



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Caregiving is among the greatest gifts we have to give a loved one. On the occasion of seven years since the establishment of St. Martha's House I thought I should share with you my happiness and express from me, our trustees and the whole Christian community in Bethlehem our gratitude and appreciation for all your love, care, help and support.

It was the morning of May 31st, 2010 when St Martha's House was inaugurated and blessed by the Most Rev William Shomali, Auxiliary Bishop of the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem. At that time we felt deeply privileged as it was the Bishop first activity after he was ordained as the new Bishop of Jerusalem.

As we age, more and more of us find we need assistance. St. Martha's House, with the Lord's inspiration and the help and support of our dear Michael Whelan, bless him, St Martha's House was founded to serve those who can no longer manage independently, or who are isolated and lonely. It is because of the generosity of the UK people we are able to offer the elderly a chance to get out of the house, enjoy our supportive group environment with assistance and personal care during the day. Watching how the ladies are able to socialize and participate in fun activities with others, I really could not be happier. Approximately half of the participants in St. Martha's House have some type of mental impairment such as memory loss. I feel it is important to enrich the lives of the ladies by bringing comfort through supervised activities. Many need support with activities of daily living such as personal hygiene and meal preparation. Each one of the ladies obtains the benefits and can take advantage of a variety of fun and educational activities designed to improve their mental and physical health. At the same time, we offer caregivers a break from their duties while knowing that their loved one is in good hands. St Martha's House provides "Medicine for the Soul" and YOU are invited to help us to continue with our mission and sustain the running of the House..

OUR DEAR VISITORS

We welcome our dear friends from the United Kingdom and other countries and locals to sharing their love, care and solidarity to our project.



WE LOVE



WE CARE

PRAYER TO SAINT MARTHA



St. Martha, I resort to thy aid and protection. As proof of my affection and faith, I offer thee this light, which I shall burn every Tuesday. Comfort me in all my difficulties and through the great favors thou didst enjoy when the Saviour was lodged in thy house, intercede for my family, that we be provided for I ask of thee, St. Martha, to overcome all difficulties as thou didst overcome the dragon which thou hadst at thy feet. Amen.

OUR ACTIVITIES



In our beautiful garden, the ladies enjoy fruits and vegetable. Thanks to our dear friends for creating a relaxing atmosphere.



Sr. Silvia Francis PBVM from Presentation Sisters (Ireland) – Bethlehem. She teaches the ladies body literacy (Trauma Stress Release Exercises)



Volunteer doctors visit to provide periodic checkups for the ladies.



Ladies feeling happy enjoying time as they do different activities.

RECREATIONAL TRIPS



CAN YOU HELP WITH OUR DAILY RUNNING COSTS?



Bethlehem families are experiencing increasing demands on their limited income. 'Care for the elderly, especially our beloved mothers and grandmothers, has become one of our most challenging responsibilities', says Laila Asfoura, founder of St. Martha's House.

Our Day Care Centre for Christian women, the first in Bethlehem, was set up in 2010 to help and provide services to elderly ladies around Bethlehem. It also provides relief to carers and family members who are tending to the daily needs of an elderly loved one in their home. St Martha's House now cares for the most vulnerable women offering the ladies a chance to get out of the house, providing a safe and supportive group environment. Generally women aged 65 and older attend at St Martha's. A few have some type of memory loss, and many need support and care with activities of daily living such as personal hygiene and preparing meals. Daily activities are staffed by a number of personal support workers.

St. Martha's is a place to socialize, the ladies taking advantage of a variety of fun and educational activities designed to improve their mental and physical health. Volunteers visit to provide specialized services and activities such as:

- Embroidery and craft work
- Medical check-ups
- Sing-along's and storytelling
- Bingo, cards and other mentally challenging games
- Physical exercise "sittercise" (stretching exercises performed while sitting)
- Bible discussion groups,
- Field trips and holiday celebrations.

St Martha's provides:

- Transportation to and from the ladies houses
- Snacks and meals during the day
- Physiotherapy services, including help with rehabilitation programmes
- Personal care support, such as personal hygiene and training.
- Basic medication monitoring
- Social activities, including organized groups and outings.

In Palestine, an elderly day care center is not financially supported by the Palestinian Authority. St Martha's House resources are very limited. We depend on our donors, we need your support to enable us to serve the elderly women in our community and to ensure that our mission is sustainable. Laila continues, 'Now, in these very difficult times, I feel that my calling is to support those Christian elderly ladies of Bethlehem who are in most need and to make a significant difference to their lives. I believe that anyone called to support our work through their contributions will find that their lives become more rewarding and more meaningful as they make closer ties to Bethlehem, the City that means so much to all those who believe in leading a Christian life'.

We thank Friends of the Holy Land, who fund a high percentage of our expenses, and all pilgrims who visit the House for their generosity. We do need the support of the international community, through prayer and advocacy, but this support must come from a partnership with people, parishes and institutions who share their love of Bethlehem with us. We ask you please to contribute to our service to give hope to the elderly ladies in Bethlehem. A Monthly Standing Order of £20 will provide a meal two days every week to one of our ladies. We request that donations from the UK are directed via Friends of the Holy Land for ease of payment and to enable gift-aid to be recovered from UK tax payers when appropriate. Please visit their website for details of how to donate www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk and confirm that your donation is for the running costs of St. Martha's House.

Please share our work in the Holy Land with your friends and tell the story of the elderly ladies in Bethlehem. We would be so happy to welcome you as one of our partners who cares and has a passion for our mission.

GIVING HOPE TO OUR ELDERLY LADIES



Jamileh:

I was born in Bethlehem on 20th February 1942. God is gracious. I gave birth to two sons and four daughters. After I lost my beloved husband life became harder and more challenging. My children got married and each found their own way in life.

I live with my son now but the other one has died. My daughters give me some money to live because my son can't help me. But after I joined St. Martha's House I have a good time with ladies and the staff provide us with care. They give us two meals a day and they host doctors to check on our health.



Suhila Abu Hamameh:

I was born in Bethlehem in 1929. I gave birth to three sons and eight daughters. My life was very difficult as we did not have anything. My husband and I had to work hard to feed our children.

After my husband's death, things got harder, but thanks to God, my children grew up and worked hard, and now everyone is married. I've lost two of my children. It's very hard for me, I live alone now. I joined St. Martha's House in 2010 when it was first established. I like to go there and spend some time with the other ladies. We sing, dance and do many activities. We also go on trips outside the house. I feel spiritually better and we are all like one big family.

DEATH ENDS A LIFE



Olga Jabrieh: was one of the first ladies that joined St Martha's House. We knew Olga, a sweet old lady full of wisdom, wonderful stories and life experiences to share with her colleagues. In October 2015 Olga had a brain stroke that caused her paralysis, speech impairment and

loss of memory. Since that date her health was deteriorating until the day had arrived. Recently, on 10th July, Olga was called by Our Lord, she died at the age of 78 years old marking number nine on St Martha's House death list. The passing of a loved lady was a stressful time. Olga had 2 sons and 2 daughters, all are married, and one of her sons had to leave work to stay at home to look after his mother while lying on her bed. Friends of the Holy Land had purchased a special mattress for Olga Jabrieh to prevent bed sores. She was financially supported through the FHL Family Support Scheme, to buy her medications.



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