

# Bethlehem University

Bethlehem University News - Volume 16 Issue No. 1 - 2007-2008

Realizing Our Destiny  
Here & Now



# A Message from the Vice Chancellor



*Dear Friends,*

As you read this edition of the Bethlehem University News, a new year has dawned. May I wish you and all your loved ones blessings of happiness and good health during 2008.

I have on my desk the words of Dag Hammarskjold, the late distinguished Secretary General of the United Nations, which are appropriate as we begin a New Year:

“Do not look back and do not dream about the future, either. It will neither give you back the past, nor satisfy your dreams. Your duty, your reward, your destiny are here and now.”

Our 2007-2008 academic year began in late August with another significant increase in enrollment - nearly 2,800 students. Some adjustments had to be made for adequate classroom space but the semester began well.

We welcomed Brother Robert Smith, FSC, PhD., our new Vice-President for Academic Affairs, who has assumed his duties exceptionally well. Brother Robert has spent most of his professional career at the university level as both a teacher and administrator at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota and Christ the Teacher Institute for Education at the Catholic University of East Africa. His experience with university academic matters is a blessing to Bethlehem University.

It was with deep sadness on 13 December that we learned of the death of Brother Fergus McArdle, FSC, our previous Vice-President for Academic Affairs. Brother Fergus died in Ireland after a long struggle with cancer. A memorial Mass was celebrated at the University on December 14th, and Brother Jack Curran, Vice President for Development, Brother Robert Smith, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Dr. Irene Hazou, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, represented the University at the funeral for Brother Fergus in Ireland. May he rest in peace.

In early September the University began its first branch of the Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences in Qubeibe Emmaus, a village 40 minutes away from Ramallah, with the generous help of the Congregation of Salvatorian Sisters and the German Association of the Holy Land.

In late October Bethlehem University had an historic event in the awarding of Master's degrees for the first time to 19 students enrolled in the MICAD degree program, Master in International Cooperation and Development. This degree offering continues to attract applicants from a variety of sectors who leave Bethlehem University better prepared to contribute to Palestine's future.

I again thank each of you for your generous financial support. As we enter a New Year, the economic outlook still appears bleak with high unemployment as well as the problems caused by the weak dollar. Yet despite these realities I am convinced that Bethlehem University will continue to be an indestructible force for good.

*Brother Daniel Casey, FSC*

Brother Daniel Casey  
Vice Chancellor

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MICAD Graduation, October 2007

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## Mission Statement

*Bethlehem University is a Catholic co-educational institution in the Lasallian tradition whose mission is to provide quality higher education to the people of Palestine and to serve them in its role as a center for the advancement, sharing and use of knowledge.*

*The University emphasizes excellence in academic programs and the development of students as committed people prepared to assume leading positions in society. The University aspires to fostering shared values, moral principles and dedication to serving the common good.*

## Bethlehem University in Figures

*Fall 2007*

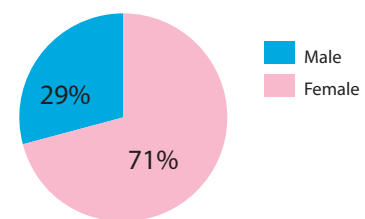
**Student enrollment: 2,787**

**Alumni of the University: 10,647**

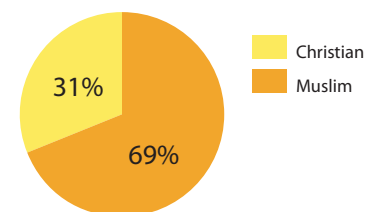
**Faculty: 177**

**Staff: 140**

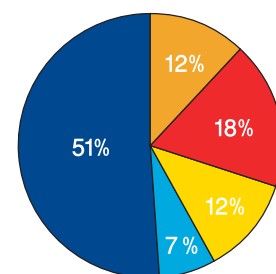
Student Gender Distribution



Student Religious Affiliations



## Sources of Income



- Student Tuition (paid by students)
- Student Tuition (funded by donor scholarships)
- Vatican Contribution
- Palestinian Authority Contribution
- Donations and Gifts



# “Your Feedback”

“I found the University, its staff, and its students very passionate about their institution and committed to higher education, despite some real challenges in their immediate environment. As an American, I was deeply moved by the experience. I look forward to my next trip to Bethlehem University.”

**James Walker, USA**

“I appreciate the efforts of Bethlehem University in providing a safe haven for its people, where freedom of speech and respect for human dignity finds its source in the institute of learning.”

**Elias Botto, USA**

“Attending the 2007 graduation ceremony was a thrilling experience for Phil and I. We were so moved by the graduates’ enthusiasm and their optimism for the future, despite the hardships of living with the Israeli military occupation, the wall and the struggling economy. It’s a tribute to the University that the students persevere to attend daily classes and complete their education since many of them must cross through the checkpoints and the wall to reach the campus.”

