

The running and development of a Day Care Centre for the elderly in Bethlehem.

St. Martha's House

One of the many visible signs of donations from the "Friends" in the UK has been St. Martha's House, the first dedicated Day Care Centre for elderly ladies in Bethlehem. It is now well established as the regular meeting place twice a week for 35 ladies to enjoy friendship and a healthy lunch.



Lunch preparation in full swing at St Martha's

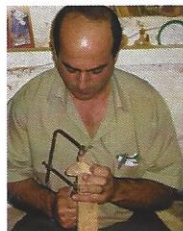
Much of the original development and the ongoing running costs are provided by the FHL, with a significant contribution from the Catenian Pilgrimage Group. It is part of a "care and repair" initiative led by Mrs. Laila Asfoura and supported by a group of Palestinian women in Bethlehem. The centre focuses on providing for the elderly, through basic health care, hairdressing, pedicure, healthy meals, exercise classes, recreational trips, amusement activities and workshops. Many elderly Christians in the Holy Land are facing particular difficulties as they are losing their traditional family support due to the emigration of their sons and daughters. With no social security, no home-care or medical support, the suffering of the elderly is acute. The immediate need is to obtain a vehicle to enable the elderly to be collected from their homes and transported to St. Martha's House. Why not make a donation to ensure this can be purchased in the near future?

'Seed corn' funding for new businesses to provide employment opportunities, in particular youth employment.

Seed corn funding is available for:

- Olive wood production
- Manufacture of olive wood soap
- A wax candle factory
- An icons and paintings gallery
- Ceramic factory
- Kindergarten nursery
- A fragrance of the Bible factory

Immediate beneficiaries of each project are between 4 and 15 families.



Our supplier at work in his workshop

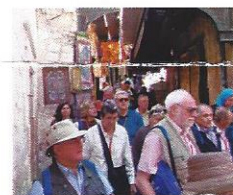
The distribution of food and clothes vouchers, medicines, food parcels, heaters and blankets in winter amongst those in most desperate need of assistance.

At Easter and Christmas, the FHL arrange for families and children in the Bethlehem District to receive food and clothing vouchers, which are then "spent" at shops owned by local Christians. Blankets, heaters and medicines are distributed at Christmas. This project is coordinated for the FHL in the Holy Land by the Sons of the Earth Association (SEA) a non profit organisation that deals with the economic and social considerations of the Christians in the Bethlehem District. The three Parish Priests in St. Catherine's Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour encourage the initiative and ensure the most needy receive support. The real advantage of this project is that three parties benefit; the children, their parents and the local family run neighbourhood shops. SEA provides the FHL with the names of all beneficiaries, so it is known that our funds, given most generously in the UK, are channelled to the most deserving cases. A typical response from a parent was "Thank you for drawing a big smile on the faces of our children and for opening a window of hope and happiness for a better future". A shopkeeper said "This is the first time in my life I am having a good Easter business period. I know my shop is small but all thanks to you FHL, I managed to sell more than 3000 NIS in less than 5 days. Thank you and may God bless you all"



Pilgrimages

"Seeing is believing". There is no better way to understand the Holy Land than to walk in the steps of Our Lord. Everyone is encouraged to visit the Holy Land, pray with the local community at the Sunday Service, visit a school or children's home, be among the Christians living their daily lives and share with them support and friendship. They will then know they are not alone. We have experienced people in the UK and the Holy Land who can help you plan and organise Diocesan or Parish Pilgrimages or small private groups. Our itineraries make it possible for you to meet the local Christians in the Holy Land.



The Way of the Cross on the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem

Support Us

Donate to the FHL General Fund and help our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land.

Please consider:

- A one off donation. Send a cheque to the office payable to the Friends of the Holy Land.
- A regular standing order. Request a form from the office or download from the website.
- Gift aiding your donation if you are a UK tax payer. Forms available from the office or the website.
- Collecting small change in your own olive wood crib box.
- Requesting donations to the FHL in lieu of presents at your next celebration!
- Providing a legacy to the FHL in your Will.
- Requesting a retiring collection in your parish. Please contact the office, who will send you a supply of Gift Aid envelopes.
- Donating online through the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) by visiting the website www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

INFORMATION & SUPPORT

If you would like further information on the FHL or a member of the national team to visit your parish, make a short pulpit presentation or address a group of parishioners, call the office now on 01926 512980 and speak to Sean Higgins or one of the volunteers.