



DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG

Office of the Chancellor

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MEMORANDUM

TO: All Parishes
FROM: Deacon Rick Wells, Chancellor *RW*
RE: Olivewood Religious Articles – Permitted Vendors – 2nd Update
DATE: February 11, 2020

POLICY & BACKGROUND:

During the year, you may be contacted by representatives of the vendors included below, requesting an invitation to come to your parish. As you know, the purpose of these organizations is to inform people about the situation of the Christians in the Holy Land and to market olivewood handcrafted religious articles, the sale of which provides steady employment for and support to Christian families in the Jerusalem area.

PLEASE NOTE:

1. While Bishop Parkes has permitted certain vendors to approach pastors in order to market their articles, in no way does he endorse any vendor for solicitation in our parishes.
2. After Bishop Parkes grants permission following the vendor's request, a letter from the Chancellor's Office is sent to the vendor, informing him/her of this permission. This permission is good for one year and renewal must be requested by the vendor.
3. While permitted vendors are allowed to approach individual pastors, the decision to invite a vendor to a parish is always left to the discretion of the pastor, and we ask that the vendor respectfully accept that decision.

Below is a listing of the olivewood vendors who have received letters of permission from the Chancellor's Office within the past year. **Please note that this permission is current through December 31, 2020.**

BETHLEHEM CHRISTIAN FAMILIES GROUP – Eddie & Danielle Farha, Sanford, FL.

BETHLEHEM NATIVITY GROUP – Mr. Khaled Jacoub, Houston, TX.

BETHLEHEM HANDICRAFT HOLY LAND GROUP – Mr. Toni Helal, Humble, TX.

CHRISTIANS IN THE HOLY LAND – Mr. Rami Qumsieh, Boca Raton, FL. (Mr. Qumsieh is personally known to Bishop Parkes).

LITTLE BETHLEHEM CHRISTIANS – Siham & Ghassan Al Sahouri, Clear Spring, MD.

ST. BARBARA MELKITE CATHOLIC MISSION – Rev. Fadi Al Mimass, Pastor, Mr. Steven Sada, Associate; Houston, TX.

THREE KINGS BETHLEHEM GROUP – Mr. Martin Zablah, Oswego, NY. (This is the most recent group to seek permission).

In addition, permission has been granted to the following:

SISTERS OF ST. ELISABETH CONVENT – Minsk, Belarus. The sales from this community support their charitable projects in Belarus, including an orphanage for children with mental and physical disabilities and a homeless shelter. The community plans to visit the U.S. in 2020.

If you have questions about any of the above-mentioned groups or about any others who are not listed in this memorandum, please feel free to contact me: (727) 341-6832 or rwells@dosp.org.