On September 8, 2018, at the Dallas Country Club in Highland Park, members and supporters of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land gathered to recognize the service of outstanding members and raise money for foundation efforts. It was a black tie event that included beautiful music from the Versa String Trio during the reception, and harpist Mary Margaret Jones during dinner. Three hundred and fifty six guests attended the event, including Master of Ceremonies, Deacon Kenneth E. Reisor of St. Thomas Aquinas Church. Honored guests were also in attendance and included Most Reverend Archbishop Bernardito C. Auza, Most Reverend Gregory Kelly, and the Reverend Peter F. Vasko. The dinner and reception featured an award ceremony, keynote speech, and new video presentation (view here: https://youtu.be/Jo9wKArI1x0).

On September 8, 2018, at the Dallas Country Club in Highland Park, members and supporters of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land gathered to recognize the service of outstanding members and raise money for foundation efforts. It was a black tie event that included beautiful music from the Versa String Trio during the reception, and harpist Mary Margaret Jones during dinner. Three hundred and fifty six guests attended the event, including Master of Ceremonies, Deacon Kenneth E. Reisor of St. Thomas Aquinas Church. Honored guests were also in attendance and included Most Reverend Archbishop Bernardito C. Auza, Most Reverend Gregory Kelly, and the Reverend Peter F. Vasko. The dinner and reception featured an award ceremony, keynote speech, and new video presentation (view here: https://youtu.be/Jo9wKArI1x0).

President of the FFHL, Father Peter Vasko, OFM, presented Susan Stanzel an award in appreciation of all her efforts in chairing the event. This was followed by Father Vasko presenting the “City of David Award”. This honor went to Vice President of the FFHL, Denise Scalzo, for her dedicated work during the last twenty four years to the people in the Holy Land. The highest award given by the FFHL, the Guardian of the Holy Land Award, was then presented to Joe C. (Jodie) Thompson Jr. This award is described as “recognition given to individuals who have not only demonstrated an outstanding love of God in their personal lives, but have upheld the truth, the reality, the faith, and the hopes of the Holy Land...individuals who have placed themselves in the hands of God”. This award was presented to Joe C. (Jodie) Thompson Jr.

Cont’d on page 3
My name is Carine Koussa Stiban, from the city of Jerusalem. My mother, Mary, is originally from Jaffa, one of the oldest Palestinian coastal cities. My father, George, was born in Jerusalem and my siblings and I grew up there. I have been married to Fadi Stiban for a year now. I’m the eldest of three - my sister Nicole is 22 years old and my brother Emilio is 20.

Since I was in the ninth grade I knew I wanted to help people. I had a good listening ear and an empathic attitude towards others. My high school friends always shared their stories or worries with me, I listened even if I didn’t always have the answer, for sometimes one must speak his mind in order to fully comprehend his own matters. This is when I decided that I want to become a psychologist.

It is a challenge to get accepted in local universities because the entrance exams are not in our mother language, Arabic or even English, nor are the university curriculums. So, after high school I had to take a year to learn Hebrew professionally. I got accepted at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzelia, the first private university in Israel. My first year was extremely difficult due to the language and some cultural barriers, but I managed to pull through with my family’s support. Moreover, there were the financial difficulties.

I was told by a friend that FFHL offered financial support and so I wrote them a letter. I was blessed to have been chosen for a scholarship, a scholarship in which my college education would be paid by the Orlando Chapter of FFHL headed up by Faith Libbe, Regional Representative. It alleviated many worries that my family and I had and, allowed me to focus more on my studies. Most importantly, I was able to finish my degree, Bachelors in Psychology and minor in communications. This degree expanded not only my knowledge but opened my eyes to new perspectives, taught me the importance of curiosity through research and the acknowledgement and respect for people, their thoughts, or feelings. Currently I am in the last year of my Masters Degree, in Social Psychology with a specialization in interpersonal relationships. Throughout this degree, I have been researching the effect of social media on a teenager’s self-esteem. In the coming years, I see myself working in organizations, alongside managers and as an advisor for the enhancement of human management capabilities and thus develop organizations while maintaining the well-being of the staff.