**Elaine Pasquini, USA**

“Bethlehem University is a treasure for its students and for the entire community. The University changes and grows in

response to each new challenge, and we are all inspired by the smiling confidence of the brothers, sisters, professors, administrators, students and proud parents that are Bethlehem University. They have that confidence because their work rests on a foundational vision that inspires them and us to be active in engaging our world, to be a creative force, no matter how tough the road we walk.”

**Thomas Garofalo, Jerusalem**

“The Swedish Theological Institute is grateful for the good cooperation it enjoys with Bethlehem University. It is always a pleasure to meet staff and students and get updated on the situation in Bethlehem area. We thank you for your sharing and your hospitality.”

**Kjell Jonasson, Jerusalem**

“Amidst the terror and injustice that plagues the Holy Land I think Bethlehem University stands as one of the few signs of hope. The students, staff and faculty have together created an extraordinary community.”

**David Ryall, UK**

“I wish to congratulate the members of the faculties, the staff and the students for the great achievements attained by the University, particularly on its 34th academic year.”

**Cardinal Pio Laghi, Italy**

“Bethlehem University has a unique position to act as an initiator and mediator between all of us. Students’ sincerity give us hope and the impetus to work for them and for the future.”

**Dr. Eduardo Domingo, Philippines**

“It is always a pleasure to visit Bethlehem University and talk to staff and the students. I admire their spirit of resilience. I always hope and pray that they continue with that spirit and not leave Palestine after completing their education.”

**Albert E. Hazbun, USA**

*We would love to hear your comments and feedback.*

*Please send us your letters to:*

*[info@bethlehem.edu](mailto:info@bethlehem.edu)*

If you are a Bethlehem University graduate DON'T forget to include your class year.



# Remembrance



*Sister Margaret Abl*, Daughter of Charity Sister, died at DePaul Provincial House in Menands, New York, on Sunday, October 14, 2007. She was the founder of the baccalaureate program in Nursing, established at Bethlehem University in 1976. Under unbelievable obstacles, she established the program and graduated the first class of 11 men and three women in 1980. The program flourished despite constant disruptions, and today enrolls over 200 students in both nursing and allied health care occupations. Until her last days Sister Margaret assisted the Nursing Department by securing scholarships and donations.



*Brother John (John Calvin) Johnston*, FSC, died on Oct. 11, 2007 in Memphis, Tenn. Brother John, 73, former Superior General of the De La Salle Christian Brothers, had an illustrious career as a Christian Brother that spanned 56 years. He was a member of the International Board of Regents of Bethlehem University. Even when diagnosed with cancer in 2006, he continued his intensive interest and participation in all Christian Brother activities until his final days.



*Brother Fergus J. Mcardle*, FSC, Ph.D., passed away on the morning of December 13, 2007 in Dublin, Ireland. Br. Fergus served as Vice President for Academic Affairs at Bethlehem University from September 2003 until June 2006. He was an energetic and forward-thinking academic who built strong relationships with other universities and encouraged the faculty to develop professionalism in their work. Br. Fergus, 58, was born in Dundalk, County Louth, Ireland on the 22nd of March in 1949.

# Reaching Out, Making Education Possible

As a result of Israeli military checkpoints, the wall and the harsh economic reality, many students who live in the northern part of Palestine have difficulties reaching Bethlehem to attend Bethlehem University. To meet the growing need of making education accessible Bethlehem University, under the guidance of Salvatorian Sister Hildegard, established its first branch of the Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences in Qubeibe Emmaus, a village 40 minutes away from Ramallah.

The first cohort has 15 enthusiastic young men and women who come from different villages around Qubeibe Emmaus. “I never thought I would be able to continue my education. It all

seemed just impossible,” said one student, adding, “We live in isolated communities.”

Ms. Bettina Gebauer, Coordinator of the Nursing Program, expects that all students enrolled in the Qubeibe Emmaus branch will find jobs once they graduate. “In this area medical services and hospitals are in the process of development. By the time they are up and running, our students will be ready to offer their knowledge and skills.”

The Qubeibe Emmaus branch has been made possible by the generous help of the Congregation of Salvatorian Sisters and the German Association of the Holy Land.



Sister Hildegard and Ms. Bettina Gebauer

## IT Graduates Win First Prize



From left to right: Ramy Giacaman, Ihab Khoury, and John Bandak

Three graduates of Department of Computer Information Systems (CIS) at Bethlehem University won the first prize in the Second Palestinian International Conference on Computer and Information Technology held in Hebron in September 2007. John Bandak, Ramy Giacaman, and Ihab Khoury created the “Breast Cancer Diagnosis System” designed to use computer vision technology to detect breast cancer in mammograms.

As a result of this award Ihab Khoury was granted a scholarship to participate in a three-month research program in the same field at the Public University of Navarre (Universidad Pública de Navarra), Pamplona, Spain.

