



FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND

Monthly Update

January 2016

Concern grows for Christians in the Holy Land

In the past few months FHL has reported on the growing tensions in the Middle East and the increasing difficulties facing our Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land. The Christmas message of many leading figures, including our senior Patrons, took up this theme, and we're pleased to know that gradually the story is becoming better known. We must hope this increased knowledge and understanding will lead to more and more support for Friends of the Holy Land, so that we can get closer to our objectives of a secure and sustainable Christian population there.

A few days before Christmas, Cardinal Nichols, FHL's Founder Patron, and HRH the Prince of Wales, met representatives of a number of concerned organisations at the meeting of Christians of the Churches of the Near and Middle East. Among the guests was FHL's Chairman, Jim Quinn and his wife Anne, and Norah Whelan, FHL Trustee. Prince Charles spoke once again of his great concern for the Christians of the Middle East. 'At this traditional time of prayer and reflection on the mystery of the Incarnation, it seems to me vital that we pause for more than a moment to think about the plight of Christians in the land where the Word was actually 'made flesh and dwelt among us.' This is what makes the plight of our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ so especially heart-breaking', he said. Their suffering is symptomatic of a very real crisis which threatens the very existence of Christianity in the land of its birth. Consequently, the greatest challenge we face is how to ensure that the spiritual and cultural heritage of Christianity in the Middle East is preserved for future generations - quite apart from doing all we can to provide practical support to those who are persecuted.'

A happy, healthy and blessed 2016 to all our readers!

Here are ten New Year Resolutions for you to consider...

- Distribute the Winter/Spring 2016 FHL Newsletter to all parishioners in your own parish
- Ask your Parish Priest to support Friends of the Holy Land with prayers and practical help
- Send news about FHL activities in your parish to FHL
- Sponsor a child's school fees at £20 a month (gift-aided) or £25 a month
- Sponsor a named needy Christian family at £3 a day (or by a standing order of £100 a month)
- Organise a Lent Lunch or other fundraising event to support FHL
- Commit to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 2016
- Organise special prayers of intercession or bidding prayers for Christians in the Holy Land and the work of FHL in your parish during Lent
- Show the FHL DVD in your parish
- Become an FHL Ambassador, sharing the FHL message by speaking at Masses in a nearby parish in Lent, or to a local organisation

FHL's website

We're keen to make our website an even better way to tell the story of the Christians of the Holy Land, and we've made a few changes. We haven't finished, though, so please let us know what you think, and how we can improve our website further.

Crib Offerings

Thank you to all parishioners in hundreds of parishes up and down the country, from the Diocese of Wrexham to Southwark, from Hexham and Newcastle to Portsmouth, who have generously donated their Crib Offerings to support our Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land.

Our thanks go, too, to everyone who contributed to the wonderful contribution of £1,557 given to FHL at the Catholic Bishops Conference of England & Wales Office/Staff Charity Advent Service of Carols and Readings before Christmas. Their generous gift will pay school fees for the neediest Christian children, to help equip them for the future and to strengthen the Christian community in the Holy Land.

Lent Appeals

Thank you to those Dioceses preparing for Lent Appeals in support of Friends of the Holy Land. Please contact the office if you require further material to support your appeal. Lent, with its tradition of charity for the poor and dispossessed, is another perfect time to raise funds to help our Christian brothers and sisters who face so many difficulties. FHL can find projects of all sizes to encourage and motivate appeals - for more details contact FHL's Development Director, Vicki Urch - vicki.urch@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk.

Winter/Spring 2016 Newsletter

We're pleased that you enjoyed our latest Newsletter, and thank you for your encouraging responses. Please contact the FHL office if you need more hard copies for distribution to your Group members and in your parish. And we'd like to hear your FHL news and ideas, too, in time for our next issue.

Gaza and Jordan

During the first week of January FHL Vice Chairman Peter Rand will visit the Holy Land, including Gaza and Jordan, where he will meet members of the Christian community and see for himself the plight of Iraqi Christian refugees. As well as a working visit to FHL's office in Bethlehem, Peter will again attend the Holy Land Coordination with bishops from around the world. This important annual event helps us keep up with the key regional issues, and to meet and develop valuable links with church leaders.

Jean Olney BEM

Congratulations to Jean Olney, who leads Friends of the Holy Land's work in St. Dunstan's Anglican Parish in Mayfield, East Sussex. Jean was awarded the British Empire Medal in the New Year Honours List, for services to the community in Mayfield. What a wonderful recognition for all her hard work for many organisations, including FHL. Please tell us of any other FHL supporters who receive honours.

A new Prayer Card

Don't forget that prayer for the Christians of the Holy Land is one of FHL's objectives. The FHL Prayer Card helps us find the right words, and has always been very popular. We've designed a new one, with another lovely icon from the Bethlehem Icon Centre. Contact the FHL office for yours.



Friends of the Holy Land



From the Pilgrims Chapel at the Icon Centre in Bethlehem, the home of the icon, because it was here we first saw Jesus.

'Amid so much darkness we need to see the light of hope, and to be men and women who bring hope to others.' Pope Francis

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Registered charity No1130054



Friends of the Holy Land

Almighty and ever loving Father, we pray for the Christians living in the Holy Land.

Lord, may the light of your love shine down on our Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land. In your mercy grant them peace in their land, peace in their homes and peace in their hearts.

We pray for the work of Friends of the Holy Land, that they will bring healing and relief to those most in need. We ask you to guide them and all who support their work by prayer, action and fund-raising.

Help pilgrims to the Holy Land to see the plight of their Christian brothers and sisters, and touch their hearts with compassion and love.

Lord, remember our fellow Christians in their greatest need, and help us not to forget them. Amen.

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www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk
Registered Charity No 1130054

Friends of the Holy Land was founded in 2009 to help and support the Christian population of the Holy Land. We work to improve education, employment, health and housing, and to develop a resilient and enduring Christian community there.