



00120 CITTÀ DEL VATICANO
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Covid-19 Humanitarian Support Appeal

In agreement with the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and following the suggestion of several Lieutenants, the Grand Magisterium of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem has decided to launch a special "*Covid-19 Humanitarian Support Fund*" specifically dedicated to the consequences of the pandemic. The virus is having a severe impact on the Holy Land, especially in Palestine and Jordan.

At the present time, it is urgent for the Christian families living there to be supported for their basic needs, especially for those people who lost their employment, due to the collapse of pilgrimages and tourism and the impossibility to daily commute to Israel for work. Financial aid support is equally necessary in order to provide the cash flow to keep operational the 38 LPJ schools in Palestine and Jordan with their over 15.000 thousand students and over 1,300 teachers and staff employed.

As it might be remembered an ordinary humanitarian fund financed by the Order and amounting to 650.000 US \$ for the current year was agreed between the Presidency of the Grand Magisterium and the Latin Patriarchate in January 2020, before the outbreak of the pandemic. Such amount is clearly inadequate in the present circumstances. Therefore, while keeping that fund for ordinary humanitarian activities already established, it has been agreed with the Patriarchate to respond to the two aforesaid new emergencies – the families in need and the functioning of LPJ schools - through this new fund.

The "*Covid-19 Humanitarian Support Fund*" would help those who lost their employment to cover the basic needs of their families such as food, hygiene and baby care supplies, medicines. It is expected that approximately 2,000 families will have to be supported by the Patriarchate in this regard during the crisis.

At the same time the fund would provide financial aid to the approximately 10.000 families that will not be able to pay the tuition fees and the relevant necessary financial aid will be distributed according to criteria that favor those who lost their employment and have no other means of support.

The humanitarian aid to families will be processed by the Patriarchate through the parish priests, in cooperation with the LPJ local councils. Each parish priest will submit an itemized report of all aid distributed. The financial support for the schools will be forwarded in the same time through the coordination of the school principals, school accountants, social workers and parish priests at each location. Each school will submit an itemized report of all aid distributed.

I therefore appeal to all Lieutenancies and Magistral Delegations all over the world to respond generously to this emergency through donations to this newly established Grand Magisterium "*Covid-19 Humanitarian Support Fund*" which will be forwarded immediately to the Patriarchate, with the usual and well established procedure.

My thanks in advance for the generous support that will certainly be provided on behalf of our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land.

Fernando Cardinal Filoni
Grand Master