It is almost two years since we began preparation for the ORDP that included consultation with our colleagues in Caritas Internationalis and MONA, establishing a Support Group of other Caritas Member Organisations, raising the necessary funds, designing a TOR for a lead consultant followed by interviews and appointment and beginning the actual work. It was an intense process during which we experienced the support and encouragement of you, our partners and friends. We are now beginning to see the fruits of this work with updated organizational structure, manuals and procedures, and committed staff with confidence to face the ever-present uncertainties and challenges in Palestine and world-wide.

Dear Friends, a lot has happened since our last Newsletter from the near completion of our Organisational Restructuring and Development Process (ORDP) to our response to the Covid-19 virus as well as our various ongoing projects. A meeting of Caritas Jerusalem Board of Directors took place in our Jerusalem headquarters, presided over by His Beatitude Pierbattista Pizzaballa, at which the appointment of a Chaplain and Executive Committee was approved.

The newly appointed Executive Committee has combined expertise in pastoral and social ministry, finance, law, health care, organizational leadership and management. We are particularly pleased to have an appointed Chaplain and we thank Fr Amjad OFM for accepting this important spiritual role.

Congratulations to our President, Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, recently appointed Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem.
Reflecting on Pope Francis’ statement in the recent Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti that Saint Francis “did not wage a war of words aimed at imposing doctrines; he simply spread the love of God”. For me, this expresses exactly the spirituality of Caritas Jerusalem that permeates all our work through which we “simply spread the love of God” to those we serve, and the mission of Caritas Jerusalem in which you our friends partake.

Sr. Bridget Tighe FMDM

This new Department combines the previous Social and Youth Departments and includes our Elderly Day Care Center.

Combines the previous Food Security and Microloans Departments as well as Caritas Jerusalem’s Vocational Training Centre. While Covid-19 curtails some work of this department, most activities continue including distribution of water tanks to beneficiaries in the West Bank.

Combines the Health Department and Emergency Interventions and this year has implemented many Covid19 emergency responses. We have two Health Centers, one in Gaza and the second in Taybeh and both are operated under the direction of this department.

A thank you for our partners and donors for the support through which we are able to be present in the community and lend a helping hand for those who need it most.
WHY VOLUNTEER WITH CARITAS JERUSALEM?

Enabling the youth to play an active role in their society, offering a chance to give back allowing them to connect to the community, ultimately leading to contributing to positive social change which is the core of Caritas Jerusalem’s values.

YOUTH COMMITMENT

Project activities included: planting trees and shrubs to enhance the beauty of the Church grounds in Gaza and to promote care of the environment, while in the West Bank it included cleaning an ancient Byzantine Church to make it accessible to the local community and internal tourists and trips to ancient churches to introduce the youth to their Christian heritage and the history of Christianity in Palestine. These various activities and trips expand the knowledge of our youth and strengthen their commitment to the Christian community.

Through our Socio Pastoral department, we will continue to provide humanitarian, social and pastoral services and to strengthen participation of our youth who already volunteer in our projects for the elderly, children with disabilities and emergency relief. Other components of our youth programme will continue including voluntary work in parishes and the wider community, in collaboration with parish priests.
We have 8 Mobile Medical Teams (MMTs) serving the poorest and most marginalized communities throughout the Gaza Strip, in collaboration with Community Based Organisations (CBOs) The MMT 1 and MMT 2 schedule will operate from 1st November 2020. Both MMT1 and MMT2 consist of 2 doctors, 2 nurses, a lab technician, a pharmacist, a data entry officer and a driver. MMT1 works in CBO premises during the morning shift.

MMT2 visits the elderly and other vulnerable persons in their home while working during the afternoon/evening shift. The elderly are the most at risk during the COVID-19 pandemic and the MMT2 staff take extra precautions in an effort to prevent them being infected by the virus. This team will work exclusively with the elderly and other vulnerable people providing them with lab tests and treatments as required in the safety of their homes.

In August 2020, in response to the spread of Covid-19 in the community, Caritas Jerusalem activated its Emergency Contingency Plan already prepared in coordination with the Ministry of Health (MOH) in Gaza. The plan includes five mobile medical teams consisting of a doctor, a nurse and a driver that visit patients in their homes providing them with medical examinations, wound dressing, medications and all necessary medical treatments.

The Mobile Medical Teams are also providing assistance to the families that are quarantined and therefore unable to provide for their family members which include elderly, young adults, children and pregnant women.

Ongoing projects include: A project for the elderly which is now beginning its third year. A data collection team consisting of 6 nurses has begun field visits and screenings for the elderly who will be enrolled in the project that includes health and nutrition education, medical screening and treatment.

Coronavirus is vastly spreading in Gaza, and so is the fear and stress among the population this is why Caritas Jerusalem’s Mobile Medical Teams are working tirelessly to provide the much needed medical care and assistance. All of which has been rendered achievable with the support of our partners and donors.
As part of Caritas Jerusalem’s emergency response to the Covid-19, Caritas has extended its services and focused on being present in the community during these difficult times.

In Gaza, Caritas Medical Teams have sanitized the Holy Family Church (Deir Al-Latin) and the Missionaries of Charity home for children with disabilities, as part of their emergency response.

The Covid19 pandemic struck the West Bank in March, Caritas Jerusalem moved quickly to help the poor and marginalized. 450 food parcels were distributed directly to families in April, providing them with essentials during the lockdowns.

After finalizing a Christian students aid project that helped support 591 children who attend 21 different schools that were chosen by the Socio-Pastoral department based on their needs, 150 food parcels were given to the families of these children. 300 food coupons were given to 12 organizations in Bethlehem, Beitjala and Beitsahour in August. Caritas Jerusalem is an active organization in the Christian community by collaborating with local parishes, during the first wave of the Covid-19, 450 Food parcels were distributed to these parishes.

In May, 2020 Caritas Jerusalem began implementing a freshly cooked meals delivery project that aims not only to provide the food to the elderly, but also to give the much-needed care to this specific group in the society that has been greatly affected by social isolation. Caritas Jerusalem staff visit the elderly while delivering the food and spend time with them to boost their social and emotional engagement and wards off loneliness.