



FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND

DESPERATE FAMILIES

The focus of Friends of the Holy Land is supporting Christian families, specifically in Palestine and Israel. Thanks to the generosity of our donors in the UK, this support is growing from year to year, bucking the trends in the charitable sector.



Ramzi & Rancia Giacaman with Oriana, Amira & Daniel

It is essential your donations go to those most in need. Some families are in a desperate situation every day. FHL know the names and circumstances of every family who receives a grant, whether at Christmas, towards the cost of medicine or treatment, school fees or refurbishing their home. FHL has recently extended our support to Gaza, ravaged by the recent conflict.

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-CHAIRMAN

As I write this before Christmas, our Chairman, Michael Whelan, continues his course of chemotherapy for throat cancer. He continues as the FHL's inspiration and has asked that I pass on his thanks for all the prayers, Masses and messages on his behalf.



We have just passed our 3rd Birthday and the pace of development is certainly increasing! None of this

would be possible without the volunteer team at the office, led by General Manager, Sean Higgins and the army of volunteers around the country supporting the Christians in the Holy Land. The word is spreading across Christians in Catholic and Church of England parishes around the country. Meanwhile, our team in the Holy Land are advising us of the best use of our funds.

So, wherever you are, please spread the message that local communities, particularly in Palestine need all the help Christians in this country can offer. **DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION!** Finally I would like to record our sincere thanks to Archbishop Rowan Williams for his enthusiastic support of FHL over the last two years. With his help, FHL is now truly ecumenical. We wish him well in his new post as Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge and are delighted he wishes to continue his support for FHL's work.

Peter Rand

STANDING ORDERS - HAVE YOU SIGNED UP?

There are many ways to give but a monthly standing order of £5, £10, £25 or more is among the best as it provides FHL a regular income to help us plan ahead. Whilst some of our projects are 'one-off', many families need regular assistance. Once we take on a new family, it is hard to have to turn off the tap for lack of funds. For more information email friendsoftheholylan@btconnect.com

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PATRONS

The Most Reverend Vincent Nichols
Archbishop of Westminster

The Most Reverend Barry Morgan
Archbishop of Wales

The Most Reverend Patrick Kelly
Archbishop of Liverpool

The Most Reverend Bernard Longley
Archbishop of Birmingham

The Right Reverend Michael Langrish
Bishop of Exeter

OFFICERS

Dr Michael F Whelan – Chairman
Peter Rand – Vice-Chairman
Tony Stokes – Hon. Treasurer
Sean Higgins – General Manager

TRUSTEES

Dr Michael F Whelan
Patrick Horsfield
Jim Kelly
Peter Rand
Charles Reed
David Ryall
Tony Stokes

OBJECTIVES

Our objectives on behalf of the Christians in the Holy Land are:

- **To raise awareness of the challenges they experience**
- **To encourage prayers to be offered for their intentions**
- **To generate and channel financial resources to provide a sustainable future**
- **To encourage visits to the Holy Land to meet with local Christians**

OUR 1ST PILGRIMAGE



Pilgrims outside the Holy Sepulchre

Encouraging visits to the Holy Land to meet Christian people there is an important objective of the FHL. So, leading by example, the first national ecumenical FHL pilgrimage will take place 20 - 28 September 2013. Please check with the office that spaces are still available. It will be a small intimate pilgrimage visiting the holy places and FHL projects, with plenty of time to meet local Christian people.

The brochure/booking form is available on the home page of the website www.friendsoftheholyland.org.uk or by post from the office.

WE GATHERED TOGETHER



Sean reporting back

The 2nd National Gathering was held in Kenilworth, Warwickshire on 29th September. The day was a mixture of presentations covering past and future, group discussions, a lively Q & A session and a report back on the workshops; with plenty of time to meet Friends from around the country to share ideas and experiences. After encouraging feedback, the date for the 3rd National Gathering is Saturday 7 September 2013. Put it in your diary now!

CALLING ALL LONDONERS

Look out for a FHL event in March at Westminster Cathedral Hall entitled "Christians in the Holy Land - Improving their lives". Chaired by Archbishop Vincent Nichols. Speakers include Sir Vincent Fean, HM Consul General in Jerusalem.

FHL DIOCESAN CO-ORDINATORS - COUNTRYWIDE

Diocesan Bishops have been asked to seek and appoint an FHL Diocesan Co-ordinator for their diocese. We now have several in place and one of the Management Committee will meet each of them to agree how best to grow awareness and support for FHL. This often begins with a presentation to parishioners in their own parish, before spreading the word to the local deanery and across the diocese. Thank you to all the Diocesan Co-ordinators who 'volunteered'! We hope to have such a contact in every Catholic and Church of England Diocese by the end of the year.

THANKS TO GUILDFORD & PORTSMOUTH

Bishop of Guildford with Peter Rand

Special thanks to Bishops Christopher Hill and Christopher Foster whose Dioceses selected FHL as beneficiaries of the Lenten Call last year.



The contributions from parishioners were magnificent and have enabled FHL to distribute more funds to specific projects. We now await details of any Dioceses who have designated FHL as beneficiaries at Advent!

