



FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND

Cardinal's Gift of £85,000

FHL's founding Patron, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster, has given FHL a cheque for £85,000. This wonderful sum came from the people of the Dioceses of Birmingham, Liverpool and Westminster, and had been raised to mark the Archbishop's appointment by Pope Francis as Cardinal. The Cardinal handed the cheque to Jim Quinn, FHL's Chairman, and Peter Rand, Vice-Chairman, at Archbishop's House on 14th May.



Image; Marcin Mazur/CBCEW

It was Cardinal Nichols's personal decision to give the money collected in the parishes 'to the suffering church in the Holy Land', through FHL. We're most grateful to him for this generous gesture, and, of course, to the many people across the three dioceses who contributed. Jim Quinn, FHL's Chairman, told Cardinal Nichols that we're planning to use the sum to speed up work on the Beit Sahour affordable housing project (Newsletter No 9) and on a project to provide water cisterns to Christian families in the West Bank. We'll keep the Cardinal and our many other Friends informed as these projects develop.

Parishes in the three dioceses held collections in March for the new Cardinal, and each of the cathedrals held Masses of Thanksgiving in the presence of the Cardinal soon after.

Cardinal Nichols has been a great Friend and adviser since before FHL's foundation in 2009, and in fact it was as a response to his concern for the many problems facing Christians in the Holy Land, and his encouragement and enthusiasm, that FHL was set up in 2009.

A video of the Cardinal's discussion with Jim Quinn of the current position in the Holy Land, his gift and FHL's plans for it can be found on FHL's website.

www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

FHL's Objectives

- to raise awareness of the challenges facing the Christians of the Holy Land
- to encourage prayers for their intentions
- to generate financial resources to give them a sustainable future
- to encourage visits to the Holy Land to meet local Christians

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Chairman's Message



This has been an extraordinary, and uplifting, few months for Friends of the Holy Land, and for me as Chairman. We were very pleased with the news that our Patron and great friend Archbishop Vincent Nichols was to become a Cardinal, and overwhelmed with gratitude by

his decision to pass the generous gift of £85,000 from the three dioceses to FHL for use for the Christians in the Holy Land. Now we can press on even faster with our project in Beit Sahour, providing initial funds to enable the building of ten affordable apartments for Christian families. And once the apartments are sold, we get the money back to invest in another housing project.

When we passed the £1 million landmark we realised that, with the need for help growing just as fast as our income, we must plan for an even busier future. We're well on the way to completing our new structure, here and in the Holy Land, and we're confident we'll work as effectively in the future as we have done in the past.

Early in May, Peter Rand, our indefatigable Vice-Chairman, had to cancel his planned visit to the Holy Land at short notice, because of family illness, so I went in his place. I was greatly impressed by the hard work and commitment of our Holy Land Committee, and pleased to see our new office in Bethlehem. I also met Mirna Nassar, our newly-appointed secretary, and took part in the first interviews for an officer to manage our organisation there. A dedicated office and two full-time employees will make a huge difference to the way FHL reaches out to our Christian brothers and sisters, and I have a feeling that the next few months will be just as exciting and rewarding as the last.

Finally, thank you all for being part of this great project, and for being Friends of the Holy Land. *Jim Quinn*

Holy Hour

To mark the Pope's visit to the Holy Land, Catholic churches throughout England and Wales held a Holy Hour of Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament on 25th May, at the exact time when Pope Francis met Christian families there. The Holy Hour was proposed

by FHL and enthusiastically adopted by the Catholic Bishops. Then, in response to our invitation, nearly a dozen Anglican Bishops also asked their parishes to hold an hour of prayer and reflection at the same time.

'One of FHL's objectives is to encourage prayers for the intentions of the Christians of the Holy Land, and the visit of the Holy Father to Christian families there was the perfect occasion for an hour of prayer' said Jim Quinn, FHL's Chairman. 'We're very glad that both Catholic and Anglican Bishops across England and Wales supported our proposal. It was important to know that our prayers were offered up at the same time as Pope Francis was with Christian families in the Holy Land, and that we were taking part in his historic visit.'

