



## **FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND**

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### **DECEMBER 2011 UPDATE FOR FHL PARISH/DEANERY/LPA GROUPS**

- **Welcome to the December Update. FHL Chairman, Dr. Michael Whelan writes:** “We are again approaching the time when we celebrate with joy the arrival of Jesus in Bethlehem; a very special time for the Friends as it takes us to the heart of all that we believe and are working for ... and achieving successfully. The last twelve months have seen excellent growth in the “Friends”.  
We have achieved a great deal in many parts of the country and are beginning to see the fruits of our successes in Palestine. Our network of Parish Groups has grown significantly and you have all been very active. The first National Gathering of Friends in Kenilworth was a great success with a most useful exchange of information.  
In the Holy Land we have extended our activities to many more families this Christmas and are laying the foundation of the first income generating project for local Christians. May the Lord bless you all and give you strength and encouragement to continue His work.”
- **Christmas in the Holy Land. Our annual distribution of coupons for staple food items and clothes plus heaters, subsidies for utility bills and small gift items is underway. This year, thanks to your generosity we can extend our support to 450 children under 12 years old, either orphans, abandoned children, those from very poor families or those who are physically or mentally sick.**  
This Christmas we are also supporting 90 elderly people who have lost their jobs, income and in some cases their homes. They will receive warm clothes and blankets for the winter in addition to payment vouchers for utility bills and food coupons. Over 20 Christian owned businesses will also benefit.  
In addition to the many deserving families in Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour, your donations will extend to local Christians in Jifna and Zababdeh. The total budget is \$31,000.
- **An inspiring story from the Annunciation FHL Parish Group in Chesterfield. Chairman, Dr. Fred Walker writes:** “Following our launch meeting, we were moved and inspired to form a small committee of seven. At our first meeting we

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discovered that one of our members was a practicing Anglican who wanted to bring along a good friend who had travelled extensively in the Holy Land. I asked them whether they wanted to start a group in their church. They were adamant they wanted to be part of an ecumenical group. Low and behold we are off and running with a beautiful ecumenical group; the first in our parish. What a surprise for our PP who was as excited as we were. We are elated with our new relationships who are not only our brothers and sisters in our beliefs but have also quickly become good friends. Our Group was excited when we heard that the Archbishop of Canterbury was supporting the FHL as we had beaten him to it!! Our first fundraising project was at St. Albans Anglican Church in Heath. We can highly recommend the formation of an ecumenical group. You'll be amazed at the powerful effect of sharing the FHL message with our brothers and sisters in other churches".

- **National Gathering of Friends.** Thank you to all who were able to join this wonderful occasion. There will be a full report in the January Update when we hope to have received a 100% response to the feedback questionnaire that was posted or emailed last week to those who attended. Please complete as soon as you can.
- **Sean has been on the road quite a lot this month** working in Bicester, Oxford, Perry Barr (Birmingham), Chesterfield, Macclesfield and Uttoxeter helping new groups, giving talks and raising awareness and funds. Just back from Kensington, the first Westminster parish has been established on High Street Kensington, Our Lady of Victories and with their support we hope to grow in the London boroughs.
- **A Very Happy and Holy Christmas from all the FHL National team.** With your support and God's Blessings, may our work to support the Christians in the Holy Land continue to grow in 2012. The office will be closed from Friday afternoon 23<sup>rd</sup> December and re-open Tuesday morning 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2012.

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