



The Bulletin

July A.D. 2026 Issue 4

Upcoming Events

Sept. 11 2026 Educational Fund Gala
Sept. 13 2026 Feast of the Exaltation
of the Holy Cross Mass
Oct. 2, 2026 Investiture of New
Members
Oct. 25, 2026 Feast of Our Lady of
Palestine online
celebration



In This Issue



Page 2 Introduction



**Page 3 Children's Edu-
cation Fund Gala poster**



**Page 4 Education Fund
Gala History**



**Page 7 Christian
Persecution in
the Holy Land**



**Page 11 News from the
Latin Patriarchate**



**Page 13 Dinner of the
Ordinary-some
memories**



**Page 15 Thinking of
Joining the
EOHSJ-Toronto ?**



EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

Lieutenancy, Canada-Toronto

From the Editor's Desk

Dear Knights and Dames of the Order,

As we mark another month in our shared mission to support the Christian presence in the Holy Land, we are reminded that this presence has never been guaranteed by circumstance — it has been sustained, generation after generation, by faith, sacrifice, and the deliberate choice to remain.

The Christian communities of the Holy Land continue to face significant pressures: shrinking numbers, economic hardship, and, in places, outright persecution. These are not abstract challenges reported from afar; they are lived realities for the families, parishes, and institutions our Order has pledged to stand beside. To understand the depth of this struggle is to understand why our work matters — not as charity from a distance, but as solidarity with a living Church in the very land of its origin.

It is precisely in this context that the Holy Land Children's Education Endowment Fund takes on its full significance. A school is more than a building; it is a declaration that a community intends to stay, to grow, and to hand its faith and heritage to the next generation. Every classroom built or maintained through this Fund is a quiet but determined answer to those forces that would see the Christian presence in the Holy Land diminished. When we educate a child in Bethlehem, Beit Sahour, or Jerusalem, we are not simply funding tuition — we are helping to ensure that there will be a Christian community in the Holy Land fifty years from now, capable of welcoming pilgrims, tending holy sites, and bearing witness to the Gospel in the place where it was first proclaimed.

In this issue, you will find updates on the persecution facing our brothers and sisters in the region, alongside the continuing progress of the Education Endowment Fund. We offer both not as separate stories, but as two halves of the same narrative: the challenge, and our Order's response to it.

We are grateful, as always, for your prayers, your support, and your continued commitment to the Holy Land and its people.

**June 30, 2026
Geoffrey Bond, Editor**



EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERSUSALEM

Lieutenancy, Canada-Toronto



— YOU ARE INVITED —

“The Children of the Holy Land – An Evening of Hope and Solidarity”

This evening supports the Holy Land Children's Educational Endowment Fund, ensuring the future of 45 schools of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, serving over 18,000 students and 1,700 educators, providing stability and promise in a region deeply affected by conflict.

Special Guest

*Join us for an unforgettable evening
of fellowship, faith, and unity
in support of the children of the Holy Land.*



His Eminence Frank Cardinal Leo

*Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto
Grand Prior, Lieutenancy, Canada – Toronto*

Date

Friday, September 11
2026

Venue

Venu Event Space
2800 Highway 7
Vaughan, ON L4K 1W8

Programme

6:00 PM Reception
7:00 PM Dinner

Dress

Black Tie /
Business Attire

H.E. Dr. Colin Saldanha KC*HS

Lieutenant

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo KHS

Honorary Chairperson

Dame Rose Savage DC*HS

Gala Chairperson

Secure Your Tickets

eohsj.com

info@eohsj.com • 416-540-4435



Ticket Purchase

\$200.

per person



EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERSUSALEM Lieutenancy, Canada-Toronto

A Future Rooted in Faith: The Holy Land Children's Education Endowment Fund

In the ancient lands where Christ walked, taught, and gathered his first disciples, a quiet but urgent battle is being waged — not with weapons, but with classrooms, teachers, and the stubborn insistence that Christian children deserve a future. It is a battle the Toronto Lieutenancy has now formally entered with the launch of the Holy Land Children's Education Endowment Fund.

To understand why this initiative matters, one must first understand what is at stake.