Bethlehem to Birmingham; the story of a hundred stoles

One of FHL's more unusual work-creation projects, to make stoles for the deacons of the Birmingham Archdiocese, has just been completed, in time for a special Silver Jubilee celebration at St Chad's Cathedral. Deacon John O'Brien, a founder member of FHL, tells the story.

'Each year the Archbishop gathers his deacons to the cathedral to revisit their ordination vows. It's the



deacon equivalent, if you like, of the Chrism Mass, when the priests of the diocese gather wearing their diocesan vestments. Until now deacons did not have such vestments, and Fr David Bazen, Director of the Permanent Diaconate Programme, suggested it would

be good to mark this Jubilee by presenting all the deacons with a diocesan stole.'

'I thought these should be made in Bethlehem, to add two significant benefits. The stoles would come from the land of Our Lord's birth, an important detail remembering that our deacons are ordained to be 'heralds of the Gospel', and the project would give

FHL in the UK

much-needed work to Christian craftsmen in the Holy Land. It's providential, too, that the Jerusalem cross, a prominent feature in the design of the stoles, is very similar to the Cross of St Chad, a Patron of the Birmingham Archdiocese.'

The work was funded by a charitable trust and the Catenians, and organised by FHL's Holy Land Committee. Two highly skilled local workers, Anwar Khouri and Abdo Hodali, made a hundred deacon stoles and two priest stoles. *Our picture shows Deacon John O'Brien and Fr David Bazen wearing the new stoles.*

The Church of England's General Synod

Once again FHL will be at the General Synod in York for the entire five days, 11th to 15th July. We'll have a display, and a fringe meeting on the latest position of the Christians in the Holy Land. There is great competition for the very limited space available and for the right to hold a fringe meeting, and we're very pleased to have been invited.

Chaired by one of our loyal Patrons, Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark, the fringe meeting will be a great opportunity to engage with members of the General Synod of the Church of England, which includes the Bishops, the clergy and lay members. We hope to meet many of our Friends there, and to make more Friends among over 400 Synod members. Jim Quinn, Peter Rand and Sean Higgins will all be there – do come and meet them.

FHL's dynamic Friends

In this issue we focus on the FHL Weybridge group. 'Lindy Wilson one of their very energetic members, is an FHL Ambassador, and works tirelessly to promote olive wood products and FHL's work in the Holy Land',



said Sean Higgins, FHL's Director of Development. 'Lindy looked after Fr Abusada, Director of The School of Joy, on his recent visit (picture). With Mo McDonnell and many other Friends, the Weybridge Group is very active fund-raising and developing FHL in the area.'

'Recently Weybridge Group members sold olive wood products at their parish Confirmation day, while other members were in Crawley promoting FHL at the Arundel and Brighton Diocesan Justice and Peace Assembly on the Holy Land. They also produced their own booklet for the Holy Hour in May.'

The Group has organised an evening in Weybridge on Sunday 20th July at which the recently-retired British Consul General to Jerusalem, Sir Vincent Fean, will be the guest speaker. All are welcome – email brollimo@btconnect.com or call 01932 846372.

More from FHL Groups

We're blessed with busy, imaginative Groups around the country, and thank our Friends and Ambassadors for all they do for Christians in the Holy Land. St Michael and All Angels Anglican Church Group raised £1,900 with a concert in March, Lingfield and East Grinstead Group held an Auction and Magical Mississippi Meal Evening which raised £1,450, and several Groups held Lenten Lunches, with Kenilworth raising £900 and East Finchley £1,700. Liverpool Archdiocese continues to support FHL with collections several times an year. They've raised more than £1,600 in the last six months over and above the collections for the Cardinal's Gift.

There's a shortage of water for people living in the Holy Land, and they need to supplement pumped water with collected rainwater. The Ely Diocese has held a Pentecost Appeal to provide Christians with water cisterns to hold rain and mains water, to ensure water is available more frequently. Bishop Stephen Conway, said 'I very much hope and pray that the whole diocese will get behind this project and give generously.' We're very grateful to the diocese for this appeal.

Churches Together

Peter Rand led a workshop on Christians in Gaza at CT's National Conference in Cardiff. Based on FHL's experience of the problems facing the 1,500 Christians, a very small minority in this overcrowded territory, Peter gave a presentation, '*Christians - Continuity, Presence and Conflict*' in which he discussed the significant contribution Christian churches and institutions make to life in Gaza despite very challenging conditions. We are pleased to see FHL's close involvement in the Holy Land recognised by this invitation.

