

Caritas Jerusalem & Caritas Spain
Youth Living Together



Dear friends,

As we write this Newsletter we are beginning the holy season of Advent, a time of waiting, of hope and expectation. Just as the Virgin Mary waited for the birth of her child with hope tinged with anxiety for an unknown future, so people in the Land of Jesus' birth wait in hope but also with anxiety for their future and that of their children.

In this Newsletter we tell you about some of our work to promote the human rights and dignity of the people of this Holy Land and of our efforts to initiate and support change for a more just and equitable society. Any economic, social, political and cultural structure which opposes or oppresses change aimed at promoting justice is wrong and we challenge it.

Caritas Jerusalem implements various projects in East Jerusalem to raise awareness of the residents' rights, empowers the youth by engaging them in community work with their peers from Caritas Spain who joined them for a summer camp, honours senior citizens on different occasions such as the International Day for Older Persons and helps small farmers in Area C to maintain and cultivate their land. We work to enhance solidarity with the oppressed and neglected through these various programmes, some of which are highlighted in this Newsletter.

Thank you for enabling us to serve the poor by your prayers and financial support.

During this season of Advent may you be blessed with hope and peace.

Bridget Tighe FMDM
General Director
Caritas Jerusalem

"The wealth of the Holy Land is in its people, the direct descendants of the first Christians. I have learnt the real meaning of hope and I have discovered the only way for peace is love." Rocio, one of Caritas Spain's Youth.

Caritas Jerusalem developed the youth summer camp program as a tool to help the youth reach their full potential as future leaders in their communities. The program fosters mutual understanding, respect and civic engagement among the Palestinian youth and their international peers.

"Our souls are wounded by the reality of our brothers in Palestine, but we are guided by the star that takes us to the manger in Bethlehem, where we find the true light of hope." Cecilia, Caritas Spain Youth.

During the visits, the youth participate in workshops, community service activities, meetings with community leaders and live with local families in order to have a holistic experience of life in the Holy Land.



From the 3rd of August to the 16th of August 2018 a group of eight young men and women from Spain led by Ms Beatriz Seara, responsible for the projects in the Middle East visited Palestine to participate in summer activities, exchange cultures and experiences with their counterparts in Palestine. This summer camp was the seventh of its kind where the youth were engaged in different community works and experienced the authentic Palestinian daily life by residing with individual families in Beit Jala.

“The families of Beit Jala not only opened the doors of their houses to us but also their hearts and lives. I have witnessed faith in action and the true meaning of hope.” Almudena, Caritas Spain Youth.

The two week visit was full of cultural activities, community service and workshops. The Spanish youth also visited historical and religious sites around Palestine and got acquainted with the reality of life in the Holy Land.

“It was an incredible experience, I didn’t know that people from outside truly care about our rights and are very interested in the presence of the Christians in the Holy Land.” Christian, one of Caritas Jerusalem’s Youth.



The camp is part of a wider cooperation strategy between Caritas Spain and Caritas Jerusalem, entitled “The Peace Initiative” which includes youth exchange. It has been held 6 times in Palestine and once in Spain. It aims to develop youth’s commitment with solidarity causes as well as their activity within their churches and communities. Spanish youth give witness talks about their experiences on their return to Spain, whereas Palestinian youth engage in voluntary action in their parishes and communities.

“This is what I learned from this incredible encounter with the Palestinians: faith is not a chance but a choice and love is not a chance but a choice. These two choices I witnessed in the families that I’ve lived, worked and prayed with.” Francesc, Caritas Spain Youth.

Caritas Jerusalem signs New Agreement with Beit Jala Municipality



On the 26th of September 2018, Caritas Jerusalem signed a memorandum of understanding with the Municipality of Beit Jala to continue the implementation of food security and livelihoods project that focuses on the use of environmental farming system and preserve the resources of the water in Al Makhrou, (area C) located to the west of the city.

This agreement for joint cooperation was signed by Sr. Bridget Tighe, the General Director of Caritas Jerusalem and Mr. Nicola Khames, the mayor of the Municipality of Beit Jala in the presence of partners' representatives such as St. Yves, Farmers Association in Bethlehem and Beit Jala.



The cooperation agreement includes the roles of each partner and the importance of building networks between them to implement the activities of agro ecological farming and agricultural irrigation systems on an area of 18 dunums.

The mayor expressed keenness in boosting and expanding the work done in the agricultural lands of Al Makhrou.