The Latin Patriarchate school system is the second-largest employer of Christians in the Holy Land. Its network of 44 schools serves the educational needs of tens of thousands of students — Christian and non-Christian alike — across Israel, Palestine, Jordan, and Cyprus. These are not simply educational institutions in the conventional sense. It is difficult to see today a vibrant parish in the Holy Land without a school. The Latin Patriarchate believes that access to quality education should be within the reach of all, regardless of status or family income, and its schools operate at great financial loss, subsidizing costs for needy students and maintaining a presence in marginalized areas





EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

Lieutenancy, Canada-Toronto

Yet the pressures upon these schools have grown severe. Years of regional conflict, the collapse of pilgrim tourism following October 2023, and the mounting economic strain on Christian families have pushed many communities to the edge. Less than ten percent of classrooms administered by the Latin Patriarchate have received meaningful upgrades or renovations. The physical fabric of these schools — the walls, windows, and furnishings within which the next generation of Holy Land Christians forms its identity — has in many cases been left to deteriorate. In Gaza, children are now entering their third consecutive year deprived of the right to an education. Their schools have been destroyed and their classrooms closed.

Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, has spoken with deep pastoral urgency about the relationship between education and the survival of Christian witness in the region. He sees the Christian presence as a wellspring of peace in the Holy Land, and the schools in particular as a pathway toward that peace. In a striking Jubilee gesture, Cardinal Pizzaballa moved to forgive all outstanding school debts of families across the Latin Patriarchate for years prior to the 2024–2025 scholastic year, describing the action as an expression of the desire for renewal, for return to God and to one another. It was an act of extraordinary pastoral mercy — and one that simultaneously underscored how precarious the financial footing of these schools has become.

It is precisely into this context that the Holy Land Children's Education Endowment Fund speaks.

The Fund was unveiled on the evening of November 29, 2025, at the Toronto Lieutenancy's gala "Restoring Hope in the City of God," held at the Venu Event Space in Woodbridge, Ontario. The evening drew more than 250 knights, dames, civic leaders, philanthropists, and friends of the Order, united in their commitment to the Christian mission in the Holy Land. His Eminence Frank Cardinal Leo, Grand Prior of the Canada-Toronto Lieutenancy, presided — reflecting on the Order's enduring vocation to safeguard Christians and Christian institutions in the region through education, charity, and solidarity.

Sir Michael Tibollo was announced as Honorary Chair of the new Endowment Fund. On the evening of the gala, an initial pledge of \$225,000 was received toward the Fund's goal of \$1 million — a powerful beginning, and a sign that the Toronto Lieutenancy's commitment to the Holy Land is deepening from annual giving into the long-horizon work of endowment.



EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERSUSALEM

Lieutenancy, Canada-Toronto

The distinction is significant. Annual contributions, however generous, respond to the needs of a given year. An endowment is a different kind of promise: it is a permanent, structured commitment whose returns generate sustained support year after year, independent of the fluctuations of crisis or circumstance. In launching this Fund, the Toronto Lieutenancy is declaring that its solidarity with the children of the Holy Land is not contingent upon the news cycle. It is a commitment written into the Order's institutional life.

In the schools of the Latin Patriarchate, Christian and Muslim students sit side by side, learning not only mathematics and literature, but fraternity — the Gospel values of respect for life, dignity, and non-violence. The relationships formed between children of different faiths in these classrooms reach their families and their communities. This is the deeper logic of Catholic education in the Holy Land: it is not only the formation of individual students, but the cultivation of a culture of coexistence in one of the most contested places on earth.

The Holy Land Children's Education Endowment Fund is a recognition of that logic, and a response worthy of the Order's ancient vocation. The knights who first guarded the Holy Sepulchre did so because they understood that some things are worth protecting at great cost. The schools of the Latin Patriarchate are, in our time, among those things.

The Order's mission has always been carried not only by swords and shields, but by the quieter instruments of faith: the chapel, the hospital, the schoolroom. In establishing this Endowment, the Toronto Lieutenancy ensures that future generations of Holy Land children — whatever storms may gather around them — will find in those schoolrooms a door that remains open.



To learn more about schools sponsored by the Latin Patriarchate go to:
<https://latin-schools.org/en>



A Flock Under Pressure: The Persecution of Christians in the Holy Land

The cradle of our faith is also, increasingly, a place of suffering for those who bear the name of Christ.

