



# FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND

## “TELL ALL THE ‘FRIENDS’ HOW GRATEFUL WE ARE”

‘That was the overwhelming message that I heard during my recent seven day whistle-stop visit to our projects in the West Bank’, says FHL General Manager, Sean Higgins. ‘Wherever I travelled, I was met with warm gratitude for everything that the ‘Friends’ are doing over here to make their lives more bearable over there. One such case is Linda and her children. The father was not there when I visited as he was collecting water from a family member. They had had none for 5 days. FHL are investigating a water butt on the roof. Linda receives a small monthly contribution of 500 shekels that makes all the difference. I was asked to pass on their gratitude for increasing awareness of their plight, for your prayers, for your practical support and for all of you who pray with them on pilgrimage. The plethora of activity in this country is changing the lives of families and giving them hope that someone does care for their future’.



Linda and children



## ARCHBISHOP JUSTIN WELBY OFFERS SUPPORT

Friends of the Holy Land is very pleased and grateful that the Archbishop is joining us as a patron and offer him a very warm welcome. Vice-Chairman, Peter Rand, says ‘the Archbishop’s interest and encouragement will help us widen our circle of supporters here and extend

the work we do for our fellow Christians. I am also pleased to welcome the Rt. Revd. Christopher Chessun, the Bishop of Southwark, as a patron. Following their ‘retirement’, the Most Rev. Patrick Kelly, the Rt. Revd. and Rt. Hon. Lord Williams of Oystermouth and the Rt. Revd. Dr Michael Langrish have each agreed to remain as FHL patrons and continue their support. We thank them for what they have done and what they will do in the future to address the needs of the Christian communities in the Holy Land’.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

It gives me great pleasure to write these few words to you. I am now in my ‘recovery’ mode, though still being told not to do too much! The chemo/radio therapies have left me very weak but there is a little bit of energy left! I would like to thank you for your support for me personally and for the superb work that many of you are doing across the country. It has been a very successful year both in fundraising activity here and in the number of families and individuals that we have been able to help in the Holy Land. You are all carrying out superb work for the people of the Land of the Lord and may you be rewarded for this in your own lives. Bless you all and a special welcome to new readers. Welcome aboard!



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## PATRONS

**The Most Revd. and Rt. Hon. Justin Welby**  
*Archbishop of Canterbury*

**The Most Rev. Vincent Nichols**  
*Archbishop of Westminster*

**The Rt. Revd. and Rt. Hon. Lord Williams of Oystermouth**

**The Most Rev. Patrick Kelly**  
*Archbishop Emeritus of Liverpool*

**The Most Revd. Barry Morgan**  
*Archbishop of Wales*

**The Most Rev. Bernard Longley**  
*Archbishop of Birmingham*

**The Rt. Revd. Christopher Chessun**  
*Bishop of Southwark*

**The Rt. Revd. Dr Michael Langrish**

## OFFICERS

Dr Michael F Whelan – Chairman  
Peter Rand – Vice-Chairman  
Jim Quinn – Honorary Secretary  
Tony Stokes – Honorary 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**

## CAN A 50% YEAR ON YEAR GROWTH BE MAINTAINED?

Wow! The last FHL year was memorable as our generous donors increased our income by 50% to £325,000 with a similar increase in funds being distributed in the Holy Land. Cost ratios have been maintained, thanks to the huge amount of time and resources provided by volunteers both at the Kenilworth office and around the country.

As the situation for Christians in the Middle East continues to look bleak, what more can be done to increase support? The answer is to spread the word even further and faster among grass roots Christians over here. We welcome all ideas and in particular new 'ambassadors' to add to our growing team who fly the flag for our Christian brothers and sisters.

## WELCOME TO JIM QUINN



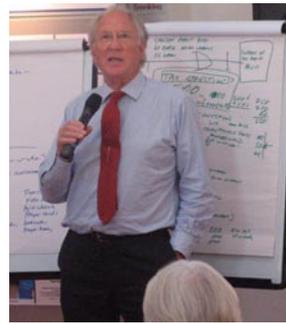
Jim Quinn

We are very pleased to welcome Jim Quinn as the new Honorary Secretary of Friends of the Holy Land. As FHL grows, we will benefit from the wide level of experience that Jim brings to the Charity. Jim has a few decades of experience behind him as a lawyer and administrator. He has been Managing Partner and Senior Partner of a major provincial firm of solicitors. He has been involved as a Trustee of a private school; a non executive director of an NHS trust; chairman of an advisory panel to the Lord Chancellor; chairman of Trustees of a Diocesan Social Care Agency and Grand Secretary of the Catenian Association. For almost 30 years he has been a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre, including a period as President of one of the Sections whence derived his love for the Holy Land and ultimately his great interest in the Friends of the Holy Land.

## FHL GROUPS

These continue to blossom around the country creating a bed-rock of support in Parishes, Deaneries and Dioceses, in particular from Roman Catholic and Church of England congregations. If you would like to know the nearest one to you or to start a group in your area, please contact the office who will provide all the assistance you need.