I was born a Christian to a Christian family. My faith was my guidance, every day, especially throughout my degrees. It reminded me of how I should treat people in a multicultural environment. It allowed me to keep looking forward through all the challenging times and reminded me that I will be just fine and I was. God sent my family and me a blessing, that will forever change my life for the better. I am thankful to my sponsors. As a result of the education I received from the scholarship not only will I improve my own life but also the life of my children, the next generations. I will do my best to give back to the local Christian community what I received from this education.

Forever Grateful,
Carine Koussa
of god and have allowed their gifts and their energies to be consumed for those in need.” Thompson, a well deserving recipient, noted in his speech that “Faith is our greatest gift,” and “The opportunity to take my whole family to the Holy Land was a life-changing blessing for all of us.”

After dinner Archbishop Bernardito C. Auza delivered a keynote speech about the importance of Christianity in the Holy Land and the obstacles that have historically led Christianity to be on the verge of extinction. Archbishop Auza’s address, entitled “Unimaginable: a Middle East without Christians”, urged those listening to go beyond surface level efforts, “We must also address the root causes, not only of the open persecution, but also of various forms of discrimination in the juridical, political, economic, cultural and social aspects of life that stoke violence.” Offering help, not only to Christians but other minorities in terms of race and religious belief, will help individuals remain in their birth land with dignity and respect. Auza added, “We thank all those who work so hard to restore a sense of normalcy to the lives of the Christians in the wider Middle East.”

A new video was presented during the dinner that was directed and produced by Denise Scalzo, OFS. The video opened with Father Peter Vasko and spoke to the importance of FFHL’s mission and values. The film also showed four past recipients of FFHL scholarships. Each one thanked his or her sponsor for allowing them the opportunity to attend university. The video, entitled “Bearing Fruit”, ended with Very Reverend Francesco Patton and each of the Franciscan members of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land Board of Directors in Jerusalem expressing their appreciation.

The event was successful in raising enough money to pay for nine full University Scholarships thanks to the hosting committee and donors. Reverend Monsignor Donald F. Zimmerman, Pastor of Christ the King Church, ended the evening with the closing Benediction.
Students Awarded Scholarships for 2018

Graduate Students

Christina Khair resides in Jerusalem. She finished her B.A. in Nursing in 2017 at Bethlehem University and is planning to secure a M.B.A. in Nursing Management at Bir-Zeit University in Jerusalem this fall 2018. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Cizar Lahham resides in Bethlehem. He finished his Bachelor’s from Al-Quds University in Jerusalem in 2018 and is planning to attend Jordan University in Amman for his M.D. in Dentistry. His sponsor is FFHL.

Elias Maria resides in Bethlehem. He finished his Bachelor’s from Al-Quds University in Jerusalem in 2018. He is now planning to secure his M.D. from the same University. His sponsor is FFHL.

Undergraduates

Hanin Rabadi resides in Jerusalem. She finished her B.S. in Architectural Engineering in 2017 at Bir-Zeit University in Jerusalem and plans to secure an M.B.A. at Tel Aviv University. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Jessica Salameh resides in Bethlehem. She finished her B.A. in Business Administration in 2012 at Bethlehem University. She is now planning to work towards her M.B.A. at the Arab American University in Ramallah. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Rawan Shahine resides in Jerusalem. She finished her B.S. in Advanced Biology at Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 2018 and is planning to secure her MPH Public Health at Tel Aviv University. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Tamer Abed Rabbo resides in Jerusalem with his parents and three younger siblings. He is planning to attend Bethlehem University and to major in Business Administration. His sponsor is FFHL.

Edward Abuawad resides with his parents in Bethlehem and has three older siblings. He is planning to attend Bethlehem University in the field of Software Engineering. His sponsor is FFHL.