The land that gave the world its Saviour now struggles to keep His followers. Across Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza, the ancient Christian communities of the Holy Land face a convergence of pressures — armed conflict, demographic decline, legal vulnerability, and acts of deliberate hostility — that threaten their very survival as a living presence in the land of the Incarnation.

A Dwindling Remnant

The numbers tell a sobering story. Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, has noted that his pastoral jurisdiction encompasses approximately 190,000 Christians in Israel, 45,000 in the West Bank, and roughly 500 in Gaza. These figures, already modest, continue to shrink. In Bethlehem, the city of the Nativity, the Christian share of the population has collapsed from 86 percent in 1950 to just 10 percent today. The causes are multiple: emigration driven by economic hardship and insecurity, lower birth rates relative to surrounding populations, and the accumulating weight of life lived in conditions of chronic uncertainty.

In Gaza, the situation is most acute. Before 2007, Gaza's Christian population was officially estimated at more than 3,000. Years of conflict and isolation steadily reduced that number, and the most recent war accelerated the decline, as repeated fighting, severe economic hardship, and blockade conditions pushed more families to leave. Only three churches remain officially active in the Strip: the Greek Orthodox St. Porphyrios Church, the Roman Catholic Holy Family Church, and the Gaza Baptist Church. For Gaza's Christians — now numbering fewer than 1,000 — Easter 2026 was observed not as a celebration but as yet another sombre observance amid displacement and severe shortages.

War and Its Wounds

The numbers tell a sobering story. Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, has noted that his pastoral jurisdiction encompasses approximately 190,000



EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERSUSALEM

Lieutenancy, Canada-Toronto

Christians in Israel, 45,000 in the West Bank, and roughly 500 in Gaza. These figures, already modest, continue to shrink. In Bethlehem, the city of the Nativity, the Christian share of the population has collapsed from 86 percent in 1950 to just 10 percent today. The causes are multiple: emigration driven by economic hardship and insecurity, lower birth rates relative to surrounding populations, and the accumulating weight of life lived in conditions of chronic uncertainty.

In Gaza, the situation is most acute. Before 2007, Gaza's Christian population was officially estimated at more than 3,000. Years of conflict and isolation steadily reduced that number, and the most recent war accelerated the decline, as repeated fighting, severe economic hardship, and blockade conditions pushed more families to leave. Only three churches remain officially active in the Strip: the Greek Orthodox St. Porphyrios Church, the Roman Catholic Holy Family Church, and the Gaza Baptist Church. For Gaza's Christians — now numbering fewer than 1,000 — Easter 2026 was observed not as a celebration but as yet another sombre observance amid displacement and severe shortages.

The conflict unleashed by the Hamas attack of October 7, 2023, brought devastation upon the entire population of Gaza, but Christians — already a tiny and exposed minority — have borne particular hardship. Cardinal Pizzaballa, following his most recent visit to Gaza, reported that roughly 80 percent of the territory's infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, and that around 400 people were sheltering on the grounds of the Holy Family parish under the care of Father Gabriel Romanelli, while the majority of displaced persons continue to live in tents.

Speaking in Rome in January 2026, Cardinal Pizzaballa cautioned that after what has happened and is still happening in Gaza, it is difficult to see a short-term solution between Israelis and Palestinians. "The wounds are still deep, people are disoriented, with weak leadership," he said. "Neither side wants to hear about the other: the relationship has broken down."

Even following the ceasefire reached in October 2025, the Cardinal noted that the situation of Christians in the Holy Land had barely improved, with living conditions remaining very complicated, especially in Gaza and the West Bank.



Acts of Hostility and Discrimination

Beyond the ravages of open conflict, Christians in the Holy Land have faced a pattern of deliberate harassment and vandalism. In 2024, a total of 111 incidents targeting Christians were recorded, ranging from verbal harassment to physical assaults on clergy to vandalism of churches and holy sites. Thirty-five of these attacks were directed specifically at religious properties — sacred spaces made into symbols of vulnerability.

Recent events in the West Bank illustrate the precariousness of Christian life even in places not directly touched by fighting. In the Christian village of Taybeh — the last entirely Christian Palestinian town in the West Bank — intervention by Israeli authorities sparked anxiety among residents and clergy who feared that a traditional Marian festival might be forcibly cancelled. Only after direct efforts by Cardinal Pizzaballa were preparations allowed to resume and the celebration eventually proceed.



