

Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem

Spring 2025 Holy Land Update





The Order and the Holy Land



Article I *Mission*

The specific mission **assigned** by the Holy Father to the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem is that of **animating zeal** in the ecclesial community toward the Land of Jesus and sustaining the Catholic Church and the Christian presence there.

Duties:

- Prayer
- Pilgrimages
- Financial Contributions





Article 20 **Holy Land Commission**



1. Tasks. The Holy Land Commission is a consultative body of the Order with the task of advising and assisting the Grand Magisterium in examining, assessing (also with visits in loco) and possibly proposing the approval of the requests addressed to the Order to finance projects in the Holy Land. It supervises and reports on the state of progress and the completion of the approved projects.

2. Members. The Cardinal Grand Master, in agreement with the Governor General, appoints the members of the Holy Land Commission. It is made up of three members, one of whom must be a member of the Grand Magisterium who, as such, assumes the role of President of the Commission.

Other Members of the Holy Land Commission are:

Sir Bart McGettrick – Scotland – President of the Commission

Lieutenant of Honor Sir Detlef Bruemmer – Germany

Holy Land Commission



Travel to the Holy Land 2 times each year – Spring and Fall – 10 days

Meet with Sami El-Yousef (LPJ-CEO) and staff

- Review Budgets – ~\$12-14 M in funding each year
- Review Project Status
- Perform Needs Assessment / Future Planning



Visit at least 2 or 3 parishes and schools in addition to convents, seminaries, nursing homes, and humanitarian aid recipients

Visit current project sites to assess progress

Dinner meeting with allied groups supporting similar interests

Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem

Pope announced to the world with the apostolic letter *Nulla celebrior* of July 23, 1847, the successful restoration of the Patriarchate.



Core Mission of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem

To serve the spiritual needs of the Christians

To evangelize the Good News of Salvation

To recruit and train religious from the native people

To create and maintain schools to educate the young

To assist the poor and needy

War and Its Effects

Status of the parish in Gaza

Situation in the West Bank

Gaza – Holy Family Church

Start of War = ~1,200 Christians in Gaza – ~750 Latin/Roman and ~450 Greek Orthodox

June 2025 - ~430 in Parish Grounds and ~150 at the Greek Orthodox Church



The Parish grounds include a church, a school with 300 students, a kindergarten for 50 children, and a priest house.

There are also two Religious Sisters' communities within the parish compound, who help in the parish activities, and are responsible for two homes for children and elderly with disabilities.

Gaza Parish



Situation in the parish has gotten significantly worse since March 2

- Shelling / Military action within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile
- Electricity has been cut; back to generators
- Feels like the plan is to get people to leave by resource starvation

Gaza Parish



No Supplies Received Since March 2

Getting low on food supplies – No fresh food or meat

Aid being distributed is all in South Gaza

Fuel and medicine is not available at any price

Gaza Parish

Good News

- ~120 students in temporary school!
- Working to refurbish the Rosary Sister school building for 2025-26
- Until his passing, Pope Francis called Fr Gabrielle almost every day!



Uncertain future for the parish and school



- First rough estimate - \$4 M to rebuild structures
- Uncertain how many parishioners stay – if they have homes / jobs

Expected that some parishioners will be living in compound for **several years!**

Situation in the West Bank

March 2024 – 1 PM



March 2025 – 10:30 AM



Pilgrimage



- Once we arrive, we felt safe. But streets are deserted.
- Getting there is a HUGE challenge – few flights / many cancellations. Serious risk getting back.
- Getting around has some issues due to checkpoints (especially the Galilee and Bethlehem areas)
- All the pilgrim sites are open
- People are very appreciative of the effort



Personal Opinion – 2026 Summer / Fall will be the beginning of a pilgrimage rebound

Situation on the West Bank – June 2025



- Current conflict at 20 months is longest ever
- Unemployment among Christians is 65%
85% of the tourism is run by Christians
- 190 new barriers/check points have been installed since war.
- 22 new settlements displacing Palestinians
- Inflation is high – close to 8% - worsen by the drop in the value of the NIS shekel.

Situation on the West Bank – June 2025



Economy has collapsed

- In the West Bank, the unemployment rate among Christians is considered the highest of all time (68-72% of young Christians are unemployed).
- The **“new poor”** LPJ Social Department is now seeing people who have historically been employed and able to meet their own needs.
- Having to rotate people in and out of the LPJ jobs creation program – too many people needing work for the funding available for job.

