



FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND

August 2016

Monthly Update

FHL at the Church of England General Synod

Vicki, Jim and Peter went to the Synod in York once again, and made many new Friends for FHL. They returned to Kenilworth with dozens of contacts to follow up, Bishops and members of the clergy and laity who visited the FHL display stand. We thank all our readers on General Synod who came to our stand. It was a very great pleasure to meet you, whether for the first time or as old Friends.

Vicki reports 'While the display stands were only in place for two days this year, there's no better way to meet clergy and lay-people among the most influential in the Church of England, face-to-face. Our meetings led directly to a number of new FHL Diocesan Coordinators, information on future pilgrimages, promises of Advent, Lent and Harvest Appeals at parish and diocese level, and above all a determination to spread the FHL message more widely. We are now contacting all those Diocesan Bishops we weren't able to meet in York.'

A message from Fr. Mario in Jordan

'I would like to thank you again for your big help for the Iraqi Christian families here in Jordan. I am sending you full report and all the documentation how we use the money. I hope that FHL can be able to help us again to continue in this emergency work. The situation is very bad, and while there are some families who leave for Australia, Canada and America, many other families arrive from the camp in Kurdistan where the situation is very difficult. So our work is not easy and there is no time to rest. Please tell all the FHL supporters that all the peoples of Iraq pray for them. Me too! God bless you, and please pray for me specially.'

We ask all our Friends to remember in their prayers Fr Mario in Jordan, who works so hard in impossibly difficult circumstances, and the Christian refugees from Iraq he helps. We're very pleased to be able to extend our work to include these very needy people, though we all recognise that what we do is a drop in the ocean. With your help we can do more, so please give what you can.

Archbishop Suheil thanks FHL

Peter Rand was fortunate to meet Archbishop Suheil, the Archbishop of Jerusalem, during his recent visit to London. He was particularly grateful to FHL for our support for the small Christian community in Gaza, especially the new employment project, supporting sixteen young people at four Christian institutions in Gaza. 'We discussed a number of new initiatives that we hope will come to fruition in the next few months', says Peter, 'and hope to have more news of this soon.'

FHL's address - a gentle reminder

Don't forget that we moved to larger offices in June, so when you write to us, please use our new address - **Friends of the Holy Land, Farmer Ward Road, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2DH.**

We also have a new office email address - **office@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk**. Please make sure your address book is up to date. You're welcome to visit, but please call first, as we are not yet manning the office full-time.

Clothes, shoes and toiletries for the Holy Land

There aren't many places of Christian pilgrimage around the world where pilgrims can offer so much practical and valuable support before they even leave home. Peter recently spoke to pilgrims in Eastcote, West London, before their Parish Pilgrimage next month, and found them very glad to take from him a significant number of childrens' clothes, shoes and toiletries for Christians in the Holy Land. They will hand these over to the FHL team in Bethlehem for distribution over the next few months to Christian families who can least afford such basic items.

Is this something your parish or diocese can consider? If you're organising a pilgrimage, or going on one, we can suggest a few gifts for you to take with you for some of the poorest Christians. The logistics are very simple, but the impact can be considerable. Please contact the FHL Office for advice.

Fundraising Activities

It's not too late to organise a fundraising activity during the rest of the summer - barbecues, cream teas and garden parties are all favourites. They can be easy to organise and have wide appeal. If you need some ideas or support to organise an event, get in touch with the FHL Office, and we'll help you.

Could you consider organising a raffle? Often a letter to local shops and organisations can result in some interesting prizes. Or perhaps you can get your children and grandchildren involved with a sponsored event, a walk, a silence, or, if you have a trampoline, a sponsored bounce. Remember, every little helps.

School fees

An education in one of the good Christian schools is essential for young people to have a secure future and remain in the land of their birth, and without Christian schools there's now a significant risk that the Christian population will disappear from the land where our faith began. FHL continues to finance school fees as a major contribution to the security of the Christian community, and each year we ask for your help in this essential part of our work.

School fees are from £300 a year, a major cost for many families, and they rely on our support so their children can attend a Christian school. Please support a named child, for just £20 month - with Gift Aid this will cover the cost of the lowest school fees for one year. Or could you perhaps make a one-off donation? Again, Gift Aid would increase your donation by 25%. Perhaps as a family or group of friends you may wish to consider offering support to a child or young person. Please ask the FHL Office for details on how you might do this.

Advent / Lent collections

Diocesan collections at Advent and Lent are a key part of our income. Without them we couldn't fund much of our work for the poorest Christians in the Holy Land. A number of dioceses have already promised to arrange collections for FHL, but to help us reach even more needy people, more are needed. Now is the time to speak to your bishop, parish clergy or parish council to encourage them to consider making FHL a recipient of this essential funding.

Friends of the Holy Land

Farmer Ward Road
Kenilworth
Warwickshire
CV8 2DH

Telephone +44 (0)1926 512980
email - office@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk
website - www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

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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.