In the Galilee region, organized crime has taken a heavy toll on Arab communities broadly, with over 230 killings recorded in a single year. Christians, as a small minority within the Arab population, find themselves caught in overlapping vulnerabilities.

The Voice of the Church

The Holy See has not been silent. The Holy See's Permanent Observer to the United Nations in Geneva stated before the world body in early 2026 that nearly 400 million Christians worldwide face persecution or violence, making them the most persecuted religious community on earth. He also condemned what he described as more subtle and often silent forms of persecution — including gradual marginalization from social and professional life and administrative restrictions that, in practice, nullify legally recognized rights.

For Christians in the Holy Land specifically, Cardinal Pizzaballa has consistently called upon the international community not to allow the plight of local believers to be forgotten amid the geopolitical complexity of the broader conflict. His pastoral letters — circulated through organizations such as the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem — have been among the most important channels by which the Western Church has remained connected to the suffering of its brothers and sisters in the East.



EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

Lieutenancy, Canada-Toronto

A Call to the Order

For members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, these realities are not distant abstractions. The Order's foundational mission — the support of the Church in the Holy Land and the sustenance of Christian life there — is animated precisely by the conditions described above. The Ensuring the Future Capital Campaign and the ongoing work of the Lieutenancy are direct responses to a crisis unfolding in real time.

The persecuted Church of the Holy Land does not ask for pity. It asks for solidarity. It asks that those who bear the Cross of Jerusalem upon their breast remember that the same Cross is carried daily, in flesh and blood, by a remnant community that has never ceased to pray where Christ was born, walked, suffered, and rose.

Deus lo vult — and His will is that His people in the Holy Land not be forgotten.





EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

Lieutenancy, Canada-Toronto



LATEST NEWS FROM THE LATIN PATRIARCHATE HOLY LAND

Here is a summary of the most significant recent news from the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem:

Joint Pastoral Visit to Gaza — June 22, 2026 (Most Recent)

Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, and His Beatitude Theophilos III, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, arrived in Gaza on June 22 for a pastoral visit, accompanied by Dr. Josef D. Blotz, Grand Hospitaller of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, and representatives of Malteser International. The two Church leaders met with clergy, religious communities, local Christian families, and people affected by the ongoing humanitarian crisis, seeking to offer spiritual strength, comfort, and renewed hope amid the suffering of war. Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem Vatican News

On June 12, in the presence of Italian President Sergio Mattarella, the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Holy Family Catholic Parish in Gaza were awarded the Antonio Feltrinelli International Prize by the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei — one of Italy's most prestigious scientific and humanitarian awards. Msgr. Iyad Twal, Patriarchal Vicar for Jordan, accepted the prize on behalf of Cardinal Pizzaballa. National Catholic Register

Cardinal Pizzaballa's Visit to France — June 8–14, 2026

Cardinal Pizzaballa visited France from June 8 to 14, invited jointly by L'Œuvre d'Orient and the Shrine of Paray-le-Monial, where he presided over the celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus under the theme "Jerusalem, the First City of the Heart of Jesus." He also met with French civil authorities, Church leaders, and thousands of the faithful. Notably, President Emmanuel Macron conferred upon him the insignia of Knight of the Legion of Honour in recognition of his longstanding commitment to dialogue, justice, peaceful coexistence, and his service to the people of the Holy Land. Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem



EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM

Lieutenancy, Canada-Toronto

New Priests Ordained for the Patriarchate (approximately 3 weeks ago)

Four new priests were ordained for the Latin Patriarchate: David Sotgiu from Italy, Adolfo René De León Salguero from Guatemala, Francisco Hurtado Cárdenas from Colombia, and José Pablo Morera Mesén from Costa Rica. Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem

Settler Encroachments on Church Land — April 2026

The Latin Patriarchate described Israeli settler encroachments and land damage on its property in Tayasir as "a clear violation of Church properties," affirming that "protecting Church endowment properties is a red line." A field meeting was held with Israeli military authorities, who acknowledged the seriousness of the situation and committed to removing the encroachments. Vatican News