Humanitarian Needs

Humanitarian crisis – not just in Gaza but in all Palestine. Jordan and Israel are not immune from the economic impacts from the war.

A thriving “Black Market” – at prices up to 500% normal.

Worldwide support from Christian / Catholic relief agencies – mainly European - have provided funds. Individual and diocese support has dried up.

Worldwide support does NOT help with:

- School related costs
- Rent
- Utility costs in Palestine



Near Future – West Bank - Palestine



- Based on COVID experience, they expect it will take 18-24 months for a return to normal once a **peaceful settlement** is reached
- Serious concerns about Palestinian work permits – will replacement workers be kept?



Expectations are for at least 2 years of hard economic times before a new normal emerges.

Holy Land Bottom Line

Estimates are that the Christian population is under 50,000

The LPJ is facing a few years of extraordinary demand for humanitarian, pastoral and social services.

The Order (along with other Christian Relief agencies) will need to creatively step up its support to assist the LPJ.

Serious Financial Challenges at Schools

EOHSJ Funding for the Latin Patriariate



Financing the LPJ Activities

Our Order provides between \$12M-\$14M in funding each year to LPJ

Institutional Funding - \$955,000/month commitment in 2024 (up from \$755,000)

Admin – Priest and staff salaries, utilities, supplies

Schools – Teacher salary support

Humanitarian Aid

Budgeted at \$1M per year but bequests and special collections typically improve that to \$1.75M. The LPJ administration estimates an annual need of ~\$2M.

Annual Donation



Project Funding

Infrastructure repairs or upgrades less than \$250,000.

Typically, 20-30 projects each year with a total budget between \$1.5-\$2.0 M.

Lieutenancy discretion
or special collections



Ongoing
Completed

LPJ List of Extraordinary Projects 2024

No.	Project Code	PROJECT NAME	INSTITUTION	CITY	COUNTRY	CATEGORY	Donor	Proposed Budget	PROGRESS
1	GA 439/24	Renovating the prosthesis and orthosis department at Our Lady of Peace Center, Amman	OLOPC	OLOPC	Jordan	Rehabilitation	Netherland Lieutenancy	\$ 84,360	90%
2	GA 439/24	Zarqa South School Renovations	School	Zarqa	Jordan	Rehabilitation	North American Campaign	\$ 175,000	100%
3	GA 444/24	Upgrading LPJ IT Infrastructure	HQ	Jerusalem	Israel	Rehabilitation	Netherland Lieutenancy	\$ 38,000	80%
4	GA 446/24	Purchasing Hospital Beds for Beit Afram Elderly Home, Taybeh	Parish	Taybeh	Palestine	Rehabilitation	USA Northern Lieutenancy	\$ 11,955	100%
5	GA 449/24	RENOVATION WORKS FOR BATHROOMS AT KG - FUHEIS ALALI	School	Fuheis	Jordan	Rehabilitation	North American Campaign	\$ 18,025	100%
6	GA 450/24	RENOVATION WORKS FOR LATIN SCHOOL 2ND BUILDING - FUHEIS AL- BALAD	School	Fuhies EL Balad	Jordan	Rehabilitation	North American Campaign	\$ 47,453	100%
7	GA 460/24	Central Air Conditioning System in Beit Afram	Parsih	Taybeh	Palestine	Rehabilitation	French Lieutenancy	\$ 87,895	80%
8	GA 461/24	Front Wall Renovation, Marka school - Jordan	School	Marka	Jordan	Rehabilitation	North American Campaign	\$ 52,836	100%

War related labor and material shortages have slowed work on some projects

Projects

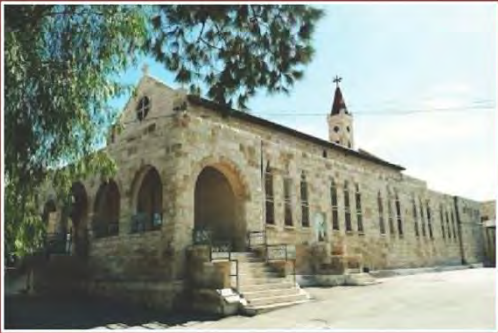


THE LATIN PATRIARCHATE
OF JERUSALEM

CONCLUSION REPORT

REHABILITATION OF SOUTHERN ZARQA SCHOOL
BUILDING
JORDAN

GA 439/24



GENERAL ADMINISTRATION
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
OCTOBER 2024

The completed structural reinforcement works have improved the school building's stability and safety. These improvements provide enhanced resistance to structural stresses and environmental factors, ensuring a safer environment for students and staff. Further, the structural reinforcement has extended the building's lifespan and improved its overall performance. The school now enjoys several practical advantages such as reduced need for future structural maintenance, lower risk of emergency repairs, greater flexibility for potential future modifications or expansions and improved overall facility management efficiency.