RETURNING PILGRIMS – WHERE ARE YOU?!

We want to hear from returning pilgrims. So often they return with one burning question "How can we continue to support the Christians in the Holy Land, some of whom we may have met?" One answer of course is to support FHL!

A great deal of success has been achieved through contacting pilgrimage leaders in advance and arranging for FHL leaflets to be available during the pilgrimage. Then (with everyone's agreement), FHL writes to each pilgrim when they return. John Rice, who already co-ordinates the distribution of olive wood crib boxes, is undertaking a project to identify the leaders of all pilgrimages to the Holy Land in 2013, so that FHL can contact returning pilgrims and extend the FHL network across the country. Please contact John, through the FHL office, if there is a pilgrimage this year in your parish or diocese.

SPOTLIGHT ON FHL CAVERSHAM GROUP

One of the newer FHL Parish Groups, at Our Lady and St Anne Caversham is led by Stephen Roberts, Katie Livesey and Edwin Raj. The group enjoys the full support of their PP Fr. Giles Goward who encouraged the first event in June: a well supported social. *Stephen writes:* "Father Giles made the FHL the parish charity for the year. This inspired us to outline a programme for the coming year. In November Tim Livesey, who worked with the founders of FHL gave us a keynote talk on the regional context. Important support for the group comes from Sunday morning refreshments, parish tea parties and Friday soup lunches which other parishioners have long maintained. For the rest of the year we have plans for meetings on pilgrimage, a film show, a spring walk and are getting a 'study group' underway for deeper discussion and reflection. Parishioners have responded warmly and generously."

CATENIAN SCHOLARSHIP AT BETHLEHEM UNIVERSITY



The Catenian Association have announced a fundraising campaign across the Association worldwide to fund an enduring scholarship at Bethlehem University. Donations are being channelled through FHL and special gift aid forms are available from the FHL office. FHL Chairman Michael Whelan said "This is a wonderful initiative of the Catenians to fund one student at Bethlehem University in perpetuity. The University provides an oasis of calm alongside its high academic standards and FHL is very pleased to support this project".

CHARITABLE TRUSTS – WHOSE IN THE KNOW?

Thank you to the various Charitable Trusts who have been very generous in the last year with their grants towards the work of FHL. Honorary Treasurer, Tony Stokes, is researching appropriate Trusts. If anyone knows of a potential source of additional Trust funds, please contact Tony through the FHL office.

SCHOOL FEES

Christian families prefer to send their children to Faith schools rather than Government schools. However, as privately funded institutions, they cost money. Both the Latin Patriarchate and Anglican authorities are generous in their support for families who cannot afford the full fees. However, sometimes hard decisions have to be made and it is FHL that bridges the gap to enable children to have the best education available, within a Christian ethos. Fees vary from school to school and University fees are higher. Nevertheless a donation of £25 per month is often enough to fund one child.



Khader & Michiline Bandak with Hanna & Lord - FHL beneficiaries

CHRISTMAS SURPRISES

As this newsletter is written, plans are in hand to make distributions to hundreds of named families and individuals within the Christian community, including some of the poorest in Gaza. The value will be around £60 per family or £30 per single person.

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM

The new Programs Development Officer for the Diocese is Sawsan Batato, who is coordinating grant aid across all 35 institutions (mainly schools and hospitals) administered by the Anglican Diocese in the Holy Land. This includes support for specific families in Anglican parishes who FHL funded at Christmas.

SUPPORT IN THE HOLY LAND

'SLOW LEARNERS' AT THE SCHOOL OF JOY

Due to high staffing levels, it costs around £1,300 per year to educate each of the 40 'special needs' children, aged between 6 and 18, for whom the School of Joy is their lifeline. At the time of a recent visit by Peter Rand, the British Consul, Sir Vincent Fean, was there to open a new play area, funded by the British Consulate.



Children awaiting Sir Vincent Fean

AN OASIS OF CALM - ST. MARTHA'S HOUSE

Peter Rand reports on his last visit. "St. Martha's House, the Day Care Centre for elderly ladies in the Bethlehem District, deserves its place as one of the FHL 'flagship' projects. Their new 2012 location is working well and the project for 2013 is to renovate the garden. This will provide an outside interest for the ladies and a few are already planning the vegetables they will grow. With lunches and other activities being arranged twice a week for 35 persons, over 4 days, St. Martha's is a well used and vibrant community. Those able will get up and dance at the first opportunity. The day before my visit, they had been on a picnic in Jericho.

St. Martha's House needs additional funds to enable it to grow and extend its services to other ladies in the area. *Why not sponsor a meal for one lady twice a week or pay the house electricity bill or even the water bill for a year? A monthly standing order of between £10 and £25 will cover this.*"

SMH Director, Laila Asfoura, leads the dancing



THE BIRDS HAVE FLOWN

The aviary is nearly complete and ready for occupation. The birds have flown! The walls are plastered, the kitchen and



Nearly finished

shower room are fitted and very soon, the young man of the house will be able to move downstairs, leave his aged parents in peace and marry his fiancée. All that remains is for an external retaining wall to be made safe. The total cost of £8,617 is a small price to pay to give a family independence and the opportunity to start a new life in the land of their birth.