## NATIONAL GATHERING – DIARY DATE



John Bradshaw addresses the 2012 Gathering

Hopefully everyone has the date in their diary. Saturday 7 September 2013. Following feedback from the last two years, the arrangements remain similar. 10.30am Mass at St. Francis of Assisi in Kenilworth with the meeting starting at 11.30am and concluding at 4.30pm. Once again B&B will be available at local homes and transport available from both Coventry and Warwick Parkway rail stations if required. There is no cost for the day and lunch is provided. There will be the usual mix of updates from the Management Committee, opportunity for questions and a series of workshops in the afternoon. Please forward any ideas for workshop subjects as soon as possible and contact the office if you would like to register.

## “BIG GIVE”

FHL have applied to participate in the 'Big Give', an opportunity to engage with a group of philanthropists who will double the money of any donations received over a specific period and with various conditions. Watch out for further information about how you can participate.

## GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

FHL will once again have a stand at the General Synod in York in early July, an excellent opportunity to meet with the Bishops, the Clergy and the Laity who are on the General Synod of the Church of England.

## FHL PILGRIMAGE

All the arrangements are in hand for the first FHL pilgrimage 20<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> September. At the time of writing it is fully booked but there may still be an opportunity to join the pilgrimage if you wish to add your name to a waiting list. Otherwise, why not register your interest for Autumn 2014?

## LUNCH WITH THE PAPAL NUNCIO



Archbishop Kevin McDonald,  
Archbishop Antonio Mennini,  
Bishop Christopher Chessun

Thanks to the generosity and organisation of John Scanlan and Mary Edwards the second lunch with the Papal Nuncio at his Wimbledon residence proved a most successful and enjoyable occasion. Once again it was a joint event with the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre. The occasion was marked by the Investiture of the Nuncio, Archbishop Antonio Mennini, as a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre and the Bishop of Southwark, the Rt. Rev. Christopher Chessun as a Patron of FHL.

## PILGRIMAGES

John Rice (of Crib Box Co-ordination fame!) is supporting the Management Committee to identify significant pilgrimages visiting the Holy Land and then to engage with returning pilgrims. Experience indicates that so often they are asking 'Having experienced pilgrimage and witnessed the plight of the Christian minority, how can I help now I have returned home?' We believe FHL provides the best solution! Thanks John for everything you are doing.

## DIOCESAN CO-ORDINATORS

Each Catholic and Church of England Diocesan Bishop has been asked to nominate a FHL Diocesan Co-ordinator to help us to engage with the parishioners in their Diocese. To date we have over 20 and are working with them, whilst encouraging the remaining Bishops to source a suitable candidate!

## WESTMINSTER EVENT

One of the highlights of the first six months of 2013 was the first FHL Public Meeting at Westminster Cathedral Hall on 19 March. Only our Chairman for the evening, Archbishop Vincent Nichols, was missing, called to Rome for the installation Mass for Pope Francis that day. What poor timing! Nevertheless, with a full house and excellent speakers in Sir Vincent Fean, Bishop Christopher Chessun and Laila Asfoura, plus plenty of questions, the audience went away happy that the occasion had been very worthwhile. Thank you to everyone who was involved.

## SCHOOL FEES



Creative use of an alcove

Beit Jala's Latin Patriarchate School is just one of the many schools where FHL is supporting families with contributions to their school fees. Sean was very

impressed during his recent visit to hear from headmaster, Suhail Daibes, that the high grades, progressive approach and Christian ethos has resulted in the school being over-subscribed. 'Everywhere I went there were signs of innovative techniques, focusing on a tactile approach as in this alcove, where the younger pupils were encouraged to become 'hands on'. This was in line with the policy to employ younger teachers than in other schools'.

## ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL, NABLUS

Dr. Walid, Director of the hospital, was keen to thank FHL for the 25% contribution we make to their 'Exemption Fund', to cover the cost of operations, medicines and accommodation for the poorest Christian families who do not have enough to pay for treatment.

This hospital is managed by the Anglican Diocese in Jerusalem.

## SCHOOL OF JOY

Meet Nour (meaning light) a young boy whose reading has improved vastly since attending the School of Joy. Thanks to a generous donation to FHL from the Entrepreneurs Fund, the



Meet Nour

School of Joy has been able to increase the School by one class to 52 students and 10 staff. Furthermore, from the new academic year, all the teachers will be on full-time monthly salaries instead of being paid daily. They are receiving teacher training from Bethlehem University and the combination is expected to ensure even greater levels of retention. That ensures a consistency of the teacher/student relationship, particularly important with 'Special Needs' youngsters.

# SUPPORT IN THE HOLY LAND

## ST. MARTHA'S HOUSE – COMPETITION TIME!

The first person who contacts the office with the name of the fruit growing on this tree in the new garden at St. Martha's House will receive a set of olive wood rosary beads, made in Bethlehem. Whatever your answer, Sean is obviously pointing to the fruits of your generosity by funding the work on this garden. It is now producing a rich harvest of lettuces, tomatoes, runner beans and other vegetables, grown, picked and eaten by the 40 ladies, who meet there twice a week in two groups. Regular visits from the occupational therapist ensure the ladies take plenty of exercise. With all the other benefits offered at St. Martha's House it is now fully subscribed.



