



## **FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND**

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### **“FRIENDS – HELPING CHRISTIANS IN THE HOLY LAND”**

#### **February 2015 update from the FHL**

- **Thank you**

Thank you to all readers of the eight-page ‘bumper issue’ of the FHL Newsletter who responded with suggestions and especially for your generous donations. January has been a very busy month in the office, for all the right reasons!

- **Visit to the Holy Land**

FHL Chairman, Jim Quinn accompanied by Peter Rand and Vicki Urch spent a hectic 4 days in January with 17 scheduled appointments in Jerusalem, Bethlehem District and Ramallah. These include meetings with Archbishop Suheil Dawani and his team at the Anglican Diocese in Jerusalem, at the Latin Patriarchate, the Pontifical Mission, Caritas Jerusalem, the Latin and Anglican Parish Priests in Ramallah, families who FHL are supporting, the FHL office, a meeting with the FHL Committee, the School of Joy, St. Martha’s House, the FRESH business, a Dental Clinic and the offices of Laila Tours. We were also pleased to meet Revd Dominic Barrington, a great FHL supporter from Kettering who was leading a pilgrimage from the US, staying nearby in Bethlehem.

Peter is delivering a detailed report on the visit to the FHL Management Committee and the next meeting of the Trustees in London on 10 February.

‘After 10 days in the Holy Land, the situation is not looking encouraging for our Christian brothers and sisters. We are seeing this from the increased level of demand for support from individual Christian families, particularly to fund medicines, home repairs and to provide core funds for ‘day to day living’. They have experienced extreme levels of cold during the last few weeks. Snow in January appears to be becoming the norm and heating arrangements for many are insufficient to keep families warm’.

- **Gaza**

Peter Rand writes that he was privileged to be invited again to the ‘Coordination’ in the Holy Land between 11-15 January, which included an overnight stay in Gaza with 22 Archbishops, Bishops and clergy from around the world. This meeting is in its 15<sup>th</sup> year, supporting the Latin Patriarchate through prayer, the presence of the attendees and putting pressure on governments when they return home. After a seven hour delay to cross the border, they witnessed some of the most damaged areas of the country, saw the

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magnificent work of Catholic Relief Services in establishing temporary wooden shelters (like log cabins) for those who had lost their homes in Shajaieh, visited the Holy Family School (where FHL have recently supported their 'Oratorio' trauma relief programme) and heard first hand from the UN Project Development Team. Afterwards, we visited the town of Sderot, the nearest Israeli town to the Gaza border. *Attached is a report from the Pontifical Mission on some of the houses of Christian families repaired from funds raised through the FHL Emergency Family Support Appeal before Christmas.*

- **Do you know of any pilgrimages planned for the Holy Land?**

John Rice is looking for any information on pilgrimages to the Holy Land, from your Diocese, your parish or indeed from any other group. Please contact him direct by email [john.rice@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk](mailto:john.rice@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk)

- **Easy Funding**

Join those 'Friends' who are raising money for FHL when shopping on line just by using [easyfundraising.org.uk](http://easyfundraising.org.uk). There are no catches and it's completely free to use. It's really simple - just shop online via [easyfundraising.org.uk](http://easyfundraising.org.uk) with over 2,700 well known retailers like Amazon, Argos, M&S, eBay (and many more!). The retailer makes a donation to FHL. Get started now and visit - <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/invite/36F38Z/>

- **A message from Vicki**

Following my four day whistle-stop visit to the Holy Land last month with Jim and Peter and appointments with Peter and 'Friends' around the UK, I am now looking forward to offering support to individuals and FHL Groups around the country, whether based in parishes, deaneries or dioceses. Please contact me by email or telephone. [vicki.urch@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk](mailto:vicki.urch@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk) or 07539 851099

- **End of financial year – please empty the kitty!**

Perhaps not entirely empty the kitty (!) but if you have money in crib boxes or in FHL accounts, please send it as soon as possible to the office. Crib box co-ordinators will be receiving a supply of labels and a list of holders very shortly. The FHL financial year ends on 31 March and it would be very helpful if all available funds were received by 17 March.

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