CARITAS Jerusalem, a member of Caritas Internationalis, represents the socio-pastoral services of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land. Our mission includes enhancing the quality and accessibility of social and medical services for the poor and marginalized.

Our Elderly Day Care Center in Ramallah is dedicated to serving the vulnerable elderly who, during these times of crisis, are greatly affected by the social distancing which is increased by the lockdowns and restrictions imposed by the authorities.

Our staff have continued their duty to help those in need by distributing meals and supplements directly to the safety of the elderly's homes. For Christmas, Caritas Jerusalem took the initiative of giving presents to the elderly so that even by a small gesture, we could lift their holiday spirit.
The campaign entitled “staying safe from covid-19 during the holiday seasons” focused on the distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) including masks, alcogel and non-contact thermometers to 46 churches of all Christian denominations during the advent season.

Caritas Jerusalem works towards assisting our fellow Christians in these parishes and protecting our society.
In May 2020, in response to a request from the MOH, our staff in Gaza prepared an Emergency Contingency Plan that provided for five Mobile Medical Teams (MMTs) each consisting of a doctor, nurse and driver with backup support by Caritas Jerusalem Health Centre staff. In August they were called upon to provide primary health care in the homes of non-Covid patients to relieve pressure on hospitals and to prevent spread of the virus in the community, this was coordinated by the MOH.

Unfortunately, the virus spread alarmingly and in early December the MOH asked our teams to visit the homes of people known to be infected with the virus with the mandate a) to assess if the infected person(s) could safely self-isolate at home and if not, to refer them to a government quarantine centre and b) to record the infected person(s) blood oxygen level and decide if they can be treated at home, and if not to refer them to hospital, all in coordination with the MOH.

The teams also visit people in quarantine to check on how they are coping and to assist in whatever way they can. Our staff who form these MMTs are working on the front line in very dangerous situations.

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, on the 24th of January 2021 the confirmed number of Covid positive cases had reached 49644, including 7,603 active cases and 508 deaths. These numbers may seem relatively small but with very limited testing capacity the true figure is almost certainly a lot higher. The same applies to Covid related deaths.

We have provided this frontline service to the people of Gaza whose already poor living conditions continue to deteriorate with extremely high unemployment, ongoing lockdown in small, overcrowded dwellings with limited electricity, poor, if any, wifi connection and during the winter, many with leaking roofs and no heating, whereas the general health of the population is weak after years of blockade, deepening poverty, overcrowded living conditions, unpotable water and poor diet. Most Gazans cannot afford nutritional supplements to strengthen their weakened immune system and lockdowns to control spread of the virus makes them even more vulnerable.
CARITAS JERUSALEM'S PROJECT "ENHANCING FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVING FARMERS' LIVELIHOODS THROUGH THE REHABILITATION OF ACTIVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS AND TRAINING OF FARMERS IN THE USE OF ECOLOGICAL FARMING SYSTEMS." IN COOPERATION WITH THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE.
As part of the Covid-19 response project, which is co-financed by the Polish development cooperation programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, and joint efforts from Caritas Poland and Caritas Jerusalem, four ventilators have been distributed to the National Rehabilitation Center in Bethlehem, which treats coronavirus infected people, and this center has a new ICU ward dedicated especially for the coronavirus infected patients.

During the official delivery of the ventilators, the governor touched on the epidemiological situation in Bethlehem, pointing to the large increase in the number of infected patients, and its implications for the health efforts and services provided. He expressed the Palestinian people’s thanks for this timely emergency medical aid.

The representative of the Republic of Poland to Palestine, Przemyslaw Czyz, expressed his feelings of gladness in providing this emergency humanitarian aid to Bethlehem and working towards helping the Palestinian health sector in order to save lives. He said that he brings the financial aspect, while the spiritual aspect is represented by Caritas Poland and Caritas Jerusalem.

In turn, Dr. Imad Shehadeh, Director of the National Center, said that this Polish support is important and vital at this particular time when the spread of the Coronavirus is very high, he conveyed the center's appreciation for the received four artificial respirators, which raises the center's capacity to eleven resuscitation devices.

Shehadeh thanked the Polish cooperation for this support, which increases the capacity of the center to treat the seriously ill, and also expressed his gratitude to Caritas Jerusalem, through which the project is being implemented.
The Governor of Bethlehem Governorate, Major General Kamel Hamid, welcomed the Representative of the Republic of Poland to Palestine and the delegation of Caritas Jerusalem, in their visit to Bethlehem and the National Rehabilitation Center, now specified for the treatment of Coronavirus patients, appreciating this support and medical aid to Bethlehem and Palestine provided by Poland.

The Secretary General of Caritas Jerusalem, Sister Bridget Tighe, said that the delivery of this aid comes within the framework of the close cooperation between Caritas Jerusalem and Caritas Poland and through funding from the Polish government, stressing that Caritas Jerusalem is following up on the health conditions in Bethlehem and is aware of the health situation and the need for these devices today to serve the people of Palestine.