Palm Sunday Incident — March 29, 2026

Israeli Police prevented Cardinal Pizzaballa and the Custos of the Holy Land, Fr. Francesco Ielpo, OFM, from entering the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to celebrate Palm Sunday Mass — the first time in centuries that Church leaders were prevented from doing so. The matter was resolved the following day, Holy Monday, with access secured in coordination with Israeli authorities, though existing restrictions on public gatherings remained in

TO GET THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE LATIN PATRIARCHATE GO TO

<https://www.lpj.org/en>



LATIN PATRIARCHATE
OF JERUSALEM



EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERSUSALEM

Lieutenancy, Canada-Toronto



Dinner of the Ordinary 2026: An Evening of Hope and Solidarity

On Friday, June 5, 2026, members of the Toronto Lieutenancy gathered at the historic Albany Club for the Dinner of the Ordinary, the Order's biannual tribute to the Lieutenancy's Grand Prior. This year's evening — honoured His Eminence Frank Cardinal Leo, Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto and Grand Prior of the Canada-Toronto Lieutenancy, and raised support for the Holy Land's various charities. The evening opened with a cocktail reception at 6:00 p.m., where guests were welcomed by the sound of a string quartet performing beside the Order's banner in the Club's panelled drawing rooms. Knights, Dames, clergy, and friends of the Order mingled beneath the Albany Club's historic portraits and stained glass before moving into dinner at 7:00 p.m.

Cardinal Leo, instantly recognizable in his red zucchetto, moved warmly through the room, greeting members individually — a fitting image for a man who, beyond his role as Archbishop, serves the Lieutenancy directly as its Grand Prior. The evening's program also featured remarks from this year's guest speaker, the Very Rev. Kevin Storey, CSB, Superior General of the Congregation of St. Basil (the Basilian Fathers), with Dame Catherine Pawluch, DCHS, serving as Master of Ceremonies.

Beneath the Club's blue-walled ballroom and its glittering chandeliers, tables were dressed in red and white — the colours of the Jerusalem Cross — each marked with a



small flag bearing the Order's emblem. The formal step-and-repeat backdrop, lettered with "Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, Lieutenancy, Canada - Toronto," framed the podium for the evening's addresses.

It was a night that captured, in miniature, what the Order asks of its members: the support and preservation of Christian life in the Holy Land, one classroom and one child at a time.





EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERSUSALEM

Lieutenancy, Canada-Toronto

Membership in the EOHSJ Lieutnancy, Canada-Toronto

The Toronto Lieutenancy gathers regularly for Mass, formation evenings, and charitable events — occasions not merely of fellowship, but of mutual encouragement in a shared vocation. The bonds formed within the Order have a particular quality, forged as they are around something genuinely larger than any one of us.

Are You Being Called?

Membership in the Order is by invitation, and it calls for genuine discernment. It asks for a mature Catholic faith, a willingness to commit financially and personally to the mission, and an openness to growing in one's understanding of the Holy Land and its importance to the universal Church. It is not a light undertaking — nor should it be.

But for those who feel drawn to a faith that acts, a charity rooted in history, and a brotherhood that stretches from Toronto to Jerusalem and across the globe, the Order of the Holy Sepulchre may be precisely the response that a restless generosity has been seeking.

The land where Christ walked is not a memory. It is a present reality, and it needs you.

For more information about membership in the Toronto Lieutenancy of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, go to:



Use QR code to go to the EOHSJ-Lieutenancy Canada-Toronto website www.eohsj.com to enquire about joining the Order.



EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERSUSALEM

Lieutenancy, Canada-Toronto



EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM
Lieutenancy, Canada - Toronto

Nomination Form

Name of Nominator: _____

Telephone: _____ eMail: _____

Name of Nominee: _____

Home Address: _____

City & Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ eMail: _____

Marital Status: _____ Profession/Vocation: _____

Business Address: _____

City & Province: _____

Name of Parish & Diocese: _____ Name of Parish Priest: _____

Social Media - Facebook _____ Instagram _____

X _____ Other Sites _____

Brief Educational and Professional Background: _____

Charities supported, Religious & Secular: _____

Knowledge of & Relationship to Nominee: _____

Will the Nominee be capable of fulfilling their spiritual and financial obligations of the Order?

I understand that the above information is given in confidence for the exclusive use of the Lieutenant and the Council in support of the Nomination

DATE: _____ SIGNATURE: _____