



FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND

April 2016

Monthly Update

FHL helping Christian Iraqi refugees in Jordan

In line with our mission, Friends of the Holy Land has chosen not to throw funds to assist refugees in Jordan, but instead to identify gaps we could fill most effectively. In January Peter Rand was invited once again as an observer to the Holy Land Coordination - a group of international Bishops - on their visit to Jordan, and he returned in March to build contacts with around 100 families who had fled Iraq for their faith. A more extensive report will appear in the FHL Newsletter next month.

Peter visited a poor part of Amman where many refugees have been 're-housed' in the last few months. 'I was shocked by the conditions in which they were living - just mattresses in a room, with a small pile of clothes, and very basic washing and cooking facilities. The children were quite obviously traumatised, and with no work permits being issued to refugees, there was nothing for people to do. Our key contact on the ground is Fr. Mario, seconded by the Latin Patriarchate to organise a programme of help for families with no hope for any change in their circumstances.'

'What I did find, though, was a very great strength of faith. For each family I visited prayer was a priority, and the churches are overflowing every Sunday. It was that faith that encouraged me to ensure we provide support with some basic materials to the poorest families, many of whom fled the threats of death with no notice, with no money, and with only what they could carry. So tables, chairs, fridges, clothes, medication and food vouchers are the priority. We have just Fr. Mario coordinating this for FHL through the Latin Patriarchate, as a first step.'

'The West Bank and Gaza are always likely to be our priorities but Christians in Jordan are within our remit, and they badly need our support. Please do what you can to help us to help them.'

Go Lean in Lent

Peter Rand writes: 'Lent may already be a distant past for most of you but for Trustee, Charles Reed and me, we still have a month to go as we extended our Lent until the Orthodox Easter on 1st May. I learned from our old friend Fr Yousef, the Latin (Catholic) Parish Priest of Aboud, that the Catholic Parishes in Aboud, Ramallah and surrounding villages celebrate Easter with Christians of the Orthodox churches on 1st May.'



'Now the hard work begins, as we strive to lose those 20lbs each in our 'Go Lean in Lent' sponsorship campaign to raise funds for our Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land. We're so glad we didn't decide to end this challenge on our Easter Day - I spent the early part of Lent on a memorable holiday in New Zealand, followed by eight days in the Holy Land, where it's impolite to refuse their hospitality. Charles had similar problems when he recently visited the Middle East. However, we are both back on track, and just need the encouragement of more sponsorship to reach our target of £5,000. So please, we'd be so grateful for a small or large donation, to the office (payable to FHL) or through the website (see below). Don't forget to Gift-Aid it. It will all go direct to help individual families in the greatest need. And thank you for your generosity. Now it's back to 'bread and water' for Charles and me!'

Follow the link: <https://mydonate.bt.com/events/leaninlent/289650>, or donate through the FHL web-site - www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

And more fund raising events...

Congratulations and a big thank you to Millie and Emma, pupils at St Helen's Catholic Junior School Academy and members of the Cathedral of St Mary and St Helen in Brentwood Essex, who ran the Brentwood Fun Run on 20th March 2016. So far they've raised £370 for FHL. This is tremendous support for their Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land, who will be pleased to know that children in the UK are helping to fund some school fees for them. Well done, Millie and Emma!

And from the Leeds Diocese, Paul Sullivan and Simon Hart are raising funds for FHL while taking on the challenge of mountain biking, with lots of off-road trails. Their route is the same as the Shroud of Turin took from the site of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem to Jaffa and up to the Lebanese border, then back to Nazareth and the West Bank, visiting some of the projects supported by Friends of the Holy Land. The ride will be between 300 to 500 miles long, depending on their knees. Please encourage them to complete the route by sponsoring them.

Rt Rev Marcus Stock, Bishop of Leeds, said 'I'm very pleased that Paul Sullivan of Our Lady and St Joseph's Parish will be mountain biking around the towns and villages of the Holy Land, meeting members of all faiths in what promises to be a challenging and worthwhile ecumenical fund-raising event. I'm particularly grateful that the event will be raising funds for the work of Friends of the Holy Land in supporting health, housing, employment and education projects for people most in need.'

FHL Crib Boxes

We want to thank those that have sent in their Crib Box money. It all mounts up, and is great way to support FHL and the work we do for our Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land. We really appreciate the work of the Crib Box Co-ordinators who go round collecting in the boxes and counting them up before returning them. Thank you all, whether you have a Crib Box or act as a Co-ordinator.

FHL Lambeth Conference

Please remember in your prayers everyone attending the first gathering of FHL Diocesan Coordinators as they meet at Lambeth Palace on 7th April. Co-chaired by the Bishop of Southwark and the Archbishop of Birmingham, and hosted by the Church of England, this is an important occasion with over 40 Dioceses represented, and a big step for FHL. A full report will appear in the next FHL Newsletter, published in May.



Christians here helping Christians there.

In these two images we have the FHL story. On the left, Millie and Emma, who raised £370 to help the poorest Christians of the Holy Land, and right, Fr Mario in Amman with an Iraqi Christian refugee family.



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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.