The Department of Computer Information Systems, which graduated its first group of CIS majors just last June, offers a promising future for young men and women interested in Information Technology.



# PALESTINIAN WOMEN'S

## Soccer Team Wins Third Place in Championship

# 3



► There was no shortage of talent on the Palestinian National Soccer Team lineup this year.

The team displayed an exceptional effort with continuous improvement all the way to the Forced Armed Club Competition in Abu Dhabi in September 2007 where teams from different countries of the Arab World and Brazil participated.

Ms. Samar Araj-Mousa, Bethlehem University's Athletic Director, along with the support of Head Coach Mr. Raed Hreimi, led the team to third place in their category in the championship, illustrating their coaching and leadership abilities.

Many obstacles face these young women players including tight travel restrictions and severe

financial difficulties. Continuing governmental financial shortages make it increasingly difficult to attract funding for the women's soccer team. These factors may have kept the team from competing for their homeland but with the help of supporters and sheer perseverance, the team was able to place high. Congratulations!!!





# Who

# *will develop the Palestinian state*



► Saturday, 27 October 2007 was a historic occasion for Bethlehem University and for all of Palestine. Considering that the Palestinian people are primarily responsible for the development and improvement of the economic, social and cultural dimensions of the evolving Palestinian state, Bethlehem University, the first university established in the West Bank, is honored to have graduated 19 students of the first class for the Masters of International Cooperation and Development (MICAD).

The graduation ceremony at Bethlehem University opened with a keynote address delivered by H.E. Minister Mohammed-Kamal Hassouneh, Minister of National Economy; Telecommunication and Information Technology; and Public Works and Housing. "These graduates play a most important role in the development of Palestinian society and we are grateful to Bethlehem University and their donors for this wonderful achievement," said Minister Hassouneh.

Mrs. Claudette Habesh, Vice Chairperson of the Board of Trustees at Bethlehem University, H.E. Archbishop Fouad Twal, the President of Bethlehem University, and Brother Daniel Casey, FSC, the Vice Chancellor of Bethlehem University, presided at the graduation ceremony. "MICAD fits well with the mission of Bethlehem University, which is to provide quality

higher education to the people of Palestine and to serve them in its role as a center for the advancement, sharing and use of knowledge – emphasizing excellence in academic programs and the development of students as committed people prepared to assume leading positions in society," said Br. Daniel. Addressing the graduates in particular, Mrs. Habesh said, "Today is not the end, today is the beginning! We hope for you a lot."

The graduates of the MICAD program, the first masters degree offered by Bethlehem University, are highly qualified professionals who have demonstrated superior skills and knowledge in the areas of sustainable development with specific knowledge and ethical awareness in human development, social and economic issues, project management, political science and international relationships. With the academic rigor of the MICAD program and their practical professional expertise, the MICAD graduates are prepared to provide NGOs, United Nations agencies as well as public and private institutions throughout Palestine with ethical leadership in international cooperation and development.

Dr. Fadi Kattan, Dean of the Faculty of Business and Director of MICAD, presented the graduates. On their behalf Lubna Rif'at Abdel-Hammed Iskandar delivered the Valedic-

tory Address. "Before the Intifada started, I spent two years looking for a scholarship to continue my education abroad. I was accepted at the University of London along with 15 additional applicants from all over the world. But because the Intifada started I could not go."

She continued, "Later I had children and it was impossible for me to leave my kids and follow my dreams. So, when I heard about the MICAD program, I thought that it was God's gift to me from the sky. I thought that God must have read my mind and inspired someone to think of this program that was tailored just for me and my needs. It gave me hope that I still can give and produce no matter what the constraints are," said Lubna.

Professor Gianni Vaggi, Director of the Centre for International Cooperation and Development at the University of Pavia, Italy, delivered the Main University Partner Address. "MICAD is here because of the commitment of Bethlehem University, and we in Europe are also benefiting from this program through our exchange of students and professors," said Professor Vaggi.

Professor Antonio Raimondi, former President of the International Volunteering for Development (VIS), delivered the Main NGO Partner address. "Today we are living the real meaning



of the words ‘international cooperation’ – cooperation between universities, NGOs and donors in order to achieve this wonderful program which is in service of human development for the betterment of our global community,” said Professor Raimondi.

The MICAD program at Bethlehem University has been made possible through the generous assistance of more than 21 donors and partners including the Catholic Bishops Conference of Italy, VIS, Volontariato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo, and TEMPUS as well as partner NGOs in collaboration with the University of Pavia, Italy, University College Dublin, Ireland, and Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands.

In the Fall of 2006 the MICAD program doubled its size by opening its doors to a second cohort of students, working in parallel with the first



Amjad Sharif with his son

one. At the same time, the Tempus Program of the European Union provided further support with stronger partnerships, including the Palestinian NGO

PARC. Likewise, in the Fall of 2007, a third cohort of graduate student was admitted to the MICAD program.