Sr. Bridget Tighe stressed the importance of the work done on the land where CJ is creating temporary jobs and encouraging people to cultivate their lands so they become self sufficient and make their living with dignity.

Mr. David Fawadleh and Moutaz Awad presented the achievements of Phase I where 125 dunams were rehabilitated for 39 beneficiaries; 55 temporary jobs were created for skilled and unskilled labourers in addition to the 10 training sessions held on Agro ecology.

Phase II will complete the work started in other parts of Al Makhrou and will be the biggest agro ecological project in Palestine.

The project is funded by the Municipality of Zaragoza in Spain and Caritas Spain.



"Thank you for making Al Makhrou green and beautiful again!" The mayor of Beit Jala

Caring For Those Who Once Cared For Us



According to a report issued by Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) on the situation of the elderly aging 60 years and over on the occasion of the International Day of Older Persons, marked on October 1st, in midst 2017, the percentage of the elderly aged 60 and over reached 4.6% of the population in Palestine (5.1% in West Bank and 3.9% in Gaza Strip).

On the 5th of October, 2018 Caritas Jerusalem's Elderly Day Care Center (EDCC) with its 50 senior citizens and volunteers celebrated the International Day of Older Persons in cooperation with the Orthodox Club, the youth and other local donors.



The day started by the celebration of the Holy Mass at the Holy Family Parish Church in Ramallah. Fr. Akram Mousharbash, the local parish priest, preached about the link between childhood and old age and the similarities between these two age groups.

(The day coincided with The Feast of Guardian Angels.)



After mass a party was held at the Orthodox Club to honor the elderly on this very special occasion. Dr. Hani Al Hussary, the director of the club welcomed everyone and expressed his joy in hosting Caritas Jerusalem in general and the senior citizens in particular.



The Palestinian Dabke group Raya performed several dances for them and invited the elderly to join. Many of them forgot their physical ailments for a while and had fun dancing with the youth.

The celebration came into its conclusion by a festive lunch and the distribution of presents to the elderly. Yasmine Hana one of our Elderly said "I will keep you in my prayers because you are the source of my Joy"



A similar activity took place in Ramallah on the 12th of October in cooperation with St. Vincent De Paul to honor the elderly. More than 90 senior citizens took part in this celebration.

Caritas Jerusalem would like to take this opportunity to thank our local donors, the Orthodox club, St. Vincent De Paul, Raya Dabke team and the local businesses that funded the two events and honored the senior citizens.



The Elderly Day Care Center (EDCC) is a friendly home in Ramallah where over 85 elderly people see their medical and social needs answered. It was established in 1990 with a Christian ethos but open to all, to serve the elderly who are left without a breadwinner and without care. It is a place to meet, socialize and spend the long hours of the day. In addition, it offers a healthy and well balanced meal three days a week, especially prepared to meet their nutritional requirement.

Caritas Jerusalem Holds Socio-Economic Rights Awareness Session



On the 10th of October Caritas Jerusalem's Social Services Department in cooperation with the Society of St. Yves held a lecture on Palestinians in East Jerusalem and their Socio-Economic Rights at our main office in Jerusalem.

After Israel occupied the West Bank following the 1967 War, it annexed around 70.5 square kilometers of the West Bank into the Jerusalem municipality boundary. The Israeli government at that time granted the Palestinian Jerusalemites permanent residency status. A permanent resident living in East Jerusalem has the right to benefit from Israeli health insurance and social welfare from institutions that are within the municipal boundary; many Palestinian Jerusalemites are not aware of their rights therefore, in coordination with our colleagues from St. Yves, we held a session to raise their awareness on their rights and where to turn for help.



The session was attended by 17 participants who wanted to know their rights and needed guidance on which institution to turn for help, particularly those who were widowed, unemployed and underserved.

Another issue that was explained thoroughly was the "center of life" policy which forces Palestinian residents to constantly have to prove that they reside, physically live and work within the Jerusalem

municipality boundaries. Any time these residents want to renew their IDs or travel documents, they must produce documents — for example, landline phone bills, electricity bills or property tax bills — that prove their physical residency in the city. If a Palestinian Jerusalemite is not physically living inside the Jerusalem municipal boundaries or has traveled to another country within the past seven years without going to the Ministry of the Interior, then he/she will lose Jerusalem permanent residency.



This activity is part of the work that Caritas does in order to empower our beneficiaries and make them aware of their rights which are protected by International Humanitarian Law.

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

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Branch No: 9110

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P.O.Box: 2445-Al-Ram