

A report on the work of the Coordinating Committee of the Women's Work  
In the Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East.

Having served for ten years as a committee in the Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East and under the Leadership of Archbishop Suheil Dawani and his wife Shafeeqa, head of the committee, the Coordinating Committee held its first meeting November 5, 2018 alongside with the Diocesan Council Meeting in Amman, in Bristol Hotel.

Committee members from Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine and Israel attended the meeting with the aim of moving forward with a new vision and evaluating their work in ten years.

One of the aims of the committee is to create new means to attract the younger generation in the Diocese in order to have sustainable leadership and involve them with global issues for their welfare and development.

The committee invited Rev. Bilal Habibi, rector of Kufr Yassif to address the committee on ways and means to work with the youth, since he has succeeded in his parish to attract young people inspite of all the challenges and obstacles he faces. In his address, Rev. Bilal said that in any situation a human being is in need to feel loved, belong, and accepted. He also confirmed that the aim of service should be clear to the leader and the participants. The work in the church should be as a teaching process, he said. One should not stop learning once he starts, but should continue to acquire education no matter what obstacles or challenges he faces. He should never give up he also said, because the uplifting comes when we are at the bottom. Hence if we concentrate on teaching and show love, and acceptance to our youth, we, i.e the church would become the station where the young people would seek refuge in, especially if we are their role models, which would eventually guide them to continue their journey in life.

Rev. Bilal also mentioned that reaching a wide circle of servants is what is needed in training, whereby the priest would be the leader, while the young people would be partners and observers. After that they both work together, till the young people become trainers and expand the circle of leadership, under the guidance of the pastor.

It is worth mentioning here that the committee members are represented from all its parishes in the Diocese of Jerusalem, but since movement is difficult and due to occupation in Palestine, each group has its own activity and its own programs.

Two members of the committee namely, Duaa Bisharat and Hana Dagher presented a resume of the workshops held in Amman, and in Ramleh. The workshop in Amman concentrated on the Development of the Spirit and the Body. A dietician presented a detailed program in how to have a healthy life with good eating habits and healthy food. Another speaker concentrated on the healthy ways for our spiritual growth and development. Duaa then presented a booklet summarizing the outcome of the workshop.

Hana from Kafr Yassif gave an illustration on the workshop in their area in Palestine which was under the theme Go Further Down with your Nets. Young leaders conducted their service there with meditations, singing and prayers, all aiming to realize that Jesus Christ is calling us to trust His Word and continue to pray and meditate.

In both workshops all priests of the diocese attended while the archbishop was present in Ramleh too.

Hind Zurob from Lebanon gave a brief summary on their work at St. Luke's Centre for the disabled in Beit Mery, whereby in addition to having a school for the children, the centre runs a chocolate factory which is of very high quality, drawing on glass, and both used for fund raising purposes. Women's work in Lebanon is lively and challenging inspite of the fact that many women have become old in age and many of the younger generation has left Lebanon since the days of the continuous war and instability.

### The Beginning of a New Era

On the second day of the meeting Reem El Far, Sana Rizik and Serpik Azar gave an illustration on the subject of sustainable development. It was clear that these aims were international aims for sustainable development which the UN has adopted to work with it till 2030. After illustrating each aim, Reem asked the committee member to think of ways where we can as women do within the framework of the seventeen aims, and choose the aims which would fit our region.

The subject that was attracted by the committee was: Poverty. Helping small farmers, and eradicate malnutrition.

Health is another subject which would include smoking, drugs and concentrate on clean water.

Gender equality was another subject especially to help housewives and women's participation in economic and political life.

Eradication of all sorts of violence was another vital issue with emphasis on equality and peace.

Education for all was an attractive subject too, and job opportunities.

Some of the outcome and recommendations were:

Awareness workshops in separate churches with the same theme and in the diocese.

Environmental programs to be prepared by Reem el Far and Suzy Rantisi given in Jordan and the other parishes in the region..

Workshops for females and youth on education and equality. Health education, and Cancer awareness. How can I work with weather changes, eradicate violence. In addition concentrate on the

Christian message on how to deal with others and stop violation of Human rights especially in our region.

Elevate the standard of women and her education and distribution of tasks.

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