Maya Abu Hani resides with her parents and two younger siblings in Jerusalem. She is planning to major in Journalism/Media at Bir-Zeit University in Jerusalem. Anonymous sponsor.

Hilda Abu Issa resides with her parents in Jerusalem and is planning to attend Bir-Zeit University in Jerusalem in the field of Arts. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Danielle Alawi resides in Jerusalem with her parents and one younger sibling. She is planning to major in Science at Bir-Zeit University in Jerusalem. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Anton Al-Hihi resides in Bethlehem with his parents and two younger siblings. He is planning to attend the University of Jordan in Amman and to major in Medicine. His sponsor is FFHL.

Razan Baboun resides in Bethlehem with her parents and one younger sibling. She is planning to major in Education at Bethlehem University. Her sponsor is Cradling Christianity from Columbus, Ohio.

Fr. Francesco Patton, OFM, Chairman of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land, announced the 2018 University Scholarship winners. A total of 42 students were chosen to receive a full four-year scholarship grant. There were 36 students who will be studying for a B.A. and 6 students for an M.A.

Fr. Francesco stated, “the importance of a college education and the opportunities it will provide later on in life is so relevant for our young Christians. We began this program some 25 years ago and it has been most successful in its goals of opening up professional employment for our young Christians thus giving them hope for their future. It has also assisted in stemming the Christian exodus as many of our students were thinking of leaving the Holy Land but are now staying.” He closed by saying that “we are very proud of these new young academicians who will now begin their professional studies.”

Graduate Students

Christina Khair resides in Jerusalem. She finished her B.A. in Nursing in 2017 at Bethlehem University and is planning to secure a M.B.A. in Nursing Management at Bir-Zeit University in Jerusalem this fall 2018. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Cizar Lahham resides in Bethlehem. He finished his Bachelor’s from Al-Quds University in Jerusalem in 2018 and is planning to attend Jordan University in Amman for his M.D. in Dentistry. His sponsor is FFHL.

Elias Maria resides in Bethlehem. He finished his Bachelor’s from Al-Quds University in Jerusalem in 2018. He is now planning to secure his M.D. from the same University. His sponsor is FFHL.

Undergraduates

Hanin Rabadi resides in Jerusalem. She finished her B.S. in Architectural Engineering in 2017 at Bir-Zeit University in Jerusalem and plans to secure an M.B.A. at Tel Aviv University. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Jessica Salameh resides in Bethlehem. She finished her B.A. in Business Administration in 2012 at Bethlehem University. She is now planning to work towards her M.B.A. at the Arab American University in Ramallah. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Rawan Shahine resides in Jerusalem. She finished her B.S. in Advanced Biology at Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 2018 and is planning to secure her MPH Public Health at Tel Aviv University. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Tamer Abed Rabbo resides in Jerusalem with his parents and three younger siblings. He is planning to attend Bethlehem University and to major in Business Administration. His sponsor is FFHL.

Edward Abuawad resides with his parents in Bethlehem and has three older siblings. He is planning to attend Bethlehem University in the field of Software Engineering. His sponsor is FFHL.

Maya Abu Hani resides with her parents and two younger siblings in Jerusalem. She is planning to major in Journalism/Media at Bir-Zeit University in Jerusalem. Anonymous sponsor.

Hilda Abu Issa resides with her parents in Jerusalem and is planning to attend Bir-Zeit University in Jerusalem in the field of Arts. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Danielle Alawi resides in Jerusalem with her parents and one younger sibling. She is planning to major in Science at Bir-Zeit University in Jerusalem. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Anton Al-Hihi resides in Bethlehem with his parents and two younger siblings. He is planning to attend the University of Jordan in Amman and to major in Medicine. His sponsor is FFHL.

Razan Baboun resides in Bethlehem with her parents and one younger sibling. She is planning to major in Education at Bethlehem University. Her sponsor is Cradling Christianity from Columbus, Ohio.
Alex Karmi resides with his parents and two younger siblings in Jerusalem. He is planning to major in Accounting at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Anonymous sponsor.

