



LATIN PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM

Saint James: Beit Hanina Parish

Published: October 02 Mon, 2017



Beit Hanina in the outskirts of Jerusalem. A fairly highly populated area, just a few kilometres from the Old City. Here, alongside the majority of Muslim Arabs, there also live several (about 600) Arab Christian families. Since the early 1960s, the parish run by the friars of the Custody of the Holy Land (one of the branches of which the Latin Franciscan parish of Jerusalem is made up) has been the only and fundamental point of reference for the Catholic residents but not only them.

For all of them, last Sunday was an important day because the new Church dedicated to St. James was inaugurated. Four months of restoration and enlargement have given the community a new and very beautiful church, completely renovated and larger, with a big altar and new paintings on the walls. The Mass, celebrated in the new holy building and presided by the Custos Father of the Holy Land, Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, was attended by at least 500 people. In Beit Hanina, the principal commitment of the Franciscans (who in recent years have also built a residential complex to house the many Christian families in this neighbourhood) has always been to create a Christian place of aggregation, encounter and training, especially for the young people. A social centre for the various religious and cultural activities has already been active for a few years, with rooms for catechism classes, multi-functional rooms and even a pizzeria (run by a cooperative of Palestinian youngsters). Now, there is also a new sports centres, with playing fields and a swimming pool in construction. His means new job opportunities for many but also, and above all, a Christian educational “gym“ which through sport, games and lectures, can transmit to the young Palestinians the values of the Gospel so that they can be a church made of “real living stones“ in a multi-religious situation. The various projects are supported by the Italian Bishops’ Conference, Unicoop Florence, **John Paul II Foundation** and many private bodies and associations. The real “motor” of all these initiatives and the vitality of “Christian Beit Hanina” – which aims to benefit the whole parish community of Jerusalem – is Father Ibrhaim Faltas, who on the special occasion of yesterday, celebrated his last Mass as a parish priest, before taking up his new post in the Custody of the Holy Land.

Contacts:

Saint James Convent Terra Sancta Jaffa Street P.O.B. 20089 91200 Beit Hanina – Jerusalem ISRAEL
Tel: +972. 02 / 585.14.77 (convent) +972. 02 / 585.46.94 (parish) Fax: +972. 02 / 583.88.31