

Voices of Support

"My many years spent as Pontifical Representative in Jerusalem have made me a staunch supporter of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land...I have seen the commitment of the Franciscans to the local population, which continues to live under a cloud of endless conflict — schools, scholarships for poor but deserving students, dwellings for young families, care for the elderly, charity towards persons and families in need, and much more. Indeed, I have reason to say to everyone that you can trust this Foundation — for what is given to it is used for the love of Jesus Christ and for the service of His and our brothers and sisters."

Archbishop Pietro Sambi
Apostolic Nuncio to the United States of America

"On behalf of the entire Bethlehem University community I thank the donors of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land who support the Catholic mission of this university. You have generous hearts and many Christian students are able to pursue their education because of your Foundation."

Brother Daniel Casey, F.S.C.
Vice Chancellor, Bethlehem University

"As a concerned Catholic and Holy Land pilgrim, I support the historic presence of Christians in the Holy Land and I encourage the heroic efforts of the reliable Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land. It has already given over 100 college scholarships for worthy students who agree to remain in the Holy Land beyond graduation. Also, its funds provide low-cost housing and jobs for Christian families. The FFHL has my respect and my prayers."

Eleanor Schlafly, President
Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation

"The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land is performing a unique service to those Christians who wish to stay in that embattled region as a witness to their faith in the Lord Jesus. I commend and encourage all who act in support of this Foundation. May it bring enduring benefit to those who it serves."

Cardinal William H. Keeler
Archbishop of Baltimore

Your Charity Goes a Long Way

\$50

Feeds a Palestinian family for one month in Bethlehem

\$100

Provides heating, drinking water and basic utilities for one month

\$250

Provides rent for a young Christian family in a Franciscan Housing Project for one month

\$500

Guarantees an elementary student a full year of schooling and supplies in Bethany

\$1,000

Provides temporary employment for a local Christian for two months in Jerusalem

\$6,000

Offers a deserving student one year at a local college in the Holy Land



"As often as you did it for one of the least of my brothers and sisters, you did it for Me."
Matthew 25:40



"The profound insecurity, lack of work, innumerable restrictions and consequent poverty of the Christians in the Holy Land are a cause of pain to us all. It is a situation that makes the family future of young generations extremely uncertain, tempting them to leave forever the beloved land of their birth."

Pope Benedict XVI

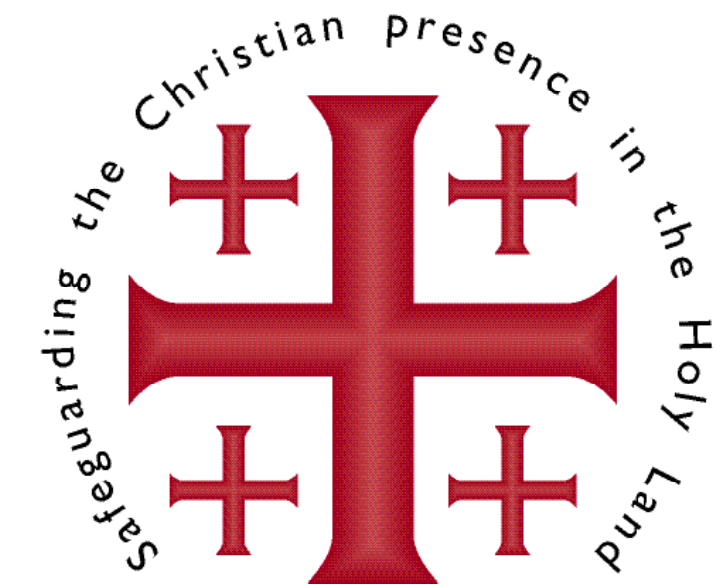
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FRANCISCAN FOUNDATION
FOR THE HOLY LAND



Our Franciscan Vision



The mission of the Franciscan Foundation is quite simple... Love God and be of service to the poor and needy. It was our Seraphic Father, St. Francis of Assisi who admonished his friars to always follow those two precepts. St. Francis himself never wavered, never waned in this resolve and today, some 800 years later, the Franciscans remain steadfast with faith and commitment in the face of old and new challenges. They

continue to strive to fulfill that mission of love and service particularly to the Christians in the Holy Land.

This mission is being fulfilled in the directive that was given by Pope Clement VI who in 1342, mandated the Franciscans to become the official custodians of the Holy Sites of Christendom, that is, to help maintain and preserve them while at the same time, ministering to the faithful of the Holy Land.