FHL in the Holy Land

About Summer School

One of FHL's longest-standing beneficiaries, the About Summer School, will take place again this year, and we've increased our support. FHL is the largest contributor to this invaluable project.

It's organised by Fr Yousef, the local Latin (Catholic) priest, and his friend and neighbour Fr Emmanuel, the Greek Orthodox priest, with a team of volunteers, many from abroad. Both Latin and Greek Orthodox children take part.



In 2012 FHL sponsored two volunteers, Ciara and Emily. They wrote *'One reason for the month-long Summer School is the boredom village children experience during the summer holiday. The Summer School provides an invaluable way of keeping local children occupied during the summer. The village, near Ramallah, isn't affluent, and many parents find it hard to pay for the children to go away, even for days out, yet the children need something to do during the long summer break.'*

The children take part in the organised games, art, drama, cooking, sewing and music sessions. As the swimming pool in the village is small they go to full-size pools in Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jifna and the Limon Valley.

Life in Aboud is far from easy. The poverty there isn't just financial poverty, it's the result of being deprived of the opportunity to travel and to work, despite many villagers having a good education. Local people rarely travel to Ramallah because of a difficult check-point on the way. The nearest settlement is only half a mile from Aboud, even though the actual border with Israel is about five miles away. Settlers have blocked

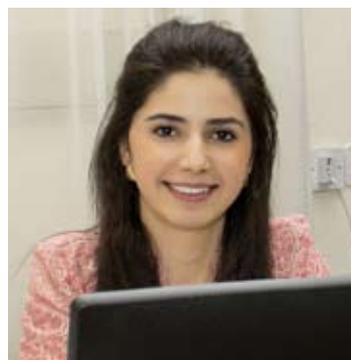
one of the two roads into the village with earth and rubble, so people from Aboud can't reach their olive groves beyond and lose the income they should get from them. There's very little new building in the village.'

Faith is an important part of the About Summer School, and each day begins and ends with prayers. There's a competitive element, too, and a good balance between education and enjoyment.

The Summer School not only helps the children, it helps their families, too, making sure the children are well looked-after, entertained and kept out of trouble. This is a very effective way to show our fellow Christians in the Holy Land that they're not forgotten, and that we can and will help them through these difficult times.

Bethlehem office

While in the UK we've been reviewing the way FHL works, to make sure we're ready and able to handle the greater demands and larger income we expect in the next five years, our devoted committee members in Bethlehem have also been gearing up for new,



bigger challenges. They now have a modest first-floor office in central Bethlehem, and a very capable secretary. She's Mirna Nassar, and Jim Quinn is impressed by her. 'She's an intelligent, highly motivated young woman, easy to talk to, and with a head well beyond

her years. She finished her degree course at Bethlehem University at the end of May, and I have no doubt she'll be a major asset to FHL's Holy Land Committee.'

'Shortly we'll also appoint an officer to manage our work there. At the moment we depend on our capable Holy Land Committee, but of course they all have jobs and businesses, and we can't continue to expect them to put these on hold time after time' said Jim Quinn. 'With an officer in place liaising with FHL here, the Committee will be able to concentrate on their more strategic managerial and development role, guiding us on appropriate and practical projects while leaving the daily routine to the new staff. It will be a much more effective structure.'

FHL in the Holy Land

FRESH in Bethlehem

One of FHL's most imaginative projects opened in Bethlehem in May. It's called FRESH, and makes a range of sandwiches and Palestinian specialities for sale to offices and shops nearby. FRESH has been set up in a new kitchen at St Martha's House, and already provides jobs to three Christian women.



FRESH will produce an income to help with the running costs of St Martha's House and employ local Christians, and of course produce good-quality and nutritious food for local office staff and visitors.

Laila Asfoura, a tireless member of FHL's Holy Land Committee and the founder of St Martha's House, is the driving force behind FRESH, and FHL has provided the cost of essential kitchen equipment.