“I have the dream that MICAD can make another dream come true. The dream that I have and think that everyone has is the dream of peace in the Holy Land,” concluded Professor Antonio Raimondi.



Brother Daniel Casey and Archbishop Fuad Twal presenting Lubna Rif at Abdel-Hammed Iskandar her diploma.



Lubna Rif at Abdel-Hammed Iskandar delivering her Valedictory speech

# How **fair** is trade in **Palestine?**

▶ Governmental as well as non-governmental organizations work hard to keep the Palestinian economy surviving and growing despite the hardships and challenging political situation. A growing economy is a means for poverty alleviation, and it is a fact that whenever economic indicators are positive, livelihood is assumed to improve. However, the questions remain: Whose livelihood improves? Who are the real beneficiaries of any economic boom? To what extent do the original producers, especially the smaller ones, benefit from any increase in profits? Are profits being fairly distributed among the various players of the supply chain? It is essential, especially for Palestinians, to guarantee that the poor do not get poorer as the rich get richer. That's what "Fair Trade" is all about. Fair Trade ensures that trade structures and practices work in favour of the poor and promote sustainable development and justice.

The International Fair Trade Movement is comprised of millions of people throughout the world. In Palestine, the number of fair trade

advocates is increasing slowly but positively. Several organizations have obtained the International Fair Trade Association (IFAT) membership, including the Fair Trade Development Center (FTDC) at Bethlehem University, the Holy Land Handicraft Cooperative Society, Sunbula, and the Palestinian Agriculture Relief Committees. In fact, these Palestinian members are the only Arab members in the IFAT at this time. Activities in support of Fair Trade include market development, fair trade monitoring, and advocacy.

The FTDC at the Institute for Community Partnership/Bethlehem University, which was established by the late Mr. Jamal Salameh, has been operating for almost two years now as a support center for Fair Trade. The FTDC's efforts for its first stage were focused on the Olive Oil Cooperatives, to whom it has provided support in marketing their products; this includes developing their capacities (training in management, marketing, and good governance, among others), developing their websites, and assisting them to obtain fair trade certi-

fications from official international Fair Trade certification bodies. The FTDC's core objective in its work with the Olive Oil Cooperatives is to help them become aware and capable of choosing the right channels for marketing their products and therefore to become the first beneficiaries of the profit obtained.

Fair Trade is still in its initial phases in Palestine, and monitoring is still an issue. However, the Fair Trade Movement hopes to encourage individuals to recognize and buy Fair Trade products, which are labelled by a credible international certification body.

On a wider level, the FTDC at the Institute for Community Partnership held the First National Conference on Fair Trade on November 30 and December 1 of 2007 as a step towards coordinating the activities of advocates of Fair Trade. Participation was open to the public. For more information visit [www.ftdc.bethlehem.edu](http://www.ftdc.bethlehem.edu). For Trade to be Fair in Palestine!

By Moussa Rabadi





# Exchange Opportunities



*“It was one of the richest experiences in my life”, said Shatha Daqaq, one of four students who participated in an exchange program designed by the International Institute for Political and Economic Studies (IIPES) in Crete, Greece.*

The program included lectures given by professors from both Georgetown and Illinois universities in Intellectual History, Political Economy, The Good Society, and Conflict Management. Meetings with politicians, legislators, ambassadors and representatives from the different international organizations, such as NATO and the European Union Parliament, were also part of the program. Upon completion students are granted three credit hours from Georgetown University.

Maha Sleibi, Manal Khalil, Reina Hazboun, and Shatha Daqaq, students of the Faculty of Business Administration, were among the 85 of 300 applicants accepted to the program.

“It made me realize that Palestinians are not the only people who are struggling in the world,” Maha Sleibi said. “There are political and social conflicts all over the place.”

Muhammed Qatamish, a third year student in Physiotherapy and a refugee from Aida Camp in Bethlehem, participated in a summer program called the “Middle East Partnership Initiative/Leadership Program” in the United States funded by the US Department of State.