Violette Fatho resides with her parents and three younger siblings in Jerusalem. She is planning to major in Law at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Her sponsor is Cradling Christianity from Columbus, Ohio.

August Hallak resides with his parents and one younger sibling in Jerusalem. He is planning to major in Electrical Engineering. His sponsor is Cradling Christianity from Columbus, Ohio.

Talin Estiban resides with her parents and one younger sibling in Jerusalem. She is planning to attend Azreili College of Engineering in Jerusalem and to major in Electrical Engineering. Her sponsors are Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Assaf from Boca Raton, Florida.

Alex Karmi resides with his parents and two younger siblings in Jerusalem. He is planning to major in Accounting at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Anonymous sponsor.

Nairi Bawab resides in Jerusalem with her parents and one younger sibling. Nairi is planning to attend Hebrew University and to major in Education. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Marcos Khoury resides in Jerusalem with his parents and two younger siblings. He is planning to attend Hebrew University in Jerusalem and to major in Law. His sponsor is FFHL.

Edmon Farraj resides with his parents and one younger sibling. He is planning to major in Hotel Management at Bethlehem University. His sponsor is FFHL.

Violette Fatho resides with her parents and three younger siblings in Jerusalem. She is planning to major in Law at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Her sponsor is Cradling Christianity from Columbus, Ohio.

August Hallak resides with his parents and one younger sibling in Jerusalem. He is planning to major in Computer Science at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. His sponsor is Cradling Christianity from Columbus, Ohio.

Christina Hanna resides in Bethlehem with her parents and one younger sibling. She is planning to major in Hotel Management at Bethlehem University. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Talin Inshewat resides in Jerusalem with her parents and has two older siblings. She plans to major in Engineering at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Suad Karkar resides with her parents and two younger brothers in the Old City of Jerusalem. She is planning to attend Hebrew University in Jerusalem and to major in Law. Anonymous sponsor.

Jessica Khayo resides in Jerusalem with her parents and two younger siblings. She plans to major in Pharmacy at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Her sponsors are Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Walo of Dallas, Texas.

Marcos Khoury resides in Jerusalem with his parents and two younger siblings. He is planning to attend Hebrew University in Jerusalem and to major in Law. His sponsor is FFHL.
Majd Maria resides in Bethlehem with her parents and has three older siblings. She is planning to attend Al-Quds University in Jerusalem and to major in Medicine. Her sponsor is Archbishop Pietro Sambi Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Tatiana Said resides with her mother in Jerusalem and has four older siblings. She is planning to attend Hebrew University in Jerusalem and to major in Science at Bethlehem University. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Francis Mitry resides in Jerusalem and lives with his parents and two younger siblings. He is planning to attend Hebrew University in Jerusalem and to major in Pharmacy. His sponsor is Mrs. Judy Purdom of Lexington, Kentucky.

Shukri Kuttab resides with his parents and three younger siblings in Jerusalem. He is planning to attend Technion University in Haifa and to major in Computer Science. His sponsor is FFHL.

Nadine Musallam resides with her parents in Jerusalem and is planning to major in Science at Bethlehem University. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Jessy Sabat resides in Jerusalem with her parents and has two older siblings. She is planning to major in English Literature. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Pascale Sahwani resides in Jerusalem with her parents and two younger siblings. She is planning to attend Hadassah Academic College in Jerusalem and to major in Physiotherapy. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Krestina Mikail resides with her parents in Jerusalem along with one younger sibling. She is planning to major in the field of Medicine at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Chris Lama resides in Bethlehem with his parents and has three brothers and sisters. He is attending Bir-Zeit University in Jerusalem and is majoring in Engineering. His sponsors are Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Sansone of St. Louis, Missouri.

