



GRAND MAGISTERIUM – VATICAN
EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF
THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

A place of worship for the whole growing Christian community in Jubeiha, Jordan



Construction is finishing at the Saint Paul de Jubeiha church, built in a growing district in the North-East of Amman. It will be able to accommodate several thousand people for celebrations. The local Christian community have already had the joy of coming together for Christmas 2020.

Some projects are particularly dear to the heart of the members of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre for many reasons. Without doubt, the Church of Saint Paul the Apostle in Jubeiha is one of those. About 10 kilometers northeast from Amman, Jubeiha is a neighbourhood where the population has been constantly growing over the past years. With the rise of prices in Amman, many families left the capital city to move here where houses and the cost of living are more affordable. Furthermore, as Abuna Butrus Hijazen, parish priest of Jubeiha, explains, “with the construction of the parish school, the number of Christians who live in the Jubeiha area increased, because it is the only Catholic and Christian school in the northern sector of Amman.” The church is and continues to be a place of worship open to the whole Christian community, Catholic and non-Catholic, which counts a few thousand people.

“This Christian community was without a church where people could gather to pray. They were like the first Christian community, as they met in each other’s homes to pray and live a life of joy and sharing,” comments Abuna Butrus thinking about the past. The parish was established by Father Labib Daibes almost 40 years ago, in 1984 when there was still no building.

Many years passed by and the growing community actively looked for some solutions to have a more stable place of worship. “The first stone of a church was placed 20 years ago – shares Father Butrus – and since then there has been support from the parishioners, who strongly desired to build the church, and also from the entire Christian community around Jordan.”

As a result of these efforts, there was a good outcome that contributed to the launch of the project in its early stages. There were also some individual donors who greatly supported the project. Omar Naber, a parishioner and member of the Jordanian Parliament, is one of them.

The idea of the church was first discussed between Father Labib Daibes and Omar Naber and then received approval and blessings from the Latin Patriarchate. The Naber family owned the church land and initiated the church project by paying for original designs, excavation, and the structural work as well as some marble work. The contribution made by Omar Naber (pictured on the next page) to St. Paul's Church ranges between 310 and 330,000 US dollars. Father of three, Omar Naber has been invested Knight of the Order the Holy Sepulchre and he joins his confreres and consocers in the faithful service for the Church in the Holy Land, the Land where he lives.

However, more contributions were needed to conclude the project. On the occasion of his first visit to the Holy Land in September 2017, the Governor General Leonardo Visconti di Modrone and the delegation accompanying him visited the construction site of the church and committed to support the project by complementing the efforts of the local community who has been longing to have a dignified place where to attend services and live a Christian communitarian life and thus boosting the project.

In fact, as Father Butrus explains, "the place where the Christian community celebrates today is the school hall. Unfortunately, we cannot celebrate all the sacraments of the Christian life (First Communion for the children, marriage, etc.), and in order to celebrate these sacraments, Christians have to go to other parishes. This makes them feel sad because they live in a parish, but they have to celebrate the sacraments of their Christian life in another parish."

Nevertheless, there is a vibrant parish life: there are different youth groups – the Catholic Scouts Movement is the largest counting about 200 youngsters and then there is the Christian Youth Group gathering youth of all ages – the Committee of Mercy, a group caring for poor and families in need, and a group of mothers.

Samer and Tamara recently got married. They have been part of the Jubeiha community since their childhood and both attended the Christian youth group. "It is beautiful that our son, who was born a year ago, will grow up in this church, receive the sacraments here and participate in the parish activities as we did before him – they say – but the difference is that he will go to the church and not to the school hall or people's homes to pray. He will have another 'ecclesiastical history', different from ours."

"After a long wait, we can finally see the dream come true that this Christian community in the Jubeiha area will have a place for prayer, worship and meeting as one family," Sami and Mai comment. "Nonetheless – another couple of parishioners continues – we believe that these difficulties helped our Christian community to live another experience of the Christian faith: that we can be faithful in all situations of our life, as the Christian community of the first centuries did as they lived a common life." "We would like to thank all those who helped us make this dream come true," they concluded.

Since 2017 the Order of the Holy Sepulchre has largely invested in this project with more than 1 million 500,000 € and now that the works are being completed, all Knights and Dames look forward to the inauguration of the church of Saint Paul the Apostle.

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