

Jerusalem Interfaith Forum Visits Nazareth, Wedding Church for Christmas

Hod Ben-Zvi
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Nazareth, Jerusalem—It has become a tradition for members of the Jerusalem Interfaith Forum to visit one another on major Holydays as a way to come closer with and learn from each other's customs, culture and religion.

In the spirit of Christmas and the New Year, twenty-one members of the Forum, including representatives of the Jewish, Druze and Muslim faiths, visited the Wedding Church in Kafr Kanna, a Galilean town located five miles northeast of Nazareth. Afterwards, they toured Nazareth, visiting holy Christian places. The delegation was led by UPF's regional chair for the Middle East, Mr. Umberto Angelucci.

On December 27, 2015, the delegation attended Sunday Mass, hosted by a senior member of the Forum, Fr. Masoud Abu-Hatoum. For the non-Christian members of the Forum, it was a meaningful experience to attend the service and see a fellow member among his community in a time of holy meaning.

The Mass was followed by an explanation about the church, its structure and the art in it, given by a young priest who is serving the church together with Fr. Abu-Hatoum.

The forum members then visited a family from the village. The family lavished special Christmas sweets and cakes on their guests, who were happy to enjoy the Christmas atmosphere, and took pictures with the family's Christmas tree.

For lunch, the participants enjoyed delicious local food at a restaurant. While they were sitting outside, the group was greeted by many passerby's, including the Muslim sheik of Nazareth.

The special visit ended in the center of Nazareth with a visit to the Church of Mary, with its 26 meter-high Christmas tree.