Simia Salman resides in Jerusalem with her parents and two younger siblings. Sima plans to major in Engineering at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Rand Said resides with her parents and two siblings in Jerusalem. She is planning to major in Arabic Literature at Bir-Zeit University in Jerusalem. Anonymous sponsor.

Tatiana Said resides with her mother in Jerusalem and has four older siblings. She is planning to attend Hebrew University in Jerusalem and to major in Medicine. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Maya Shahin resides with her parents in Jerusalem and two younger siblings. She is planning to attend Hebrew University in Jerusalem and to major in the field of Law. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Doreen Soufan resides in Jerusalem with her parents and one younger sibling. She plans to attend Hebrew University and major in Archaeology. Her sponsor is FFHL.

Michael Tissawak resides in Jerusalem and lives with his parents and a younger sibling. He is planning to attend Bir-Zeit University in Jerusalem and is to major in Law. His sponsors are Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Walo of Dallas, Texas.

We thank all of our sponsors for their continued dedication to these students.

To learn more or become a sponsor, visit www.ffhl.org/programs
Cradling Christianity annual fundraising dinner exceeded one million dollars in contributions over the thirteen years of the event.

In September of this year, the Cradling Christianity Mass and Dinner, benefiting FFHL, was held at the Saint Charles Preparatory School in Columbus, Ohio. Two hundred and fifteen guests attended the event to support their Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land. The event raised money for FFHL’s efforts to preserving Christianity in the birthplace of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

The mass preceding the dinner was led by Monsignor Joseph Hendricks of St. Brigid of Kildare. The service took place in Saint Charles Chapel, with six other priests concelebrating with Monsignor Hendricks. It is always special to see so many members of the clergy at the event as well as from our local seminary, the Pontifical College Josephium.

In attendance were honored guests Father Peter Vasko, OFM, President of FFHL, and National Regional Director Mike LeCuyer. Event chairman and emcee, Chuck Bramlage, opened the event with a recollection of his last visit to the Holy Land. As his pilgrimage prepared to leave, the Christians asked the volunteers not to forget them. The Cradling Christianity group continues to remember them by holding their annual event, which in its thirteenth year, raised over one million dollars.

Vice President of the FFHL, Denise Scalzo, was the keynote speaker at the dinner. She shared experiences from her many trips to the Holy Land in her speech entitled “What Is It That Keeps A Person Going Back To The Holy Land?” Scalzo told several moving stories about her experiences while volunteering in the Holy Land over numerous pilgrimages. She also presented a video entitled, “Bearing Fruit”, that introduced FFHL scholarship recipients. The recipients have all benefited from the efforts and contributions of fundraisers like the Cradling Christianity dinner.

We dedicate this event’s success to the support of the planning committee members: Judy and Gene Alfonsi, Venetia and Chuck Bramlage, Janice Conard, Tammy and Bo Foeller, Barbara and David Garick, Ardith and Chuck Mers, Fran and Ken Weise, and their 22 table sponsors.

Thank you for your contributions and your support. May God continue to bless you.
In the Spotlight

US Bishop Runs Pro-Life Marathon

During the Long Beach Marathon last month, FFHL board member Bishop Thomas Paprocki of Springfield, Illinois and the LIFE Runners took the opportunity to highlight their pro-life message and dedicate their efforts to the sanctity of life.

For the 26 mile run, Bishop Paprocki used a finger rosary to recite the decades of the rosary, offering his prayers up for those who are ill and for the sanctity of life.

During his training for the race, Bishop Paprocki developed a mantra, “Hold fast to the cross and embrace the pain.” Bishop Paprocki explains he believes the Lord asks us to embrace the pain and endure so that we may one day be reunited with Him indefinitely in His holy kingdom, heaven.

The 66-year-old bishop has run 24 marathons in total, offering up his pain while training and competing as reparation and atonement for his sins and the sins of others. Running almost five hours for each marathon Bishop Paprocki notes you can certainly recite many a Hail Mary in that time period.