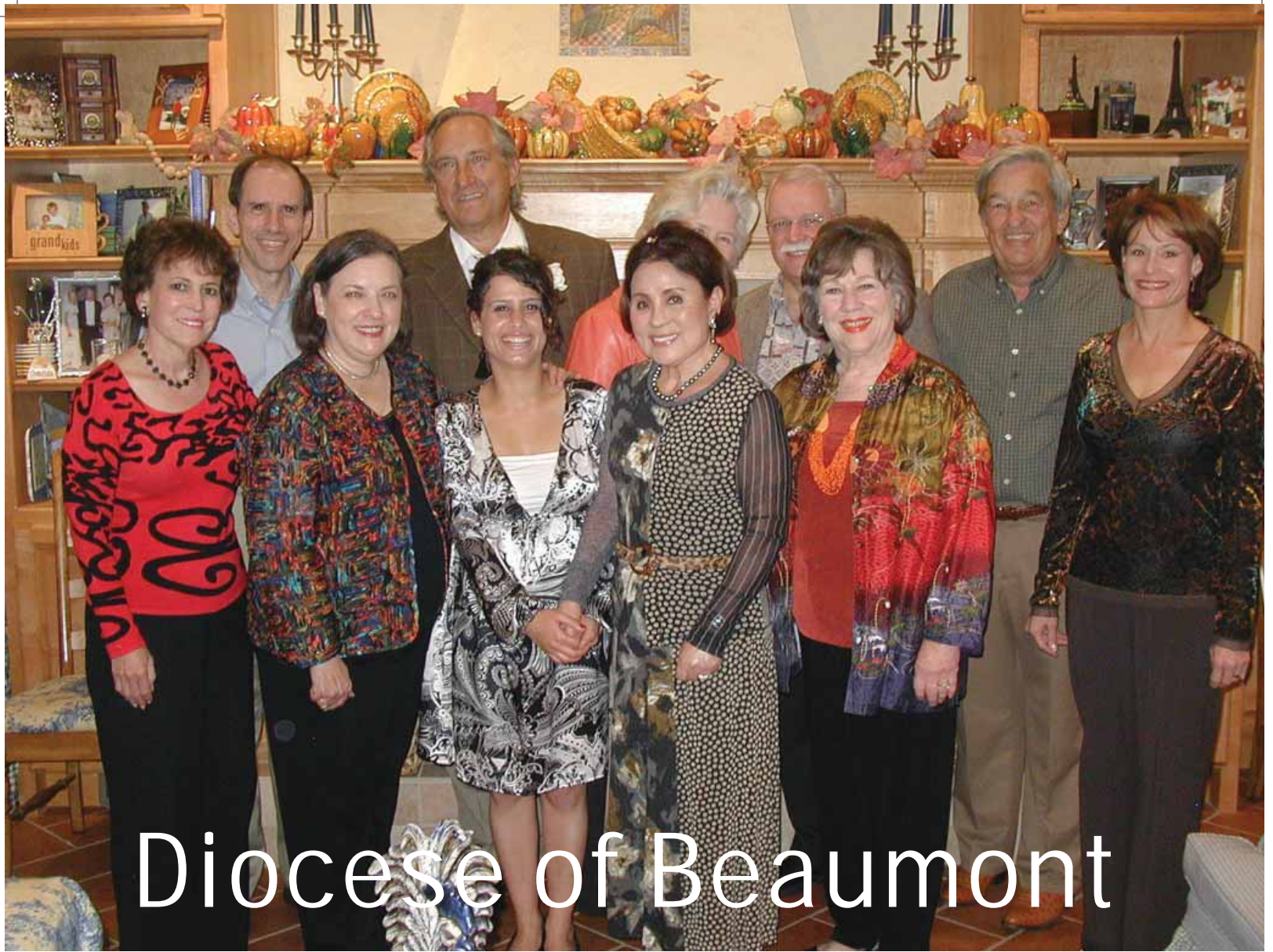
The summer program included visits and workshops in several American universities, such as Georgetown, Boston, and Harvard, where participants attended lectures on leadership, diversity, public speaking, ethics in

democratic society, and the challenges of religious freedom. It also included visits to political institutions, companies and meetings with senators and mayors. Muhammed and the other participants had an opportunity to volunteer in four different organizations, including World Vision and Habitat for Humanity Project.

For his distinguished work and involvement throughout the summer program, Muhammed was granted three certificates of honor: one from the US Department of State, a certificate and a laptop from Benedictine University, and another certificate from the mayor of Lisle and Naperville, Illinois.

“Being a Bethlehem University student made me feel very privileged as I am provided with training in different fields and I am encouraged to be a distinguished leader in my society,” said Muhammed upon his return.





Tala Karkar BU '05 (center) surrounded by benefactors from the Diocese of Beaumont

► *Tala Karkar did not realize that May 5, 2006 would become a determining date in her life. As a student ambassador, involved in receiving visitors to the University, Tala with other student ambassadors took part in hosting a group of pilgrims from the Diocese of Beaumont, Texas, led by Bishop Guillory.*

As part of the visitors' program students engaged with the group members over lunch, during which she expressed her aspiration to further her education after obtaining

her Bachelor degree at Bethlehem University. Upon their return to Texas, 11 members of the Diocese of Beaumont pondered over how to assist Tala and decided to pool

their resources to help Tala fulfill her ambitions.

As a result of their generosity, Tala is now majoring in Public Administration as an M.A. student at Lamar University in Texas. Tala is eager and committed to complete her studies and return to Bethlehem University where she hopes to teach and train others in Public Administration.