FHL family support

Remember the Handal family, in Issue 9? They were living in very poor conditions, without enough furniture for the family to eat together, and using an old stove that repeatedly burst into flames. When Peter Rand heard of this he arranged for their kitchen to be renovated. Here's the result, a happy family.



But new cases arrive a regular basis, including a young man with testicular cancer where surgery will cost 25,000 shekels, though his insurance covers only 3,500. Another case is a young couple with a new baby where the marriage is in trouble because of financial difficulties. The challenge is the costs of looking after their baby so they can both seek work.

School of Joy

Fr Abusada now has permission from the authorities to open his sixth class room, and thanks to our generous Friends, FHL has funded another teacher and ten more students. However, funds are still tight and the staff have not had an inflation increase this year. Grants from Italy and Germany have been reduced, so any additional funding will be well received to support the students with special needs under Fr. Abusada's care.

Dental Care in the Holy Land

Out thanks go to John Hunt, a dental professional, who visited St. Vincent's Dental Clinic during a recent pilgrimage, and to Gail Brown and others for showing such interest in FHL's aim to improve the dental care of the Christians in the Holy Land. John was impressed by what he saw, and we're now making plans to optimise the benefits the excellent dental clinic in Bethlehem and its well-qualified staff are able to offer.

FHL's film

Good progress is being made on a 15 - 20minute film to tell the story of the Christians in the Holy Land and FHL's work to help and support them. It will include interviews with two of our Patrons, Cardinal Nichols and Archbishop Welby. Thanks to a generous benefactor it will be available to FHL Groups soon; contact the FHL office to order your copy in advance.

Pilgrimages

FHL Management Committee Member John Rice is making good progress engaging with more UK pilgrimage organisers and leaders. FHL can arrange for pilgrims to meet local Christians and hear first-hand about FHL's support for the most needy families. Shepherds Tours, who handle many Church of England pilgrimages from the UK, has agreed to distribute FHL literature and promote our work to Anglican pilgrims from around the world.

JUST A FEW POUNDS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Please donate to FHL and help our Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land. Please be generous, and consider -

A one-off donation. Please send a cheque payable to Friends of the Holy Land to the office (address below).

A regular payment by standing order to FHL. Please ask the office for a form or download from the website, by clicking the 'donate' button.

Gift-Aid your donation if you're a UK taxpayer. That way your donation is worth a further 25% to FHL. Please complete a Gift Aid form and send your donation to the office.

Ask for donations to FHL instead of presents at your next celebration!

Leave a legacy to FHL in your will.

Ask for a retiring collection in your parish.

Please contact the office - we'll send you a supply of Gift Aid envelopes.

Donate to FHL on-line through the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) by visiting our website, www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

YOU CAN HELP FHL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

FHL's Patrons

His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols
Archbishop of Westminster

The Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby

Archbishop of Canterbury

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 Rev Christopher Chessun

Bishop of Southwark

The Rt Revd Dr Michael Langrish

Trustees

Jim Quinn - Patrick Horsfield - Jim Kelly
Peter Rand - Charles Reed- David Ryall
Tony Stokes - Norah Whelan

Management Committee

Jim Quinn - Chairman
Peter Rand - Vice-Chairman & Executive Trustee
Tony Stokes - Trustee & Director of Finance
Sean Higgins - Director of Development
Karen Baxter - Office Manager
John Bradshaw - Communications
John Rice - Pilgrimage Liaison

A date for your diary -

FHL's 4th National Gathering

10.30am to 4.00pm

Saturday 27th September

St Francis Parish Centre, Kenilworth

Principal Speaker and Concelebrant at the opening Mass will be our Patron, Most Rev Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham. More details follow in our Monthly Updates. Contact the FHL office to register your attendance.

If you'd like further information on FHL or for one of our team to visit your parish to make a short presentation or address a group of parishioners, call the FHL office on 01926 512980. Speak to Karen Baxter or one of our volunteers, or email sean.higgins@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

Beit Sahour Housing Project - a Special Appeal

FHL is committed to raise £120,000 for this project in 2014. While the fundraising is being led by the Croydon Deanery, it is open to all. Such is the urgency and importance of this project that some of the Cardinal's Gift will be used to start development of these ten affordable apartments for young Christian families.

Please help this vital project. You can donate by post by cheque or standing order, or on-line. Visit www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

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