Bishop Paprocki holds strong in his faith and the teachings of our Lord. He was raised in a devout Catholic home that first instilled in him his pro-life morals. As he has grown in his faith and career, Paprocki acts as a strong voice in the community advocating for the sanctity of human life.

Since running his first marathon in 1995, Bishop Paprocki estimates he has raised over five hundred thousand dollars for different charitable causes including pro-life. Bishop Paprocki dedicates his efforts to the entire spectrum of human life including assisting the elderly, children and those in poverty.

CHRISTMAS IN THE HOLY LAND

Homes have been decorated, parties have been planned and presents have been purchased. But as we rejoice in the spirit of the holidays, we must not get swept away in the material celebrations. Remembering the true meaning of Christmas is more meaningful and impactful than any other explanation for the happiness this time of year brings.

We celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ during the month of December. This was the day that God sent his one and only Son to earth to save us. The story starts with the Arc Angel Gabriel appearing to the Virgin Mary and saying,

“Do not be afraid. You have found favor with God. You will become pregnant, give birth to a son and name him Jesus. He will be a great man and will be called the Son of the Most High.”

Mary asked, “How can this be? I am a virgin?” and Gabriel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come to you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.”

Mary, a devoted believer, answered, “I am the Lord’s servant. Let everything you have said happen to me.”

Gabriel then appeared to Mary’s betrothed, Joseph, and told him to welcome Mary into his home as she was carrying the Son of God. Joseph accepted his part in God’s will and welcomed Mary into his home as his wife.

Cont’d on page 9
Philanthropist Honored for Donations to Holy Land Charity

By Tim Glaze, People Newspapers

“[Going to Jerusalem] is not really a vacation. It’s a pilgrimage. It’s serious stuff. But it kind of brings everything home - that’s where Jesus was born, where he died, where he walked, and where all of his disciples were. It’s a very powerful and unique place.” -Jodie Thompson

Dallas, Texas resident Jodie Thompson has been a supporter of Christians in the middle east his entire life, making numerous financial donations to the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land.

The enormity of his charity hit home, though, when he visited Jerusalem many years ago.

The trip was such a special moment for him, he took his entire family - 19 people - back to the Holy Land in December and was guided by his longtime friend, Fr. Peter Vasko, OFM.

“We all went for about ten days and it was spectacular,” he said. “It’s not really a vacation. It’s a pilgrimage. It’s serious stuff. But it kind of brings everything home - that’s where Jesus was born, where he died, where he walked, and where all of his disciples were. It’s a very powerful and unique place.”

For his donations, and efforts within the Christian community at home and abroad, Thompson was awarded the Guardian of the Holy Land Award on September 8 at the Dallas Country Club. The award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated “extraordinary commitment” to “supporting and preserving the presence of Christians in the Holy Land,” according to officials with the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land.

The FFHL works to keep Christians financially viable in the middle east through school scholarship grants. Grant recipients can also receive music scholarships and money to attend trade schools.

It has also created social programs in the middle east like boys’ homes and family centers.

Thompson was honored at the event by Archbishop Bernadito Auza, Observer to the United Nations, and Dallas Bishop Edward Burns.

“It’s a really wonderful award,” Thompson said. “The FFHL is something I have supported for a long time, ever since I went [to Jerusalem] in 1996.”

Thompson has lived in Preston Hollow for 30 years, but he was originally born in Highland Park. Before returning to Dallas, he lived in New York City, Mexico City, and Puerto Rico. But, he and his wife always considered Dallas home.

“We knew we wanted to end up back here someday,” he said.

Thompson’s foundation, the Chatham Hill Foundation, owns two Catholic radio stations - an English-speaking station on 910 AM and a Spanish-speaking station on 850 AM. Both stations have enjoyed huge success, he said.

“When we bought those two stations, we bought them as a package and they became the two largest Catholic stations in the nation,” he said. “There are a lot of smaller Catholic stations around the country, but we’ve been very successful. It’s been a real pleasure to own those stations.”