# Invest in the Future!

For Scholarship  
Information

[scholarships@bethlehem.edu](mailto:scholarships@bethlehem.edu)

# Alleviating Poverty

## *Part of What Our Alumni Do*



**Jane Giacaman BU '91** ▼  
**A SUCCESS STORY**

When Jane Rabba Giacaman first finished high school in 1984, she was determined to pursue a higher education at any cost. The options ahead of her were many but the possibilities were rather restricted due to financial as well as societal considerations.

Jane joined Bethlehem University with the consolation that her eldest sister, Miranda, graduated from there in 1977- the first graduating class since its establishment in 1973. This was a clear sign that she wanted to follow in her sister's footsteps.

After she graduated in 1991 Jane worked in a couple of places before she was hired in 1995 as Project Development Officer in the Monitoring Department of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinians in the Near East (UNRWA) at their Headquarters in Jerusalem.

It was a decision that most likely led to the major turning point of her career. Due to her strong and unwavering character as well as decision-making skills and talent, Jane has managed to find her way up the ladder of the Organization, reaching the unprecedented position of Chief

Microfinance Operations, traditionally held solely by international, non-Palestinian staff. Her most significant achievements throughout the past 12 years at UNRWA are her creation of two pioneering Microfinance & Micro-enterprise Credit offices in Damascus, Syria, and Amman, Jordan between 2001 and 2004.

Today her department's portfolio carries a total number of 11,450 active loans in the amount of \$10 million that assist in the alleviation of the poverty in the region of Palestine, Syria, and Jordan. She has also become an authority on microfinance on the national and regional levels.

"I have no doubt that the formation I got during my Bethlehem University years is the basis to which I attribute much of my success. In addition to my home and school upbringing, Bethlehem University had a large impact on the development of my character and the career person I am today. Today, like I have always felt, I feel proud to say that I am a Bethlehem University alumna."

Jane is happily married and has two boys, Sami, 15 and Saro, 11.



# Barbara Lavin: Farewell



Barbara Lavin (3rd from the right) with a resident at Four Homes of Mercy and Occupational Therapy students and graduate.

An exceptional teacher, administrator and leader who managed to share her knowledge and skills with the Bethlehem University Community and the people of Palestine has left her post as Coordinator of Occu-

pational Therapy at Bethlehem University. After 10 years of service Ms. Barbara Lavin has returned to her native New Zealand. Barbara's work has resulted in the graduation of four cohorts of Occupational Therapists and the establishment of occupational therapy units in various hospi-

tals across the West Bank, which has provided graduates with employment opportunities and Palestinian society with the much needed services of Occupational Therapists.

Ms. Lavin has also been the driving

force behind coaching and training 10 Occupational Therapy students from Gaza, despite their inability to access the Bethlehem University Campus due to strict orders imposed by the Israeli military. She managed to develop programs, modules and plans that enabled those students to finish what is required of them from their homes in Gaza. Some of the developed techniques included teaching via video conferencing, conducting training in Egypt, and sending international teachers to Gaza.

Ms. Lavin's energy and commitment will be missed and her legacy will be carried out by the committed staff and faculty of the Department.

# Sharing Expertise & Background

## REINVESTING IN PALESTINE

Dr. Eman Abu Sada from the Catholic University for Applied Sciences in Cologne was the first guest lecturer in a new Summer Workshop Program introduced at Bethlehem University.

Once a year a Palestinian lecturer currently teaching at a university abroad will be invited for a one-week Summer Course at Bethlehem University.

"Students were very much in favor of Dr. Eman's visit and very excited about it because they have never had lectures on these topics before," said Dr. Inge Tiemann, who initiated the program and is the Consultant for Participatory Learning at Bethlehem University. "They found it very necessary and useful."

This program was developed to provide Palestinian academics working in the "Diaspora" the opportunity to share their expertise with a Palestinian university. Although they live and work abroad, many of them have ties to their native country and experience a deep feeling of solidarity with the Palestinian people.

Dr. Eman Abu Sada was raised in Beit Sahour and graduated from Bethlehem University in 1988. She obtained her M.A. and Ph.D. in the United States and she now lives with her husband and two daughters in Germany. In a seven-day workshop she lectured students of the Department of Social Sciences on "Strategies of Creative Problem Solving and Creative Thinking in the Social Field."



Dr. Eman Abu Sada from the Catholic University



# Theatre

## of the Oppressed Comes to Bethlehem



From left to right: Nisreen Taqatqa, Mariam Brijjeh, Sofyan Amira, Ali Abu Mustafa, and Sawsan Owaineh.

Mariam Brijjeh, Mira Sabat, Dema Hllu, and Izat Natsha.

