



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

At the service of the living stones in the Holy Land

Close to the children of Bethlehem

The Order of Malta and the Order of the Holy Sepulchre join their forces to support the Holy Family Hospital



The Holy Family Hospital is a primary hospitaller work of the Order of Malta. In 2017 the Grand Magisterium of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre supported this important institution for the benefit of local population in Bethlehem and beyond.

The Holy Family Hospital of Bethlehem, located just 1,500 steps from the manger where the Christ Child was born, is known by many names. It has been called the Beacon of Peace, the Preserver of Life, the Employer of Choice, the Center of Medical Training Excellence and the Maker of Everyday Miracles. Families come to Holy Family Hospital from across the Holy Land to deliver babies and seek care for, their mothers, children and grandmothers.

Since 1990 over 75,000 babies have been born at Holy Family Hospital. That is more than enough to fill a stadium with young people who had their start in a hospital where Muslims and Christians work together delivering life, peace and hope without regard to creed, national origin or economic status.

In 1989 His Holiness **Saint John Paul II entrusted the care of Holy Family Hospital to the Order of Malta.** His Holiness insisted that the Catholic presence of this Hospital be maintained and expanded to provide care to the neediest and to offer meaningful employment to the citizens of Bethlehem. The Order of Malta accepted the challenge and repurposed the Hospital to be an infant and maternity hospital with a dedicated Neo-Natal Intensive Care Unit and gynecological surgery center. A residency and teaching program were established.

The motto of the Hospital is ***the best for the poor***. Thanks to its generous supporters, Holy Family Hospital services are all subsidized by at least fifty percent, on the basis of a sliding scale which takes

into consideration ability to pay. The Hospital makes free services available to the poorest families. Hospital social workers provide pastoral care to patients and help determine what other services may be needed by the poor and by refugee families. No service is ever withheld for economic reasons.

Holy Family Hospital operates the only state of the art NICU in the region. It regularly nurtures babies born at just one pound to full health. The Hospital supplies more than just **excellent healthcare**. It provides meaningful employment to over 170 Palestinians, bringing vital economic stimulus to the region. It also purchases supplies locally to help the struggling economy.

The Hospital partners with hospitals and other entities both locally and abroad; including the Bambino Gesù Vatican Hospital in Rome. Locally, the Hospital provides over a dozen internships for Bethlehem University students in the fields of healthcare and administration. The Hospital also partners with other local hospitals to sponsor continuing medical education days quarterly. These training days are staffed by medical professors from around the world, and offered free of charge. Over 70 medical professionals attend these seminars, raising the level of care and excellence across the West Bank. The Hospital also maintains ties to hospitals in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, where neonates requiring advanced surgical procedures can be sent for care.

Just this May, a **pregnant Muslim mother** came to the Hospital with life endangering complications. The Hospital was able to deliver her baby two months early, saving both her life and that of her son. During their baby's two month stay in the NICU, the family bought the NICU a **beautiful icon depicting the Holy Family to hang above the 18 incubators**. When asked why she chose this gift, the mother replied that the Holy Family watches over the babies, doctors and nurses in the NICU, and the visiting families need to see the icon so they can be reminded of the love and protection of the Holy Family.

The Holy Family Hospital is a **place of Christian witness and an enduring sign of peace** where the doors are always open, and no one is ever turned away.

Michele Bowe

Order of Malta

(Spring 2018)