to Organizational Review Tool (ORT), risk management and how they are interconnected. After presentations and discussions on risk management, the conclusion was that managing risks leads to better decisions and introducing prior action in order to eliminate potential risks. In order to practice the ORT, participants in small groups were given case study to deal with. This activity helped the participants practice risk analysis and risk mitigation and identify challenges as future trainers such as how to transfer the knowledge to other CIMs coordinators in different regions.

The fourth day was dedicated to finalizing the ORT session and developing an improvement plan based on the ORT activity done the day before. The group came to conclusion that in order to develop an improvement plan they must include the Board and Management in the discussion. The improvement plan should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound), also the context and culture of the organization should be taken into consideration. Nonetheless, for the improvement plan to succeed the monitoring and evaluation are very vital and important.



From Left to right Karam Abi Yazbeck Caritas Mona, Laith Bsharat Caritas Jordan, Harout Bedrossian Caritas Jerusalem.

The fifth day aimed to focus on the “ideal” trainer enumerating the necessary skills, knowledge and attitude through drawings. The last day was also dedicated to practicing facilitation skills and simulating a training session by using the learnt techniques.

The trainees left Bangkok with deeper knowledge on different aspects of the CI MS, gaining a lot of new practical information by this becoming indeed proud promoters of the CI MS in their respective regions.

In addition, the facilitators' team sometimes adopted changes in the agenda and integrate more stimulation and role plays in order to practice some of the methodologies and techniques presented during the 5 days and make the plan sufficient and applicable to all regions.



A group activity



A group activity

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