



## A MESSAGE OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

from the Mayor and  
City Council of Bethlehem

**B**ethlehem, the place where the birth of the Prince of Peace was announced to the whole world 2,000 years ago, is living through a gloomy period. As some of its citizens have been infected by the pandemic coronavirus, the city has been closed amidst a national state of emergency. A month-long quarantine has been imposed since March 5, and citizens are allowed to leave their homes only to purchase necessities or for doctor's visits, in an attempt to contain the virus and cure those who have been afflicted. The Church of the Nativity, the center of pilgrimage to the Holy Land, is closed, along with all other religious, cultural, historical, commercial, and institutional attractions and centers in the city.

In this difficult period, Bethlehem is struggling and fiercely fighting the spread of this virus. But we have deep trust in and extend all our support to the fearless doctors and angels of mercy who are helping to deal with this predicament.

Bethlehem's city council and the citizens of the town of the Nativity extend their profound thanks and appreciation to the wise Palestinian government, represented by His Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh, for undertaking immediate and strict confinement measures to deal with this pandemic and guarantee the least number of losses.

We would like to acknowledge and convey our deep appreciation to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the governorate of Bethlehem, and the security forces that control and lead the situation on the ground. Also, we are grateful for the support, cohesion, togetherness, and solidarity of the Palestinian municipalities, the local and international press agencies, the various associations, the private and public sectors, the volunteers, the citizens of Bethlehem governorate in particular and the Palestinian people in general, who have shown their support, whether through supplying the patients and needy families with food and necessities, or by calling, encouraging, and launching inspiring and stimulating posts and hashtags on social media.

Special thanks goes to the courageous doctors and the angels of mercy who sacrifice their tranquility and health to help us confront this situation. Moreover, we appreciate the citizens of Bethlehem for assuming responsibility and for their awareness and deep commitment to cooperating with the authorities.

From the birthplace of Jesus Christ, we will remain strong and united in order to face this calamity that has befallen Bethlehem and crippled its various aspects of life. We are praying with hearts filled with faith and hope that this contagious virus will be eradicated.

We hope that the Church of the Nativity, which had been open to all believers around the world to announce the story of the Nativity, will soon be open again. Bethlehem will remain the fruitful house of bread, the house of abundant provisions for the people of God.