Name this fruit! Sean with SMH Director Laila Asfoura



## WORLD YOUTH DAY IN RIO DE JANEIRO – CAN YOU HELP?

Twenty young people from the village of Taybeh, the only entirely Christian village in the Holy Land, are attending World Youth Day in Rio. They have sourced funds for their flights and are now seeking a little spending money. If anyone would like to make a small donation, then the funds will be immediately sent to Fr. Aziz, the PP in Taybeh.

## FAMILIES/SPONSORSHIP



George and Linda

George and Linda are one of a growing number of families being sponsored by 'Friends' in this country to the tune of 500 shekels per month. They have no family to support them. George is a diabetic on crutches and cannot work. If you would like to adopt a specific family for £90 per month, please contact the office. Each family is individually recommended after due diligence has been completed and they are visited by FHL representatives on a regular basis to ensure funds are being used wisely, are still necessary and their circumstances have not changed.

## MEDICAL NEEDS

These are among the most frequent requests, covering the cost of medicines, operations and convalescence. FHL recently made grants for cases of brain cancer, a broken leg and regular funding for Issa to treat his diverticulitis. With medicines often costing 25% of income and operations costing as much as five years' income, we are as generous as we can to help save and extend lives of the most serious cases.

## DAMP, DAMP AND MORE DAMP

Damp is the single biggest problem that needs repairing in many of the homes we visit. The work to permanently solve the issue is sometimes extensive and beyond the means of the family. The constant damp can have a serious effect on the health of the youngest and oldest members of the family. This is one such house that is just about to undergo the treatment from FHL's band of tradesmen, led by supervisor, Joseph.



Damp is rife in many properties

# SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS IN THE HOLY LAND

## ARAB EPISCOPAL MEDICAL CENTRE, RAMALLAH



Diabetes is the number one cause of death in the region. The equipment donated by supporters in the UK in the last year is now

ready to benefit hundreds of families, following the official opening of the Centre in June by new FHL Patron, Archbishop Justin Welby.



Equipment for diabetes patients, supplied through FHL

## ROOF COLLAPSE AT RECTORY IN BEIT JALA

Earlier in the year a severe storm caused the water tank to crash through the roof of the Rectory at Beit Jala. Following an emergency request for modest financial support to repair the



The new water tanks

problem by the PP, Fr. Ibrahim Shomali, a keen advocate of the FHL in the Holy Land, Sean was able to inspect the work during his

recent visit. Two smaller brand-new tanks with associated solar panels and waterproofing have now brought order where there was chaos.

## ROSARY SISTERS SCHOOL

'A visit to the Kindergarten took rather longer than planned as each child wanted to tell me their name', says Sean. 'This was a very happy place but one could see funds were tight. Among other problems, I saw a slide that had been broken, something that the FHL can replace to restore the play equipment for the younger children.'



A Happy Place



Broken slide

## BETHLEHEM ICON SCHOOL



The Director, Ian Knowles at work

This new initiative is being well supported by FHL. What an eclectic mix of students Ian has attracted to maintain this Christian tradition of iconography and enable people to earn an income from selling the fruits of their labour and restoring frescos in churches; Coptic nuns who raise chickens to supplement their income, Syrians,

Lebanese, students and mothers, from 17 years to 63 years old. By working as a 'collective', they pool their skills and experiences for this intricate work. One icon can take a month to complete and earn the student \$300 but then be sold at five times the price.



The Icon of the day

## OLIVE WOOD PRODUCTS

From April, Olive Wood Products has been fully incorporated into Friends of the Holy Land. Olive wood and associated products are imported from specific Christian family businesses in the Bethlehem area that are reliant on us to provide an outlet for their wares. A small supply of olive wood products made by the students at the School of Joy are available. Contact Pam Highton at the office with your olive wood order for Advent! It's never too early!

## CHRISTMAS CARDS

A new range of FHL Christmas cards will be available for purchase in August. Here is a taster! Please order early as we sold out last year. If you are attending the National Gathering on 7th September, then why not collect your order there and save the postage costs?



## PRAYER CARD

Look out for an FHL prayer card that is being designed and printed.

## NEW HMRC GIFT AID REQUIREMENTS

Please ensure you are using the correct Gift Aid forms and envelopes. They are the ones that include within the declaration a reference to Community Amateur Sports Clubs!

To ensure our records are kept up to date, please inform us of any changes to your name, address and personal tax circumstances or if you wish to cancel your Gift Aid Declaration at any time.

## JUST A FEW POUNDS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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

Please be generous and consider:

- A one-off donation. Send a cheque to the office payable to Friends of the Holy Land.
- 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](http://www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk)

## HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE

## POSTERS FOR CHURCHES. PILGRIMAGES. CELEBRATION LEAFLETS.

Supplies of FHL brochures, newsletters, posters, banners, pilgrimage guidelines and celebration leaflets are all available from the office



## 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.