On a cold February afternoon, 15 students shuffled into a room in the Millennium Building to enlist in an innovative drama project that saw the birth of the Bethlehem University Drama Society. They were united by shyness and a lack of previous drama experience. Eight months later, nine of them took to the stage in front of hundreds at Bethlehem University and at Al-'Abidiyeh, Hussan and Beit Sahour secondary schools.

The project was initially the brain-child of Dr. Hala Al-Yamani who works in the Faculty of Education at Bethlehem University, and Paul Moclair, a UNAIS development worker. Together they shared a concern that 29 percent of Palestinian school children drop out at 10th grade. They also shared a belief that the problem could be addressed through Forum Theatre. With Forum Theatre, an oppression or injustice familiar to the audience is presented

without being solved. After the play is performed, an intermediary called the joker facilitates a discussion with the audience. The play is then performed a second time and audience members are invited to intervene directly in the action so as to resolve the problem.

The play's relevance to the lives of young audience members was demonstrated by the numbers of boys and girls eagerly getting on stage to participate in the action and to challenge the play's oppressors. Eman Joubran from Beit Sahour commented, "The themes of the play were very attractive, especially Amira's refusal to get married just to please her father." Majd El Kaisi from Dheisheh Boys' School said, "The play taught me how to deal with students who want to persuade

me to leave school early."

For the participating students at Bethlehem University the whole process was an unforgettable experience. Trainee

teacher Sofyan Amira explains the primary motivation for him to join the project. "I want to know how drama can help me as a teacher." He added that although the project required a lot of work and brought a lot of pressure, it was all worth it when they performed.

For the Bethlehem University Drama Society there is no time to sit back and rest on their laurels. Already the group is embarking on a new project which will tackle issues relating to gender and conflict. The group hopes to devise and perform a new production by May 2008.



# Br. Robert Smith

## Joins Bethlehem University's Community



Brother Robert greeting Ms. Hilary Shaw, a benefactor of Bethlehem University



Brother Robert talking to some Bethlehem University students: from left to right: Dana Bannoura, Elias Kattou'a, Ahmed Issa

Brother Robert Smith, FSC, Ph.D., was appointed to assume the position of the Vice President for Academic Affairs as of September 1, 2007. Br. Robert succeeds Brother Fergus McArdle, FSC, who served as the Vice President for Academic Affairs from September 2003 until he returned to his native Ireland for medical care due to illness in the summer of 2006. In the interim year, Brother Neil Kieffe served as the Acting Academic Vice President.

Upon embarking on this new opportunity at Bethlehem University, Br. Robert expressed enthusiasm and a deep sense of understanding of the job that lay ahead. "Both Brother Neil and Brother Fergus, my two immediate predecessors, dedicated themselves wholeheartedly to this vital educational mission. Now, I see

our task is to review and enhance the academic infrastructure for the years ahead," Br. Robert said. "I say enhance because we are fortunate to have a solid foundation upon which to build and expand."

Before arriving at Bethlehem University, Br. Robert, a native of Minnesota, was a tenured Professor of Theology at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota for 25 years and served three terms as Chair of the Theology Department. From 2003-2007 Br. Robert served as Vice President for Mission at Saint Mary's University and as Director of the Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching. Also notable is his service from 2000-2003 as the Dean of Christ the Teacher Institute of Education in Nairobi, Kenya, an institute of Saint Mary's University as well as part of the Catholic University

of East Africa.

Br. Robert hopes that he can add something valuable to the Bethlehem University Community, especially considering his experience working abroad and his love of other cultures as well as years of experience in academic institutions. "I enjoy and am comfortable in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society," Br. Robert said. "I find it personally enriching to be included in such a society and I enjoy both the challenges and the benefits in this kind of ambience and look forward to serving Bethlehem University and the Palestinian community." Bethlehem University is indeed fortunate to have as its new Vice President for Academic Affairs an educator with such experience and enthusiasm.

## A New Master Program to Start in 2008



Mr. Moin Kanaan

Targeting science graduates from the West Bank and Gaza, Bethlehem University along with the Palestinian Polytechnic University in Hebron will soon be jointly offering the first Masters program in Molecular Biotechnology.

Dr. Moein Kan'an, Dean of Science, reports that the program, which was recently accredited and approved by the Palestinian Ministry of Education, will build on the successes of both universities in genetic research and bioinformatics. It is envisioned that with this advanced training and research a more homegrown science and technology will be developed and critical indigenous problems will be effectively addressed.



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"Thank you for providing us with excellent information."



30/5/2007

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Visiting the Nativity Church in Manger Square



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"Your work is a big contribution to the highly important dialogue between cultures and religions."



14/9/2007



24/9/2007

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"Celebrating Mass at the University Chapel was a highlight."



4/10/2007

**Bishop Dennis Madden, USA**

"The visit was a great help in understanding the situation of the Palestinian people."



10/10/2007

**Living Stones Trust, UK, led by Deacon Duncan McPherson**

"It is impressive to see how you are overcoming obstacles we never have to face."



