

**Abdallah Elias Abdallah Dababneh**, I grew up in Madaba/ Jordan, in a Christian family: a Catholic father and a Greek Orthodox mother. My father serves as the spiritual head of the family, he's my role model and he affected my life in a very special way. He was very close to the church, he spent much time with the church's activities, and he was a minister of the youth ministry in my parish for years, and a catechism teacher. My mother was an orthodox, but she got married in a Catholic church and she became Catholic.

I was born on April 14<sup>th</sup> 1996, it was Easter Sunday, and I was baptized 5 months later. I am the firstborn for my parents, and as an oriental family they named me Abdallah (which means the servant of God) as the name of my grandfather, and because I am the eldest of my brothers I must call my son Elias, but I will break this rule, since I will not have any physical children!

In 2008, a priest visited our school, and he said that he came from the seminary; it was the very first time that I heard about this place, he said many nice things about that place, he made me excited and I raised my hand and I asked to join the high school seminary.

I told my parents about my decision, my father was pretty happy but he said that I was young for a big decision like this, and my mother refused the idea of being far away from her. I didn't know how things changed, and a year after I joined the high school seminary of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and I spent five years there.

During the last two years in the high school seminary, I was sent to Beitjala's parish high school; I finished high school with high grades (89.6%) in 2014. The grace of God helped me many times to know his will, and I did a preparation year, a linguistic year of French, and I studied philosophy for two years, then I was sent to

study abroad, and to have a year of experience in the Seminary of Saint Joseph, Yonkers- New York; which mainly belongs to the Archdiocese of New York, but at the same time it is an inter-diocesan seminary for the archdiocese, the diocese of Rockville Center, and the diocese of Brooklyn.

Now I am back to Beitjala where I start, officially, the first year of theology.