Perhaps most importantly, the completed works provide increased confidence for students who will learn in a safer environment. Parents can feel more secure about their children's safety, while teachers and staff can focus on education without concerns about structural issues.

It's worthy to mention that this project's completion marks the beginning of a new chapter for the school with improved safety, stability, and potential for future development.

SCOPE OF WORK

To achieve the above result, the project included the following civil works:

1. Demolition and Excavation Works:

- Demolished parts of existing block/concrete walls adjacent to designated columns, with width not exceeding 30 cm each way.
- Used special cutting machine and removed debris to approved dumping area.
- Excavated all foundation types with 30 cm offset from each foundation side.
- Provided clearance for isolation of new foundation and column bases.
- Extended excavation to existing foundation level.
- Transferred surplus material outside the site.
- Demolished existing column jacketing.

2. Concrete Rehabilitation Works - Basement and Ground Floor

2.1 Preliminary Works

- Supplied and applied ceiling support using formwork wood and props.
- Placed props at 75 cm spacing throughout ceiling and around designated columns and beams.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Project statement of Activity

Financial Summary

Project Name
Renovating Zarqa South School Building in Jordan

Project Code
50099

Reported Period
Expectation Period

15/04/2024 - 30/09/2024
15/04/2024 - 30/09/2024

Project Statement of Activity

Currency
USD

Donations		
	Grand Magisterium - USA Western Lieutenancy	\$174,950
	Other Contribution	\$212
	Total	\$175,162

Expenditures		
	Civil Works	\$167,675
	Management & Supervision	\$15,767
	Surveying Fees	\$1,624
	Total	\$175,066
	Surplus/Deficit	\$96

Prepared By: Rozeen Hajjar
Financial Reporting & Control Officer

Checked By: Jack Amer
Director of Finance

Approved By: Sami El-Youssef
Chief Executive Officer



Huge List of Deferred Projects – YE 2024



A CRITICALLY NEEDED list totals \$3.2 Million

\$1.7 Million for Schools – all funded and underway!

Safety issues, leaking roofs, toilets & plumbing problems
Desks, classroom doors, broken lab equipment



\$1.5 Million for Parishes and other LPJ buildings

HVAC issues and some structural repairs
Leaking roofs, toilets & plumbing problems



Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Humanitarian Aid

Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Humanitarian



Program	Total	Beneficiaries 2024
Medicines	\$159,936	219
Medical Emergencies	\$287,756	254
Social Assistance	\$598,531	4,555
Tuition Support	\$452,535	446
Gaza Employment		(100)
Iraqi Refugees	\$98,754	200
East Jerusalem	\$80,837	355
Social Aid Office	\$83,917	
Total	\$1,762,266	8,204



The LPJ is the safety net for Christians in general and Palestinian Christians in particular

The Order is the primary funding source for these LPJ humanitarian works

Humanitarian



Receiving 175-200 request per month tuition, food coupons, medical, rent

Requests are the result of unemployment (especially high among young adults) and inflation.

LPJ is still receiving humanitarian support from Worldwide Catholic Relief agencies though that support is dwindling.

Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Humanitarian Aid



Muli Generational Family - Rent, food coupons, tuition support

Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Humanitarian Aid



Muli Generational Family - Medical aid, medicine, food coupons

Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Humanitarian Aid

- Family of 6 in 3 rooms
- Father employed for 14 years by Custody of HL
- Mother lost job at start of war
- **Aid:** Children's tuition support, Food Coupons and Utilities



Daughters Bedroom



Father in Living room

Cycling Donations Through the Economy



The LPJ implements runs programs that tries to have each donated dollar touch multiple families!

- Here is a Christian shop keeper accepts the food coupons from the LPJ office.
- Food coupon recipients shop here.
- Stocked produce comes from Christian growers.
- Shop keeper employs Christian workers who get paid from the proceeds.
- They send their children to LPJ schools and their tuition pays a Christian teacher.
- Christian teacher supports her family and can now shop here.

A single donated dollar just touched 5 families!