For more information on Christians in the Holy Land, or to make a donation, visit www.ffhl.org

So as we open our presents and gather with friends, let us ask ourselves how we can give others the gift of God. We ask you humbly to consider giving others the happiness Our Lord and Savior brings us. Please consider giving to the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land so that we may continue our mission of keeping Christians in the Holy Land as they are threatened as a minority in their own home.

As we celebrate, may we also pray and reflect on this most holy time. On behalf of the Franciscan Foundation of the Holy Land, we wish you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. May you rejoice in the miracle, the gift and the promise of Christmas.
Meet Selim

**Biography**

- Born Catholic in Alexandria, Egypt in 1941 from Palestinian parents both born in Bethlehem.
- Went to LaSalle Brothers Catholic Schools from kindergarten to high school where he learned to speak French fluently.
- Graduated from the School of Engineering at Alexandria University with a BSEE in 1963.
- After working for 4 years in Egypt to pay back his college education, he immigrated to the USA in 1968.
- Married in 1968 in New Jersey; he and his wife have 4 adult daughters and 7 grandchildren.
- His career path brought him to Florida, via Long Island, NY and Pittsburgh, PA when he was transferred by Westinghouse to Orlando in 1973.
- Moved rapidly through the ranks with Westinghouse until 1982 and reached the position of Operations Manager. The Orlando division was sold to a private concern and he remained with “Automation Intelligence” until 1995.
- In 1995, formed his own company “Quality Manufacturing Services” and sold 50% of it in 2007 to the employees (ESOP).
- In 2014, he sold the second half of his company and retired. The company grew and was over $20M with 120 employees. He’s on the company Board of Directors until all obligations to him are satisfied.
- He and his wife like to travel and spend time with their family.
- He was involved with many church activities such as teaching religious education while his girls were in prep school. Then, moving to the FOCUS program (coaching engaged couples), he served on the parish council while being a Eucharistic Minister for more than 25 years.
- Since his retirement he founded a civic activity named “I-Dignity” where he helps the less fortunate obtain the necessary state ID’s, birth certificates, social security cards, etc. He says “A lot of inner and personal satisfaction is obtained when you see the smiles on their faces because they can now obtain medical services or get a job that would have been unreachable without the documents. He translates from Arabic to English for immigrants and refugees.

**What has been your greatest FFHL accomplishment?**

My wife, Huguette, and I went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 2011. We were inspired to support the Foundation after seeing the great work that the Franciscan Foundation was doing to help maintain the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

We sat on the sidelines for many years and attended the regional yearly fundraiser. Fr. Vasko approached us about an opportunity to support a university student for four years. We were happy to help. He subsequently invited us to attend the Washington dinner at the Vatican Embassy and other functions.

In early 2018, I received an invitation from the Orlando Regional director Faith Libbe to become more active in the region and she offered me the position of co-regional director. I embraced the task and started running the job as a business introducing methods, procedures, agenda, minutes to provide continuity in our efforts to grow the region. This is a work-in-progress and the results are still to come. Three committees were created with active participation and individual responsibilities.

The executive committee meets on the first Tuesday of each month while the communication committee meets on the first Friday of each month. Agendas and Minutes are available. Three regional meetings were planned to recruit volunteers for the region. An administrative and financial committee is being formed with a member of the executive committee taking the lead spot. A date and location have been chosen for our 2019 gala/banquet which will be held on September 14, 2019 here in Orlando. Efforts are ongoing to identify host table donors. We have received pledges and donations of $47,000 towards the dinner with $37,000 delivered to the FFHL office in Washington, DC. I am presently in charge of the gala/banquet committee until a suitable person is identified.

I can already feel the passion of the new recruited volunteers with the communication committee. A mission statement has been written and is in line with the statement of the foundation. A database for the Orlando region has been created and is being updated with 203 records of people that are donors and/or pilgrims. I want to acknowledge the overwhelming help and support I received from Mike LeCuyer to get things started.

