



President's Report
Ambassador Michele B. Bowe
August 2022

Twenty newborns entered the world joining the eight babies born the day before in the well-baby nursery. The NICU team juggled incubators and bassinets to accommodate the twenty tiny babies in their care. They prayed for no more admits that day as they were already two babies over census. Holy Family Hospital prepared that day in anticipation for full day road closures announced for President Biden's visit to Bethlehem. Shifts hours changed to 6 am until 6pm to insure uninterrupted care.



Just the day before while visiting Jerusalem, President Biden announced one hundred-million-dollars in support for the Palestinian East Jerusalem Hospitals. Jerusalem rejoiced at this gift, while Bethlehem remained overlooked. None of this much needed funding would be designated for Bethlehem or Holy Family Hospital. The eyes of the world focused squarely on Jerusalem and the historic visit of the American President, who spoke eloquently about the importance of strengthening the Palestinian healthcare system.

The following day, President Biden visited Bethlehem stopping first at the Church of the Nativity to pray. As the entourage left the Church a group of young parishioners serenaded the President. These children got their start at our very own Holy Family Hospital. They were proud to greet the President and share their songs and culture at the Church where they were baptized. It was a joyous interlude.



Since the days of King David and the birth of the Christ Child, Bethlehem has been a quiet overlooked town overshadowed by Jerusalem. Today, this remains true. As pilgrimages return to the Holy Land, the hotels in Jerusalem are full while the few pilgrim groups that stay in Bethlehem only create demand for a hotel to open to receive a group and then promptly close. Economic activity in Bethlehem from the pilgrimage sector is only 15% of what it was in 2019. Given that 90% of the Bethlehem economy relies on pilgrimages, most workers have not been able to return to work. Since March of 2020 Bethlehem has slipped deeper into a persistent economic crisis.

Mothers continue to arrive to the hospital hungry and ready to deliver. The babies are born smaller and more fragile. The nutritional status of both mothers and babies is compromised. They are all vitamin D deficient and anemic. A growing poverty is entrenched in the town. Despite these obstacles, Holy Family Hospital redoubles its resolve to restore dignity to families and provide the best care in these challenging times.



To respond to the growing needs, the social workers at Holy Family Hospital are busier than ever not only providing psycho/social care and determining sliding scale fees but ascertaining the ongoing needs of the families. Holistic care is required in times of great stress. In response Holy Family Hospital Foundation began partnering with the parish at the Church of the Nativity to ensure that the most vulnerable women, children and their families have access to food, diapers, medication and electricity each month. This holistic approach to care which also includes vitamins restores dignity to families and improves the health of the women and children of Bethlehem.

For 25 years, Holy Family Hospital Foundation has elevated the status of women and children by ensuring the best care without regard for need or creed. Accompanying the staff and patients, the Foundation is committed to keeping the spotlight on Bethlehem. We share the joys, sorrows and accomplishments of Bethlehem through the care at the Hospital and the isolated communities served by our Mobile medical Unit. We share the good news of Bethlehem across our country and beyond. The Foundation is committed to keeping Bethlehem in the forefront. Together with our friends and supporters we bring hope to Bethlehem. We work to create a better future for Bethlehem one woman and one child at a time, lest the world forget Bethlehem.