Cycling Donations Through the Economy



- Donations used to buy supplies from Christian growers.
- Parish ladies use supplies to make traditional treats.
- Treats are sold in local Christian markets.

- Money raised is used to hire unemployed parishioners to make repairs at parish school.
- School stays open to employ staff.

Donated dollar touches 5 families!



Pastoral Activities

GRAND MAGISTERIUM PASTORAL ACTIVITIES FUND
SUMMARY REPORT
FOR THE PERIOD 1/1/2024 – 31/12/2024



DONATIONS	
Grand Magesterium 2023 Contribution	\$799,879
Total Donations	\$799,879
Expenditures	
Pastoral General Activities	\$150,265
Youth Chaplaincy Activities & Programs	\$178,745
Summer Camp Activities	\$83,1753
Scouts Activities & Programs	\$44,839
Annual Liturgical Celebrations Activities	\$115,737
Migrants Support	\$100,000
Liturgical Office of the Latin Patriarchate	\$45,507
Catechetical Office of the Latin Patriarchate	\$29,080
Spiritual Retreat Groups	\$23,312
Prison Ministry	\$10,638
Family Center	\$79,753
Total Expenditures	\$861,052
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	(\$61,173)

LPI Seminary in Beit Jala

10 Major Seminarians with 3 priests formators



Seminarians continue their studies but their ability to travel to parishes for pastoral work has been severely restricted because of the war and increased security check points.

At the start of the 2024-25 year, 2 seminarians were stuck in Jordan due to VISA issues

LPJ Seminary in Beit Jala



Breaking News

Minor Seminary to Reopen Fall 2025

LPJ received from the Israeli government an exemption to the law prohibiting underage congregate living. This law, passed in 2022, effectively closed the Minor Seminary.

Lay Center for Spiritual Formation



Special classes for tour guides (the spirituality of the holy places), young families (married less than 10 years; family ethics) and youth (the challenge of faith in the modern world).

4 general courses: Introduction to the New Testament, The Virtues, Synoptic Readings and the Social Doctrine of the Church.

Lay Center for Spiritual Formation



Spring semester offered 7 courses and had over 120 participants. Classes taught by priests at Seminary

Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Schools

Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Schools

2024-2025 School Year



44 Schools (13 Palestine; 25 Jordan; 6 Israel)

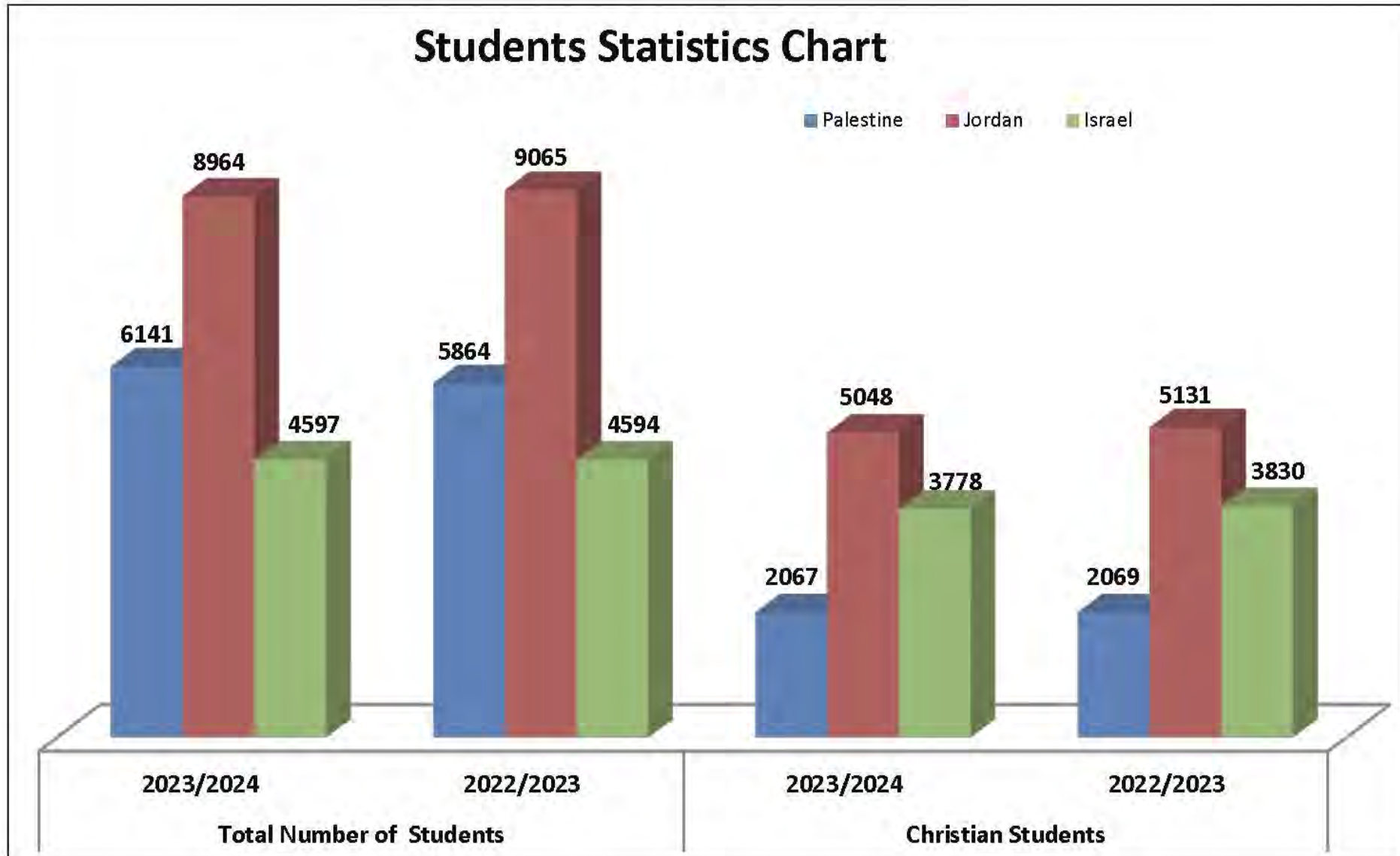
1,715 employees including 1,331 Christian (78%)