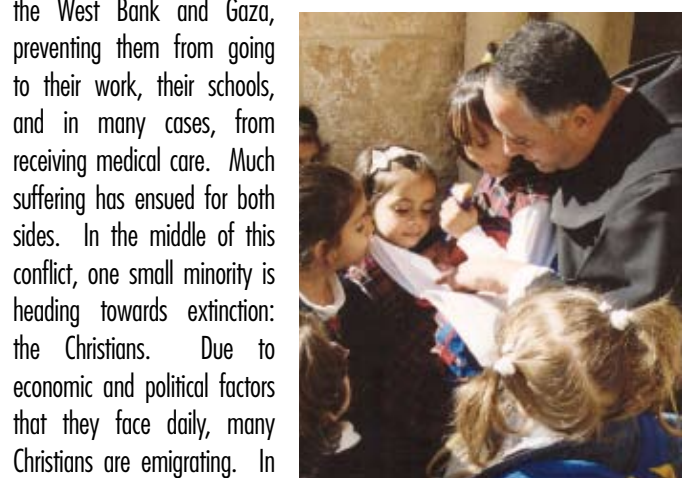
Fr. Pizzaballa, Custos of the Holy Land, also stated that it was "through the Incarnation that Christ took on our human form and lived among us here in the Holy Land. We friars who minister in this land have been given an example. We have become witnesses for Him in the very place which Christ made holy. It is by assisting and helping our fellow man in this land and from these Holy Places that we ourselves become incarnate in Him."

Today the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land is a constant in the life of the Christian community. We friars are obliged to give that peace, that love, that pardon, that faith, and that hope to suffering Christians in the Holy Land who now find themselves in a great dilemma and are reluctantly leaving their homes and land to live in other parts of the world. We don't want the Holy Sites of Christendom to become empty religious monuments and museums. We need a living and worshipping community.

Our Spiritual Homeland At Risk

The Holy Land has always been an area of conflict and most notably between the Arab and Jewish people living here. It has been a problem of antiquity going back to Abraham's time, when Abraham exiled his second son, Ishmael, in favor of Issac. For most Arab historians, Ishmael is the father of the Arab nation while Issac belonged to the Israelites. Since that time, an initial hostility has turned into an ongoing enmity of two people claiming the same land.

Since the UN partition of Palestine in 1947, the control of this land has undergone many changes especially territorial between Israelis and Palestinians. The Wall and other restrictions have affected hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza, preventing them from going to their work, their schools, and in many cases, from receiving medical care. Much suffering has ensued for both sides. In the middle of this conflict, one small minority is heading towards extinction: the Christians. Due to economic and political factors that they face daily, many Christians are emigrating. In the Diocese of Jerusalem, the Holy Land Christians number 115,000 inside the state of Israel and 35,000 Palestinian Christians in the West Bank and Gaza. In 1940, there were 45,000 Christians living in Jerusalem; today, there are less than 10,000. Christians now comprise less than 2% of the population of the Holy Land. Although there are numerous factions on both sides who carry on the 'cycle of violence,' the vast majority of Christians simply want to live in peace. They are caught up in the middle, wedged between the hammer and the anvil, so to speak.



Jerusalem is the faith-point of every Christian believer - the spiritual hometown of us all. Our Catholic heritage links us through faith and fellowship with all our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land. As pilgrims on a journey to our "promised land," we are beckoned to sustain this Christian community with love, faith, pardon, peace and hope. We are invited to witness to the Light of Christ here as the Franciscans have done for more than 800 years.

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Activities of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land

The founding Custos of the FFHL, Bishop Giuseppe Nazaro, OFM, DD, explained "Just as the Good Friday collection was implemented by the Papacy hundreds of years ago to specifically help to maintain and preserve the Holy Sites and Sanctuaries of Christendom and its institutions, so the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL) was created as yet another Franciscan response to a 'new crisis,' i.e., the Christian exodus from the Holy Land. Our focus is to keep a Christian presence, the 'Living Stones' of our Christian faith, in the Holy Land by providing education, employment, and housing."



University Scholarships

Since 1997 the Foundation has given over \$1.4 million in scholarship grants to Christian students. In turn, each of these young marginalized Christian students agrees to remain in the Holy Land for at least 4 years after graduation. Once students secure employment, they are more inclined to remain in their homeland.

Child Sponsorship Program

Grants are given to Christian children who come from families who cannot afford a Catholic education. Franciscan schools give religious instruction for every student according to his particular religious convictions recognizing the right of each individual to maintain his own faith. Many of our donors sponsor a high school or elementary school child and pay for their yearly tuition. The separation barrier between Israel and the West Bank has cut off jobs and hence many of our Christian families cannot pay for their education. They need our help!



Subsidized Housing/Renovations

To motivate Christians to remain in the Holy Land, the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land established the "Housing Development Program" to provide subsidized housing to Christian families who would otherwise be forced to reside abroad. Currently, the Franciscan Custody, with the assistance of the FFHL, has already completed over 100 units in Bethlehem and is planning to build another 120 units on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem and 220 more apartment units in Nazareth and Jaffa. In addition, hundreds of our Christian homes, especially in Bethlehem and Jerusalem, are in dire need of repair or renovation. The Foundation continues to employ Christian engineers, architects and tradesmen to meet these needs.

Employment Opportunities

Many Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza, who normally held jobs in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa, have been barred indefinitely from entering Israel proper to earn a living. Over the last 5 years, thousands of foreign workers have been hired, replacing Palestinians who previously held these jobs. The average rate of unemployment of Palestinian men as of January 2006 is 65%. The Foundation is endeavoring to create new positions in administration, clerical and custodial positions in our schools, churches, parish centers and medical facilities. Furthermore, new jobs are created in construction trades as we build new housing developments.

