



# FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND

## Monthly Update

January 2017

### 2016 in Review

FHL wishes supporters a joyful New Year and to express our thanks for your continued support over the last 12 months. Through your efforts FHL have achieved some key milestones in our mission to support the Christian population of the West Bank, Gaza, Israel and Jordan, and to help them develop a resilient and enduring community.

These achievements include:

- Direct financial support made to over 2,000 needy Christian families
- Geographical spread of support increased to include projects in Nazareth; the largest city in the Northern District of Israel
- Fleeing Iraqi Christians refugees supported in Jordan through the 'dressmaking project' equipping 19 young women with skills to help their future employment
- First Diocesan Co-ordinators conference held at Lambeth Palace to facilitate idea sharing and effective communication
- Employment projects, such as those in Gaza, working towards a sustainable Christian community
- FHL head office relocated to larger and better equipped premises in Kenilworth
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*Iraqi Christian Refugees in Amman, Jordan receiving support from FHL*

## New Year Thought

New Year is God's way of letting us know it's possible to make changes for the better. Why not start each day of this New Year with a prayer to remember our Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land? If you need inspiration contact the office who will happily post you an FHL prayer card. [office@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk](mailto:office@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk).

## Looking Forward to 2017

FHL Vice Chairman and Executive Trustee Peter Rand says, "Central to our work remains our key objectives of increasing awareness, prayer, and practical support, and to encourage people to go on pilgrimage. My personal goals for FHL in 2017 include:

- To spread our message by improved communications via a new website, social media and greater engagement with the Communication Teams of the 66 Dioceses of the Anglican and Catholic Church in England, Wales and Scotland
- To grow our donations to counter the current 20-25% exchange rate 'losses'
- To reach further across the West Bank and Israel to find and help more needy Christian families
- To increase grants from Charitable Trusts and Foundations by 100%
- To develop opportunities for FHL to participate in more church services and pulpit presentations across the country.
- To expand our volunteer team of Ambassadors, Diocesan Coordinators and Regional Coordinators
- To encourage a greater number of pilgrimages and pilgrims to the Holy Land
- To secure 10 Church of England Dioceses to select FHL as the beneficiary of Lent, Harvest and Advent Appeals
- To extend the number of Catholic Dioceses recommending FHL as the beneficiary of their Crib Offerings from 8 Dioceses to 12."

## December – a busy month in Kenilworth

December was a very full month for the Kenilworth office. As well managing the usual seasonal lift in Olive Wood sales we were also busy with the Crib Offering mail out.

In early December Karen Baxter, FHL's Office Manager, organised a large packing exercise to dispatch over 1100 envelopes, each going to an individual parish church within 8 Catholic dioceses across England and Wales. This activity was the culmination of work begun in earnest during the summer months, when the possibility of FHL being the beneficiary of Crib offerings was discussed with Bishops and other diocesan contacts. These negotiations resulted in 8 Catholic dioceses choosing to support FHL at this special time of year, a time when thoughts turn naturally to Bethlehem and to Christians living in present day Holy Land.

Calling on the support of 10 local FHL supporters Karen ensured that every parish church within the dioceses of Arundel and Brighton, Birmingham, Hexham and Newcastle, Lancaster, Leeds, Middlesbrough, Salford and Southwark received an envelope containing a poster, a strutted display board (to sit behind the collection basket), a covering letter from the Bishop and the latest FHL newsletter. In just two hours the work was completed and the volunteers were then able to assist with the dispatch of 1500 newsletters which were mailed out to FHL's wider supporter base. Karen says, "I would like to express my thanks to all

those local supporters who joined us at the offices in Kenilworth. Without them we would not have been able to send out this mailing before the Christmas post rush. With their help a total of 2600 letters were posted by the end of the day." Karen goes on to ask "If anyone has not received the latest Winter/Spring 2017 Newsletter please call the office on 01926 512980 or email us at [office@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk](mailto:office@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk)."

Should any other parish, group or diocese wish to discuss how they might support FHL in a similar way during Lent or even start planning for Harvest and Advent appeals please contact the office or call Vicki Urch 07539 851099 [vicki.urch@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk](mailto:vicki.urch@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk).

## Diocesan Volunteer News

During the year Vicki Urch, FHL's Director of Development, has spent time meeting with groups, parishes and diocesan coordinators, across England and Wales. Each meeting results in a greater understanding of the roles performed by both FHL head office staff and those of our valuable diocesan based volunteers. Each meeting means that we working together more effectively to make a difference to the most vulnerable Christian families in the Holy Land.

Vicki says "In the last few weeks I have met diocesan coordinators in Manchester, Salford, and St Albans, visited a deanery meeting in Dorchester and met with the Knights of St Columba in Hayes. Without exception these visits leave me inspired to do more and humbled by the efforts people are prepared to make for their brothers and sisters in the Holy Land".

Vicki is keen to visit even more of you next year so do please get in touch with her and book a visit. Email [vicki.urch@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk](mailto:vicki.urch@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk) or call 07539 851099.



*Vicki Urch collects £3,000 cheque from John Hibberd, Provincial Grand Knight of St Columba, Hayes*

## Diocesan Coordinators Conference – Lambeth Palace 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017

During 2016 FHL have more than doubled the number of Diocesan Coordinators working to share FHL's vision across many Catholic and Anglican dioceses. The role of the Diocesan Coordinator is crucial in nurturing diocesan support and works with the bishop, the communications officer and with staff and volunteers at Deanery and Parish level. FHL's second Diocesan Coordinators conference will be held at Lambeth Palace on 9th March and we are delighted to be welcoming our key note speaker Dean Hosam Naoum. As both Dean of Jerusalem's St Georges Cathedral and also a key member of FHL's Holy Land Committee Dean Hosam will share an up to date report on the impact of FHL work in the Holy Land. All those with a desire to promote FHL at diocesan level should contact Vicki Urch Director of Development who will ensure you receive an invitation to this conference. [vicki.urch@friendsoftheholyland.org.uk](mailto:vicki.urch@friendsoftheholyland.org.uk) or call 07539 851099



*Kate Peacock recently appointed FHL Diocesan Coordinator at St Albans*

## 2016 Lent Appeal Update

Tony Stokes, FHL's Trustee and Director of Finance wanted to share results of the Anglican Diocese of Europe's Lent Appeal. Tony reports; "The final total for the Lent appeal for the Diocese of Europe was a magnificent £20,116. These funds are supporting the education of specific families identified as being in need by the headmaster at the Arab Evangelical Episcopal School in Ramallah and will make a real difference to the lives of these needy Christians." If other diocese would like to consider how their Lent Appeal might support FHL project work please contact [vicki.urch@friendsoftheholyland.org.uk](mailto:vicki.urch@friendsoftheholyland.org.uk) or call 07539 851099



*Pupils at the Arab Episcopal College with Head Teacher Iyad Rafidi and FHL's Peter Rand*