Serving 19,702 students including 10,893 Christians (55%)

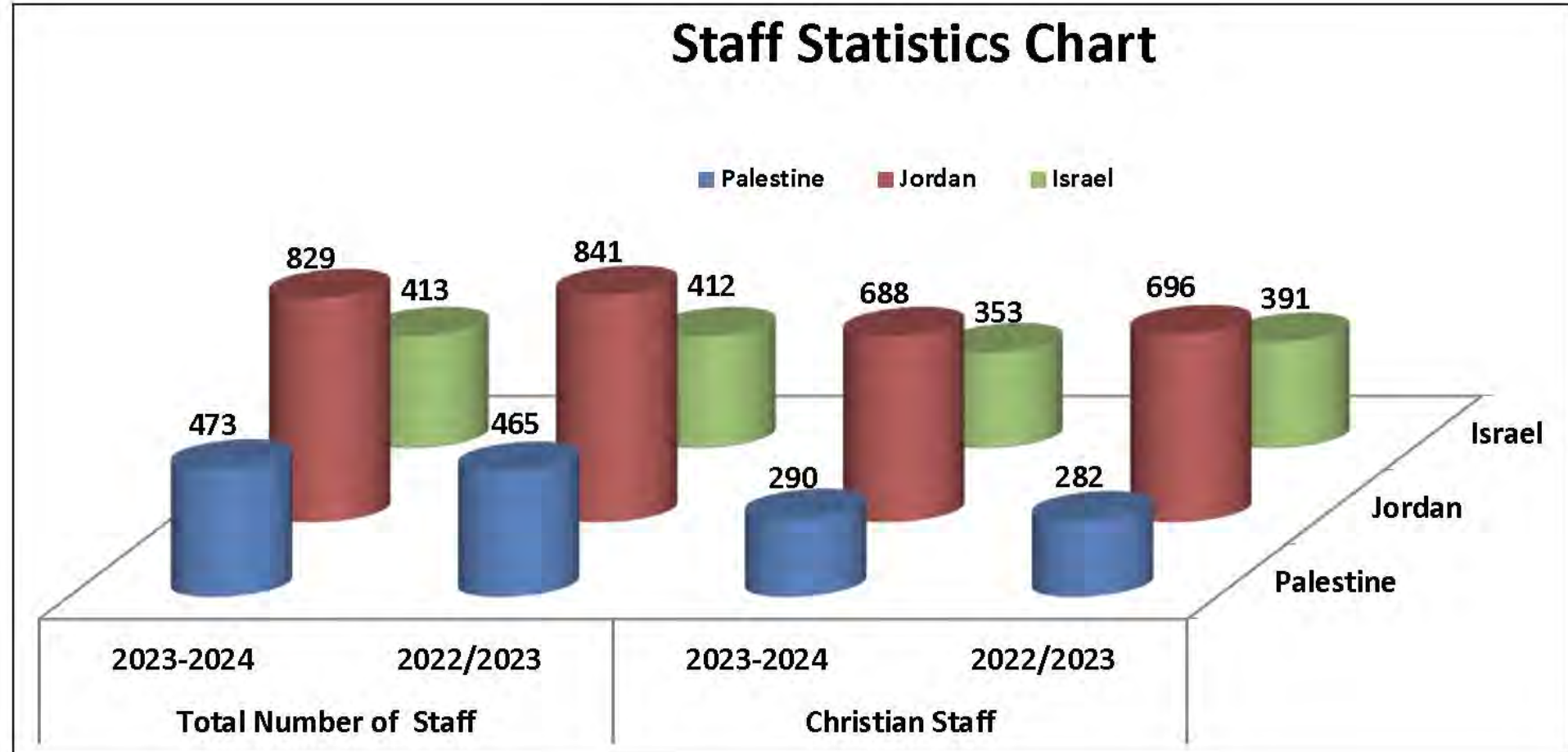
179 returning or new students joined our schools during the year

