



## **David Peters – State Deputy**

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### **Reverend Fathers, Brother Knights, Dear Jerusalem Students Sponsors, and Dear parishioners of Blessed Trinity Church.**

Today is a special day where we recognize all of the work and effort put into making the Jerusalem Students Program which began in 2012 a huge success. Today we recognize those who have extended their support by sponsoring a needy Christian student to receive an education in The Holy Land.

Pope Francis has denounced the persecution of Christians in the Middle East. Our Supreme Knight, Carl Anderson is highly supportive of our Christian Brothers and Sisters in the Middle East, and has always raised strong awareness of their plight and their need for help, and he has spearheaded the support that the Knights have given to this great cause.

Through the generosity **of you, the sponsors**, so many Christian children have been able to attend the Melkite Catholic Patriarchate School in Beit Sahour, the town where Jesus' birth was announced in the fields to the shepherds.

While giving thanks to our sponsors, please know that you are doing more than helping a child to complete his education – you are also helping to preserve the presence of Christians in the Holy Land. I would like to thank Brother HikmatDandan of Jesus the

King Council of the Knights of Columbus for his vision and dedication which has brought this project to life, and also for the many many hours of work that he puts in each day to keep this program alive and spreading the news of this cause to support needy Christian students in the Holy Land.

In the last few years, and practically each year, the education for **75 students** have been sponsored, so far **18 students** have already been sponsored until graduation, **15** of them have joined Universities, and 3 students have joined colleges. Through your generous efforts, we pray that these students will graduate from higher learning and will form successful Christian families that will grow to populate the Holy Land thus strengthening Christianity. 70% of the sponsors are Knights of Columbus members from many Councils and Assemblies in Canada & the United States, and 30% are Faithful Parishioners. The education sponsorship support started at C\$4500/- in 2012, and now in 2019 has grown to over C\$ 50,000, and I thank all of you for your generosity and support. You are truly contributing not just to the growth of these Christian students, but also to keeping the Holy Land flourishing.

May our Almighty God in Heaven bless this program and all its participants, and give you the strength and grace to continue supporting this great cause.

My special thanks to Rev. Fr. Ed Murphy. Also to St. John Paul II Assembly for supplying the Honour Guard lead by Faithful Commander Sir Knight Paul Di Pietro. Thanks also for all of the other Sir Knights who participated.

**We shall now proceed to the distribution of the student files to their sponsors who ever were able to attend.**