A CHRISTIAN MISSION

'During my recent visit, writes Peter Rand, 'I met Mr. Mazen Kawa, the Administrative Director of St. Luke's Hospital in Nablus and the hospital's PR Director, Ms Salwa Khoury, to learn more of their work. The hospital is under the remit of the Anglican Diocese in Jerusalem with a mission to provide healthcare for the poor and needy, acting in a Christian manner. As a private hospital it charges fees for in-patients, though they can exempt people who cannot pay for all or part of the charge for operations and medicines. FHL have agreed to contribute \$1,000 per month towards specific cases. This will be allocated to the most needy Christian families, with details being forwarded to FHL regularly.

SUMMER CAMPS – PALESTINIAN STYLE

Summer will soon be here! Once again FHL hope to fund children attending one of the Summer Camps attached to the schools in the West Bank-where fun is a vital element!



SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS IN THE HOLY LAND

CANDLES OF HOPE

A year since this project was first established the small factory in Beit Jala is selling high quality candles to churches and souvenir shops around



Candles in full production

Bethlehem and in Jerusalem. A recent generous donation has provided a catalyst to the business enabling an even faster development of various stock lines and potentially increasing the number of employees. Currently 4 ladies, each of whom would otherwise be without work, are manufacturing, decorating, labelling and then packing the candles for distribution.

RENOVATION AT EIN ARIK

Ein Arik is an ancient Palestinian village near Ramallah. There is a sizable Christian community living in very poor conditions, with no mains water or telephone. FHL do not generally refurbish church premises but this project from the Latin Patriarchate offered the double benefit of job creation for the parishioners as well as maintaining the church. The work included waterproofing the ceiling, internal/external painting and excavation, levelling and asphaltting the church yard. All for a cost of only 4,900 Euros.



TWO FRONT DOORS – ALLELUIA!

Nablus is where the house splitting has started. Two families that are heavily involved in the Latin Parish in Nablus, under the charismatic Fr. Johnny, are having their houses rearranged to create separate accommodation for Ibrahim and Bassema, the sons of each family. This is because they wish to marry this Easter and will not take on the responsibilities of marriage without their own home; with their own front door, living room, kitchen, bathroom and bedroom. Ibrahim's house was completed for Christmas and Bassema's is in progress. Not only do such projects offer employment in the area, but they ensure young people do not emigrate and stay to grow the Christian population in the area.



Bassema and his mother outside his new front door

Ibrahim with his father and Fr. Johnny



ARAB EPISCOPAL MEDICAL CENTRE, RAMALLAH

Diabetes is the fourth highest cause of death in Palestine. It can cause blindness, problems with the feet and many other conditions. The Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem is developing a Medical Centre in Ramallah for the diagnosis and treatment of diabetes, centralising all specialities required under one roof. FHL, at the request of Bishop Suheil in Jerusalem, has funded a Stress Test System; an ECG analyser, 19" display, treadmill and BP monitor, at a cost of £20,000.

FHL NEEDS YOU!

The plea for more Ambassadors will never go away! As every Catholic and Church of England Diocese is approached to support Christians in the Holy Land, local FHL ambassadors will be vital to hold the hand of parishioners who want to set up small FHL groups. With thousands of potential parishes, there will always be a role for a willing FHL ambassador! Will you volunteer?

WHO TO LOOK OUT FOR IN KENILWORTH



Supporting General Manager Sean Higgins, there is a loyal team of volunteers who are well established in

various roles.

John Rice is officially the Crib Box Co-ordinator, but he is often found transporting olive wood items, brochures and other literature up and down the motorway network.

John Bradshaw is our communications specialist, supporting the Management Committee with both internal and external requirements to spread the message.

Pam Highton (not forgetting husband, Tony) are the stalwarts behind the management of olive wood and Christmas cards.

If you call the office during a midweek morning, you are likely to find the following volunteers handling your requests:

Lyn on Mondays, Karen on Tuesdays, June on Wednesdays, Maureen on Thursday and Pam on Fridays. Lisa is our floater often working for FHL at home.

JUST A FEW POUNDS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Donate to help our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land. Consider:

- A one off donation. Send a cheque to the office payable to FHL – General Fund.
- A regular standing order. Ask for a form from the office or download from the website.
- Gift aiding your donation if you are a UK tax payer. Your donation is then worth an additional 25% to FHL. Complete a Gift Aid form and send your donation direct to the office.
- Requesting donations to FHL in lieu of presents at your next celebration!
- Providing a legacy to 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 on-line through the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) by visiting our website

www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE

CRIB MONEY BOXES – THEY'RE FREE!

Whether it's bronze or silver or the odd note, FHL crib boxes around the country are raising thousands of pounds; and with very little pain! Why not get a group of 20 friends together to give them EACH a crib box? They are free, although we will chase you every year in January/February for the contents! Call the FHL office with your request.



LEGACIES - FUTURE PLANNING

If you would like to make a legacy to FHL in your Will, please contact the office for the necessary documentation.

INFORMATION & SUPPORT

If you would like further information on the FHL or for 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.