**What does being a contributing member mean to you?**

I am happy to serve because of my heritage. If my parents did not move to Egypt, my story could have been quite different. I may have been on the receiving end of tuition assistance for preliminary/secondary education in a catholic school or a college scholarship from the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land.
Honoring the Life of Colonel Nicholas John Babiak

Colonel Nicholas John Babiak, age 70, passed away peacefully on Thursday August 2, 2018, following a brief illness. His wife, Joyce K. S. Babiak was by his side.

Former member of the board of trustees for FFHL, Babiak was a man of honor, dignity and passion. He was a retired Colonel of the United States Air Force serving twenty years; a college graduate earning his Bachelor of Science, Masters Degree, and Doctorate of Business; a business founder, president, and CEO; and a loving husband.

He was a man of strong faith. In 2007, Babiak was invested in the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem and later created a Knight Commander with Star. In October of 2017, he received the highest honor a layman can receive from the Catholic Church from Pope Francis, the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifici recognition. Babiak was active in his local parish, Saint Ann’s, serving on multiple committees and in other positions. He was a board of trustees member of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land starting in 2014. Babiak was passionate about sustaining the feeling and enhanced value one got from visiting the Holy Land for generations to come by preserving Christianity in Jerusalem.

Colonel Babiak was born on December 16th, 1947 in Suffern, New York, to Theodore and Julia Babiak. Nicholas John Babiak is survived by his loving wife, Joyce. He was preceded in death by his parents and his brother Stephen.

Introducing Our New Partners,
DeLauro and Associates

DeLauro and Associates, our new fundraising, public relations and marketing consultants, specialize in working with nonprofit organizations to improve management to build their development programs. Their experience ranges from national philanthropies to small startup charities. The vast expertise DeLauro offers includes board and staff training, campaign studies and counsel, financial policy development, strategic planning, executive searches and more. With over 75 years of combined experience, they have worked with organizations all over the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii, to light the way to goal achievement and client success.

DeLauro and Associates will be working with Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land in the following areas: development, website design and management, social media, and communication and public relations. Their team has been hard at work researching how to best serve our organization, including implementing new strategies, and plans for the future. Improvements to our official website have already started and will continue through the remainder of the year. We encourage you to visit for new videos, articles, and information regarding our foundation’s efforts (https://www.ffhl.org/). Social media updating will also happen regularly to keep our community informed. We encourage you to follow along as news and photos are posted. You can find us on Facebook at Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land, Twitter at @FFHL_HQ, and on Instagram at @franciscanfoundation_hl.

Looking into 2019, DeLauro and Associates will work on strategy and deliverables and continue monthly reporting to our executive team in order to help us reach our goals. They will be developing training plans and empowering regions to work together and individually. Their efforts will include modernizing our materials and improving access to information for those in the Holy Land. We look forward to working with the DeLauro team and strengthening our efforts in the safeguarding of Christianity in the Holy Land.

For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s field, God’s building. (Corinthians 3:9)
Embrace His Grace! Plan your Next Holy Land Pilgrimage with the Franciscan Foundation

Join Fr. Peter Vasko, OFM, on a pilgrimage of faith:

NOV. 26 – DEC. 06, 2019
MAR. 10 – MAR. 19, 2020
NOV. 29 – DEC. 08, 2020
FFHL PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND

These pilgrimages exploring the Holy Land will provide an opportunity to open a new chapter in your own faith journey and your own response to God’s generous grace.

Now is the time to reach out in support of our Palestinian Christians. Your presence can make a difference.

FOR INFORMATION CALL 855.500.FFHL, EMAIL INFO@FFHL.ORG OR VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.FFHL.ORG

In an effort to reduce costs so that a maximum amount of each donated dollar can go to support Christians in the Holy Land, we would like to move toward more electronic and fewer printed communications.

If you are open to receiving future communications electronically, please go to www.ffhl.org/media/subscribe-to-the-ffhl-enewsletter/ to register for the online version of this newsletter.