

The Bakery in Maaruneh - Where your donations now turn to bread

With God's grace, which has manifested itself through many donors and helpers, the “Bakery of Grace” has succeeded.

The idea of building a large bakery was born a few years ago. The objective was to be able to offer good bread at cost price and to provide part of the daily production to the poorest free of charge.

The plan was for a modern, energy-efficient bakery with a daily production capacity for up to 10,000 families in the region. The large bakery was planned as the first major reconstruction project that would nourish people in the long term while at the same time creating meaningful, sustainable jobs.

The financing of this major project posed a challenge. Initially, only a few of our friends and donors could imagine that such a large undertaking would be feasible within a reasonable period of time. The trust, helpfulness and generosity of these few turned out to be blessed, fertile seeds that began to germinate. Through a blessing from above, we managed – again and again – to collect enough donations from individuals and contributions from aid organizations to be able to continue the projects whenever the funds started to run short.

The work never needed to be stopped completely: Neither due to delivery bottlenecks for some building materials, nor due to the interim expiry of various permits, nor due to cold, heat or rain, nor due to violently fluctuating prices – not even due to Covid 19.

Thanks to a special state permit, the workers were allowed to continue without interruption. Certain building materials were procured more slowly than planned, as production quantities were reduced through various lock-downs. However, even this constituted exactly those quantities that we were able to pay from the donations at any given point of time.

The last major hurdle was the financing of the bakery machines. When the required sum was finally secured and payment of the machines had been effected, the individual parts were quickly loaded onto two large trucks and taken from Syria to Maaruneh. Just in time, before the Lebanese-Syrian border crossing became tricky due to the increasing number of Covid 19 infections. This prevented the technical specialist of the Lebanese delivery company to personally monitor the assembly of the machines and the test run of the bakery as originally planned. This problem was finally solved on the basis of modern communication technology – in the form of tele-monitoring.

On August 4th, the tele-monitored test run was carried out in the presence of the mayor of Maaruneh and the first fresh flatbreads were tasted. For the test run, the flour and the fuel required for a power generator were purchased on the market. The donated power transformer had not been set up yet and an underground power cable still needs to be laid. Only after the successful test run was it possible to file an application for state-subsidized flour and energy.

We are very happy that on September 11, 2020, the first bread production with state-subsidized flour and electricity took place. His Beatitude Patriarch Youssef Absi came to

Maaruneh personally to bless the bread and the bakery. The local people are very relieved to have access to good daily bread.

A well-functioning bakery is an incredible blessing, especially at this time of the Covid 19 pandemic, which has pushed people who had already been in need of help even deeper into poverty and often into bitter famine.

May this blessing from above – which flowed into the project through friends and benefactors, dioceses and aid organizations – forever accompany the work of the bakery.

The "Bakery of Grace" rightly bears its name. It constitutes a shining example of what Christian hands are able to achieve.

A heartfelt thank you for each and every contribution, for all material and non-material support and donations that have allowed this project to come true.