# visitors

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"It is a sign of hope to see such committed young people."



22/10/2007

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Brother Daniel awards Bishops Kicanas with the Bethlehem University Medal of Honor



24/10/2007

**EOHSJ – Germany and Academic forum of the Diocese of Augsburg, led by Dr. Thomas Weckbach, Lieutenant of the District of Augsburg, and Prof. Dr. Adalbert Keller**

"What you are doing here is both inspiring and professional."



25/10/2007



25/10/2007

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"You are a message of hope for the future."



29/10/2007

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"I'm glad to hear that people belonging to different religions and denominations live together so well on a grassroots level here in Bethlehem."



30/10/2007

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"The University is an oasis of education, hope and peace."

# visitors

**Bishop John Smith**

Bishop John Smith with Bethlehem University student Razan Wazwaz  
 "It was interesting to get first hand information about the difficulties the students face."



2/11/2007

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9/11/2007



14/11/2007

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12/11/2007

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A wonderful and enriching experience



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25 April 2007 to 29 November 2007

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## Prayer

*The Holy Land and its people are in need. Your prayers are needed for the people of all faith traditions in the Holy Land, for the people of the world community who work for peace with justice, and for people in leadership positions around the globe. May violence, oppression, occupation, and injustice come to an end. God has showed us what is good and what is required: "To act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).*

## Annual Gifts

The activities described in this magazine and more are possible through the generous financial support of many individuals and organizations. If you are able to keep hope alive in the Holy Land by providing financial support, here is how your financial gifts help.

- \$176 supports one student to work 6 hours per week to help pay his/her tuition.
- \$360 supports one student for one course for one semester.
- \$600 supports a partial scholarship for one of the 22 students with disabilities.
- \$1,000 provides a computer for a faculty office or student laboratory.
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- \$22,500 provides 25 computers needed to upgrade a classroom laboratory and staff offices.
- \$27,250 provides books and print journals for the University library for a year.

*It is your support that makes possible all that we do – and we are deeply grateful!*

In addition to the tuition that students and their families are able to contribute, Bethlehem University is supported by contributions from individuals, foundations, corporations and governments. As illustrated throughout this publication, your donations strengthen the University and its educational and professional development services to the Palestinian people. Your contributions are greatly appreciated and allow us to continue this most vital and significant work in the Holy Land.

Gifts from the **local and international** community can be made through the Development Office in Bethlehem:

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Tel. 0041-41-920 45 37  
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# *In Spite of Violation*

May 2007

## *Prof. Shqueir Looks Ahead*



Prof. Shqueir has been a faculty member with Bethlehem University since 1981.

As he was winding down after a long work day teaching and preparing for final exams, Prof. Adnan Shqueir's quiet evening was violently interrupted by the Israeli soldiers.

"I had just finished my dinner with my wife and daughters, when I heard loud pounding at my door," said Prof. Adnan Shqueir, a faculty member and Chairperson of the Department of Life Sciences at Bethlehem University. "At gun point, we were rounded up in a small room for three hours, while at least eight soldiers were freely tamper-

ing with and vandalizing our home. I am not worried about the physical damage they left behind. I am more concerned with the psychological and emotional damage. Had they told us what they were looking for, and what is it that they wanted, things could have been easier...different. But all they communicated to us was foul language and orders to move, sit down, shut up and so on" added Prof. Shqueir. "I feel that our basic rights and privacy were violated. I know I am not the first to face such brutality but I sure hope I am the last."

Two days after the incident Prof. Shqueir traveled to Egypt to participate in an international conference titled: "Environmental Protection is a Must" in which he presented a paper on biogas production. "The soldiers invading my home have interrupted my peace of mind, but I will do my best for them not to interrupt my commitment to my students and research. I am not giving up. With the help of many around me I am picking up the pieces and looking ahead."

### Responses to Adnan Shaqir's Story

- It is indeed amazing that such people as Professor Shqueir act the way they do.

**Brother Peter Gilfedder, FSC**

- It is these "grace filled" people that makes life bearable and keep the fire of hope burning for us in this world we live in.

**Patrick Henry Longalong**

- I am very moved by your account of Professor Adnan Shqueir's ordeal, and that of his family. Please convey to him my deep admiration and my

gratitude for his example. There is great beauty in the midst of so much pain.

**Father Bernard Lee, S.M.**

- I will help disseminate such information so a more realistic view of the realities in the Holy Land can be known.

**Tom Wirtel**

- What a wonderful testament to the strength and courage of the Palestinian people.

**Gloria Truitt**

- I know that people much smarter than I have grappled and continue

to grapple with the problem of evil and how to combat it. I do, however, sense the feeling of helplessness among those whose suffering under the occupation might drive them to more violent responses.

**PEACE  
Claire Carey**

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