Curricular and Extra-Curricular activities sharply increased during the year

Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Schools



Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Schools



The LPJ is the largest / 2nd Largest Employer of Christians in the entire region!

Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Schools

		Total Costs		Total Tuition Collected		% Tuition Collected to Cost	
	Schools	2023-2024	2022/2023	2023-2024	2022/2023	2023-2024	2022/2023
1	Palestine	\$8,813,086	\$8,963,738	\$6,079,980	\$5,871,032	69%	65%
2	Jordan	\$10,239,591	\$10,196,761	\$7,609,898	\$7,401,285	74%	73%
3	Israel	\$23,154,396	\$22,087,496	\$22,480,657	\$21,841,394	97%	99%
		\$42,207,073	\$41,247,995	\$36,170,535	\$35,113,711	86%	85%
	Palestine & Jordan	\$19,052,677	\$19,160,499	\$13,689,878	\$13,272,317	72%	69%

Generally, Muslim families pay the full cost of tuition; Christian families receive average 50% tuition aid

Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Schools

Palestine / West Bank

Average Revenue Per Student	\$990
Average Cost Per Student	\$1,435
Average Deficit Per Student	-\$445

Jordan

Average Revenue Per Student	\$849
Average Cost Per Student	\$1,142
Average Deficit Per Student	-\$293

Israel – Government Supported

Average Revenue Per Student	\$4,890
Average Cost Per Student	\$5,307
Average Surplus Per Student	\$147

Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Schools

2024-2025 School Year – Financial Challenges

Deficit in Palestine schools increased from \$2 M to \$2.85 M

- Tuition collection

Deficit in Jordan decreased from \$2.45 M to \$1.58.

- Larger number of Muslim students paying full tuition.

Israel Deficit alarming at \$866,795

- First time ever – significantly reduced Government aid



Celebrating the Rosary in
our Schools



IT Lab

Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Schools – Ain Arik



Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Schools - Reineh



Upgraded CAD lab allows high school students to design and create simple circuit boards

Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Schools



Still a lot of work to be done to update and modernize the schools

Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem

ENSURING THE FUTURE

OF THE SCHOOLS OF THE LATIN PATRIARCHATE
A NORTH AMERICA CAPITAL CAMPAIGN



A \$12 Million Dollar Campaign

\$8 Million dollars for the renovation and modernization of EVERY LPJ Schools

\$4 Million dollars for unfunded teacher's wages resulting from uncollected tuition

Things I don't have time to talk about

Pastoral Activities

Scouts, youth programs, childcare and other support programs

Vicariate for Immigrants and Asylum Seekers

The Migrant workers come from the Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, parts of Africa (French and English speaking), Latin America, Ukraine, Romania, Poland, and China. Some legal, most illegal.

Estimate almost 100,000 Roman Catholics in the Vicariate, in different localities in the country

Job Creation and Empowerment Program

Strategic Plan



WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE!







For your continued support for the Order and it's mission in the Holy Land

For more information see the North America website <https://eohsjnorthamerica.org>



www.eohsjnorthaerica.org



*generous
giving*



“We are called,” the Latin Patriarch, His Beatitude Cardinal Pizzaballa, writes, **“to build a future of hope and a future of peace. In a special way that future depends on the continued well-being of our Christian families and most especially on the education of their children.”**