



FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND

“FRIENDS – SUPPORTING THE CHRISTIANS” October 2013 update from the FHL

- **FHL National Gathering – Held on Saturday 7th September.** Guest Speakers Fr. Mark Madden and Dr. Harry Hagopian were well received and the feedback from those attending the third National Gathering was overwhelmingly in favour of having guest speakers again next year. If you would like a copy of the Questions and Answers, slide presentations or text from Fr Mark’s talk, please drop an e-mail to the office and we will send them to you as attachments to the reply. Thank you to everyone who participated this year.
- **Mass at Westminster Cathedral.** A well attended Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Vincent Nichols and offered for Michael Whelan and the Friends of the Holy Land. A copy of the Homily delivered by His Grace is attached to this e-mail.
- **Trustees Meeting.** In the afternoon before the Mass at Westminster Cathedral, FHL trustees held their annual meeting and approved the annual report which has been duly filed with the Charities Commission. To see this, and previous years go to <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/find-charities/> and type 1130054 in the search box.
- **Fund raising success:** Popular ways of making friends, raising awareness and funds over the summer included Salmon & Strawberry afternoon tea in Sheffield, St Williams FHL Group; Strawberry tea in Olton, Solihull Group supported by local Catenians and their wives; Sponsored cycle ride around the parishes near Barton under Needwood in Staffordshire; Cake sales in St Oswald’s, Liverpool and walking the Camino to Santiago de Compostela, Spain (that would please Martin Sheen) by Dave Hart.
- **St. Dunstan’s, Mayfield Jazz Date with Jacqui Dankworth. Saturday 9 November. 7.30pm** Tickets cost £20, full view, and £15, restricted view and are on sale via the parish Office (01435 873484). FHL contact is Jean Olney.
- **Peter’s Travels.** In addition to leading the FHL pilgrimage, Peter had two very successful trips to Hornchurch to speak at three Masses and then return to show a dvd and set up a new group. In addition Peter also had a meeting with Kenilworth’s local MP Jeremy Wright to discuss the work of the charity.
- **Worcester Cathedral** The Big Bible Day event this year again saw FHL in attendance selling Christmas cards and Olive Wood items to both visitors to the Cathedral and

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participants in the Bible Day. Two FHL groups Wyre Forest and Worcester had a hand in helping Sean sell over £100 of goods and raise the public profile of the charity.

- **Droitwich Methodists**

Sean joined the afternoon meeting of Droitwich Methodists to show excerpts from the dvd Bethlehem Hidden from View and talk about the plight of Christians in the Holy Land. We are delighted that they have adopted us as one of their projects.

- **Uxbridge International Mass**

A new Parish Group in Uxbridge at Our Lady of Lourdes and St Michael held a food fayre and International Mass on Sunday 22 September at which FHL were the nominated charity. Donations for food and sales of Olive Wood items which Sean sold at the event made for an excellent day. Many thanks to Angela Seddon and Fr Nicholas Schofield.

- **Sean's Travels this month will include:** In the North West, speaking at Masses over the weekend of 5/6th October in Fleetwood at St Wulstan's and St Edmunds; a meeting at St Oswald's, Liverpool on Monday 7th with Friends from there and the Stoneycroft area, in the afternoon; Southport St. Patrick's (Fr Mark Madden) in the Parish Hall later in the evening; a fund raising event (Pie and a Pint) with Wyre Forest supporters and a chance to give the group a report on their project to refurbish a couple's flat in Bethlehem on Sunday 13th.

- **FHL's first Pilgrimage: Pilgrims' Progress by John Rice.** We fifty three met, as acquaintances, at Heathrow "departures" very early on Friday morning and left from "arrivals" eight days later as firm friends, united by the common aim to do more to support the Christian community in the Holy Land. Together, we had worshiped and prayed, eaten, drunk and chatted and most important of all, walked in the footsteps of Our Lord. From the joy of Holy Mass out in the open at the side of the Sea of Galilee to Sunday Mass in Arabic and English in Reneh and on to the isolated community of Taybeh (they make beer and ceramic peace lamps and are about to open the first Roman Catholic radio station in the Middle East). Jericho was included and we experienced the wilderness through which John the Baptist must have wandered. We met and chatted with the elderly in the Care Home in Taybeh and St Martha's House in Bethlehem. We experienced the children of The School of Joy (those of limited ability) and Beit Jala (boisterous youngsters) and some of the students at Bethlehem University, all being projects which receive support from Friends of the Holy Land. Everywhere, we heard a different slant on the challenges facing the Christians in the Holy Land and this helped us all, irrespective of pilgrimage experience, to gain a much better understanding of the current situation. We also came to appreciate the volume of pilgrims from other parts of the World, from the Americas, France, Spain, Italy, the Balkan countries and Poland to China, Australia and Papua New Guinea. There are many to share the challenge of supporting our Christian brothers and sisters in the land where Our Lord once walked.

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