



# PATRIARCHATUS LATINUS - JERUSALEM

بطريركية القدس لللاتين

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Jerusalem, 2 July 2021

To all the Bishops, priests and faithful of the Latin Patriarchate.

The Lord give you peace!

The time has now come to communicate the changes, which this year take on a particular direction and emphasis, because they come after my nomination as Patriarch, with which according to the laws of the Church, the re-appointment of the main offices is necessary.

The pandemic, which has kept us stuck and isolated for several months, slowed down the process of discernment and decisions, but at the same time has allowed me, in different ways, to listen as much as possible and review the work done so far.

I would like to thank all who have been close to me in recent years in managing the complex organization of the Patriarchate, in a particularly challenging and demanding time: the Vicars, the Chancellor, the seminary, the secretaries, and the administration. Their commitment has been decisive in recent years and has supported me through the difficult phases.

I hereby communicate the first and main changes, to allow the necessary time for the transition. There will be more communications later.

## The Vicars

I would like to thank Bishop William Shomali, who, as we all know, in recent years has accompanied the diocese in Jordan in a difficult time and in particular circumstances, with many problems of a different nature. His presence and his tireless activity on behalf of priests, in the organization of the administration, in listening to the different requests of schools and parishes and also in his service to the AUM, were valuable and indispensable.

He is now asked to put the experience gained over the years at the service of the entire Patriarchate, and to assume the office of Vicar General, to return to Jerusalem and to help me in guiding the whole diocese.

He will be replaced by Father Jamal Khader, who after years of service in Palestine, will now bring his experience to Jordan and give continuity to the work done to date.

Thank you to Father Hanna Kildani, who in these four years has served the diocese in Israel and who has particularly taken care of our presence in the parishes entrusted to us and in the important service in schools in Israel. Now he leaves Nazareth to soon take on new offices and services in the diocese.

Father Rafic Nahra, who has served the diocese to this day in the Vicariate of St. James and the Vicariate for Migrants and Asylum Seekers, will come to Nazareth. Father Piotr Zelasko will replace him for the Vicariate of St. James, while Father Nikodemus Schnabel, OSB, a monk of the Dormition Abbey will replace him for service to migrants in Israel.

## **Pastoral and Catechetical office**

After Pope Francis' recent Motu Proprio on the ministry of the catechist and the synodal process, there is a need to rethink anew the direction of both offices. So it is that before thinking about who to entrust them to, a discussion on their configuration and setting for parishes and schools is necessary. This process has already begun and talked about in the two branches of the Presbyteral Council, but it will still take some time to complete. I hope that after the summer, we will be able to reach some initial conclusions.

## **Seminary**

In personal conversations with priests, I perceived how valued this institution is to everyone, but I encountered few difficulties of availability for easy transition at the moment. I thank all those who have made themselves available, trusting that grace will help them. I thank Father Yacoub Rafidi, who now takes on the delicate responsibility of leading schools in Palestine, together with the parish of Ramallah.

## **Chancellery**

There are also changes in the Chancellery. Father Ibrahim Shomali will take time to finish his studies before taking on new offices. We thank him very much, especially for the service linked to the various tedious and increasingly complicated permits and visas, for the management of the Patriarchate house and for the many daily incoming needs in the Patriarchate that require prompt and immediate responses. Thank you on behalf of all!

Finally, a special thank you to Bishop Giacinto Boulos Marcuzzo, who now ends his service as Vicar and formally retires. We say, it formally ends, but it will continue to remain for all of us an important reference, both for the life of priests and for the specific needs of the diocese, which he so loved, served and will continue to serve for many years to come: in the parishes, seminary, in his presence in Galilee and Jerusalem which has always brought serenity and prudent vision of situations and events. Thank you Sayyedna!

**The changes for parish priests must take place by August 15. For the other offices, it will be on a case-by-case basis depending on the circumstances.**

**According to the bylaws of the Diocese, the Vicars appoint a commission to assist in the handover (Art. 151).**

As always, it has not been possible to respond to all the requests and needs in the different realities of the Diocese. It is my hope that we can gradually address them in due time.

I thank all of you for your openness and availability in obedience. I am confident that as you have been called, you will do your utmost and together we continue to joyfully serve our Church and our people with dedication.

I wish you all a serene and restful summer in the Grace of the Lord.

In Christ,



*Pierbattista Pizzaballa*  
Pierbattista Pizzaballa  
Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem