



FRANCISCAN FOUNDATION

FOR THE HOLY LAND

FFHL's Response to Covid-19 in the Holy Land

Board of Trustees

Archbishop Christophe Pierre
Apostolic Nuncio to the US
Special Advisor

Officers

Rev. Francesco Patton, OFM
Chairman

Rev. Peter F. Vasko, OFM
President

Denise M. Scalzo, OFS
Vice President

Tim Lynagh
Treasurer

Karen M. Carroll
Secretary

Board Members

Eugene J. Alfonsi
Dublin, OH

Raymond Arroyo
Sterling, VA

Joyce K.S. Babiak
Arlington, VA

James M. Cornelius
Zionsville, IN

James N. Corrigan, Jr.
Washington, DC

Bishop Frank Dewane, DD
Venice, FL

Cardinal Timothy Dolan, DD
New York, NY

Joseph Cornelius Donnelly
New York, NY

William Hartnett
Dallas, TX

P. Jewel Nackard
Flagstaff, AZ

Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki, DD
Springfield, IL

The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land is a tax-exempt non-profit organization pursuant to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. All gifts to the Foundation are tax deductible. Please remember us in your will.

Visit us at: WWW.FFHL.ORG



▲ FFHL has been focused on helping deliver supplies to the elderly and those who were not able to leave their homes because of COVID-19.

As followers of Jesus, we believe there is always a light at the end of a dark tunnel. If we are positive, we will eventually see the light. If we are not, then the light will take longer than expected. This analogy of light and darkness illustrates the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land's decision to assist those in need during the pandemic in the Holy Land.

In late April of this year, the Franciscan parish of the Church of St. Catherine in Bethlehem began providing food supplies to the ill, to the elderly and to those who were not able to purchase food during the pandemic. The Catholic Boy Scouts delivered these supplies to people's doorsteps. Later, the Franciscan Boys Home, subsidized by FFHL, assisted in the same manner. The work was later duplicated by our parish in Jerusalem.

FFHL not only donated over \$20,000 toward these food supplies, but also gave an additional \$40,000 to help with critically needed medication for those affected



▲ FFHL has been providing assistance to families in need and those who have lost their jobs during this difficult time.

by Covid-19. Despite all the difficulties our faithful brothers and sisters have been experiencing in the Holy Land, these critical actions helped to lessen the impact of this pandemic for many in need of assistance. ■

The Franciscan Boys Home: Making a Difference even in a Pandemic

Since its founding in 2007, the Franciscan Boys Home has cared for more than 200 Christian children. These youth came to the Home suffering from heartbreaking social, economic and psychological trauma due to factors such as orphanage, or a breakdown in the family structure – from separation, divorce or other tragedy. The Home's loving staff provides what is needed for the children to grow up and thrive in a safe, secure, healthy and protective environment. This is done under the charge of one of the Franciscan Fathers and one of the Franciscan Sisters.

(Continue on page 2)

OUR MISSION

The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land is a worldwide organization founded in 1994 under the auspices of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land. The Foundation was created to strengthen and support Christianity in the Holy Land through the preservation of holy Christian sites and the support of the basic human rights and continued presence of the Christian minority living in the Holy Land.

LETTER FROM THE CUSTOS

Fr. Francesco Patton, OFM

*Dear Brothers
and Sisters in
Christ,*



In the midst of so many challenges in our world, we still have so many blessings to be thankful for. Our Lord showers us with an overflowing abundance of faith, hope and provision, so we may in turn bless others. As Thanksgiving season nears, let us remember the suffering of our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land, and may we continue experiencing the joy of the Lord through selflessly giving.

Because of the generosity of our supporters like you, FFHL is able to continue offering life-giving resources to those who desperately need our help.

We wish to express our unmeasurable gratitude for your many sacrifices in support of our mission. FFHL is eternally grateful that you have chosen to bless us with your generosity. Please continue to offer up prayers for the Living Stones of the Holy Land. We pray God will continue blessing you with provision, resources, health and favor a thousand times over so you may be a blessing to others.

I remain a servant of God and yours, in the Spirit of St. Francis,



**Fr. Francesco
Patton, OFM**

**Custos of the Holy Land
Chairman of FFHL.org**

(Continued: The Franciscan Boys Home: Making a Difference Even in a Pandemic)



▲ Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land has been dedicated to helping those in crisis during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Home receives generous support from Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land. The Boys Home has yielded many success stories over the last few years.

After leaving the Boys Home, many have made some remarkable achievements for themselves and their communities. Some young men completed their university studies and returned to serve at the Franciscan Boys Home or Terra Santa College in Bethlehem. Others worked in local community establishments, while others began their own businesses, married and had children. They are now productive members of society who are able to use and invest what they have received back into their communities.

Thanks to the support they received while living at the Boys Home, they can build a healthy and successful life transformed by the power of faith, hope, love and the continuous contact of the Boys Home which was with them step-by-step in their early lives.

Sadly, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its dangerous effect on the world, the Boys Home was forced to temporarily close its doors, in accordance with the government's

regulations to ensure the safety of all. The children were forced to return home. Since then and still to this day, we have followed up with their psychological state, studies, health and nutrition. Our social workers routinely check in with the boys and their families providing them with psychological and social guidance.

Following the directions of the Franciscan Boys Home leadership, the teachers have created online teaching groups to assist, guide and help the children finish their homework and studies. There have been repeated visits to each child's home offering them necessary supplies and food while still adhering to the public safety measures. This year alone, more than 26 families with a total of 30 children have benefited from the Franciscan Boys Home.

By the power of God Almighty and the intercession of Mary and St. Francis we pray that the Coronavirus pandemic will soon be over so that we may return to a normal atmosphere for the Franciscan Boys Home and can continue to build a better future and brighter tomorrow together. ■

Fr. Fadi Azar

(Head of the Franciscan Boys Home)

*To date,
100 children
benefited from the
Boys Home services.*

*This year alone,
more than **26 families**
and **30 children** have
benefited from the
Franciscan Boys Home.*

CURRENT EVENTS

FFHL Friend and Long-Time Supporter Announces Retirement

On April 26, 2020, over 300 vehicles paraded in honor of Msgr. Donald Zimmerman's retirement and in celebration of his 73rd birthday. After 47 years as priest of the diocese of Dallas, with 26 of those years in pastoral leadership at Christ the King Catholic Church in Dallas, Texas, Msgr. Zimmerman announced his plans to step down.

Among the cars in the honorary parade were FFHL's Board Members Susan and Tom Stanzel and Julie and Nick Summerville, with their daughter Siena. Msgr. Zimmerman was introduced to FFHL in 1994 by Tom and Susan Stanzel. Since then, he has been a steadfast and generous advocate of FFHL's mission to preserve the Christian presence in the Holy Land. He has supported every biennial Dallas Fundraising Dinner since the first event in 1998, serving as Master of Ceremonies at the first two dinners, and underwriting a table for the seminarians from Holy Trinity Seminary on multiple occasions.

Msgr. Zimmerman also generously supported FFHL's University Scholarship Program Luncheons which raise funds for four-year university scholarships for underprivileged Christian youth in the Holy Land. Four of these luncheons were held in the intervening years before the Vatican Embassy



fundraising dinners were established. Msgr. Zimmerman also enrolled Christ the King parish in the Bethlehem Memorial Program with a brass plaque of recognition mounted at St. Catherine Church in Bethlehem. In 2006, Msgr. Zimmerman received the Pope Leo XIII Gold Cross of Honor from Fr. Pierbatista Pizzaballa, OFM, Custos of the Holy Land, for his great work and support of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land. Some honorable guests in attendance for this special recognition included Archbishop Pietro Sambi, DD, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States; His Excellency, Bishop John J. Nevins, D.D., Bishop Emeritus of the Venice, FL Diocese; and Fr. Pizzaballa. Also present for this ceremony included the Honorable and Mrs. Will Hartnett and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stanzel.

In 2014, Fr. Peter Vasko, OFM and Denise Scalzo presented Msgr. Zimmerman with the City of David Award for his ongoing support and dedication in helping the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land maintain and preserve the Christian presence in the Holy Land. A video shown during his award presentation showcased six recipients of the FFHL University Scholarship grants with remarks from eight Dallas locations, including Msgr. Zimmerman, who eloquently expressed why they support the mission of FFHL. ■

FFHL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

» **Spring 2021 Dallas Good Shepherd Society Luncheon** (Tentative April 2021)

» **Fall 2021 Holy Land Pilgrimage** (Tentative Nov 28-Dec 7, 2021)



Honoring FFHL Board Member Anthony Frank Sansone, Sr.

(7.19.1926 to 4.27.2020)

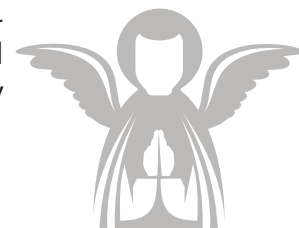
Anthony Sansone passed away on April 27, 2020.

He is survived by his wife Mary Anne Michaels Sansone, his "Little Mary Anne" of 66 years, two daughters, six sons, 42 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren (with two on the way).

Mr. Sansone founded the Sansone Group and remained CEO/Chairman of the Board until his passing. He was the backbone of the company and will be forever honored. Mr. Sansone made a lasting impact on the St. Louis community and his adopted community in Palm Beach, Florida and was involved in countless charitable, civic, and social causes. Throughout his life, Mr. Sansone received numerous recognitions and awards, only a few of which include: Ernst and Young Entrepreneur of the Year Lifetime Achievement

Award; Guardian of the Holy Land Award, the highest honor given by the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land, and the Order of St. Louis King Award, the highest award the diocese of St. Louis bestows.

Mr. Sansone was an active member of the Franciscan Foundation Board of Trustees and was very generous in helping to maintain the Christian presence in the Holy Land. He always gave time, treasure, and talent towards that goal, and will be greatly missed. For his many contributions to his community and his Church, he will be most remembered as a loving husband, patriarch, friend, gentleman, mentor, visionary and insightful leader. He was fully committed to his family, his business and his faith. He seized life and lived it to its fullest. His legacy will be carried on through his family and through those he touched. May his soul rest in peace. ■



First time Pilgrimage: A Trip of a Lifetime for a Mother and Son



▲ Grace Stringer and her son David sharing their spiritual journey

Grace Stringer and her son David's first pilgrimage to the Holy Land was a life-changing experience that brought them closer together. Grace and her son David were among a group of Priests, Sisters and parishioners from St. Hyacinth Church in Amarillo, TX to join the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land's Fall Pilgrimage. "It renewed my gratitude for God's love and mercy and for leading me to this place at exactly this time in my life and in history. It is beyond words," says Grace.

Experiencing the steps where Jesus trod, viewing the Sea of Galilee, walking to the Crucifixion site where Jesus was taken down from the Cross and also being able to touch the Holy Sepulchre...it took my breath away and left me feeling like time stood still."

One of the most special aspects of this trip for Grace was being able to have memories with her son. "David's father died a few years ago, and his thoughts during the trip were of his father and how much he would have enjoyed being with us. My husband often told us before he passed that there is a thin curtain between here and the hereafter". David frequently said throughout the pilgrimage, "Dad is right alongside us". The trip was a healing touch for both.

One of the most memorable parts of the pilgrimage for Grace was walking to the Old City to the Tomb of Christ at dawn and spending time in prayer at the Crucifixion site. "As we were getting ready to leave, we heard some of the most beautiful, heavenly angelic music," she recalls. "We

turned to see where it was coming from, and saw monks praying and singing at the chapel of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. We stopped in our tracks, listened, and were mesmerized. We could have stayed there for a long time – it was heavenly. I know God intended this for us, and I am forever thankful."

Throughout the pilgrimage, Grace was grateful for the Masses that brought each experience alive. Other highlights included the Mount of Temptation in Jericho, the Mount of Olives and the Temple Mount.

Reflecting back on the whole experience, Grace felt she was very fortunate to learn about the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land and how deeply involved the Foundation is in so many aspects of the Holy Land. Because of the dwindling numbers of Catholic and Christians in the Holy Land and the increased danger of losing our Holy sites, Grace implores all Christians to realize how interconnected we should be with them.

"Since coming back, I have recommended this pilgrimage to many people," says Grace. "It is a life-changing trip to be able to experience more closely Jesus' life, death and resurrection. I have now been able to experience His love in a more profound way during Mass. To be able to transport myself mentally to those Holy places takes on a new meaning and nearness to our earthly experience." ■



FFHL Recognized at Catholic Foundation Dinner

Community Partnerships

FFFHL was highlighted as a Visionary Donor at the 2020 Catholic Foundation Dinner. The Foundation's Holy Land Scholarship Fund benefits Catholic college students with funding for scholarships through FFHL's University Scholarship program, allowing students to pursue their goals. ■



FFHL Earns Charity Navigator's Highest Rating for the 7th Consecutive Year



FFFHL strives to achieve transparency through accountability with our donors. We work diligently to provide sustainable programs that will truly implement positive change, and we value every donation as an impactful investment into our mission. We aim to go deeper by helping our friends, volunteers and donors to practice philanthropy.

Established in 2001, Charity Navigator has grown to become America's largest and most utilized nonprofit assessor. This platform provides donors with an unbiased, numbers-based analysis overview of thousands of charities across the nation. Charity Navigator's ratings cover two areas of a nonprofit's conduct; financial health, and accountability and transparency.

We are proud to announce Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land has earned a seventh consecutive 4-star rating from Charity Navigator. This is the highest possible rating and indicates that our organization adheres to sector best practices and executes its mission in a financially efficient way.

Only 7% of the charities evaluated have received at least 7 consecutive 4-star evaluations, setting FFHL apart from its peers and demonstrating our trustworthiness to the public. Attaining a 4-star rating verifies that Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in our area of work.

The most recent information published on Charity Navigator shows 85% of FFHL's fundraising dollars are spent on the programs we offer Christians undergoing severe hardship and persecution in the Holy Land. Administrative expenses are less than 10%, and fundraising expenses 5%. On average, FFHL operates on a \$0.04 expense per every \$1 raised. This figure is found by calculating the average expenses and average contributions over its three most recent fiscal years. As a 501 (c) (3) organization, we rely heavily on the generosity of our supporters, who understand the importance of safeguarding a Christian presence in Israel, the birthplace of our Lord and Savior. Thank you for investing in the mission and vision of FFHL. Read our blog about the importance of transparency in nonprofit work at www.ffhl.org/media/ffhl-blog/. ■

THE GOOD SHEPHERD SOCIETY

We wish to express our deepest gratitude to the **Treanor family** for their recent substantial legacy gift to Franciscan Foundation to the Holy Land. This generous donation will support our missions and programs in the Holy Land. We are most grateful for such extraordinary generosity.

~ THANK YOU ~



Making a Life-Changing Impact in the Holy Land



▲ One of the honored families to receive a housing gift

During a year that has seen a global pandemic of biblical proportions, the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land is especially grateful for the generous support from Christians around the world.

Without ongoing investment in FFHL's programs, our spiritual homeland would be at an even greater risk of losing more Christians. In fact, church leaders predict that if the current exodus continues, Christianity could easily cease to exist in the Holy Land within 50 years. Each year an estimated 300 Christian families are forced to leave due to a lack of jobs, an unstable housing market, and other hardships both politically and economically.

Father Peter F. Vasko has led FFHL since its founding in 1994. He is aided by a volunteer Board of Directors dedicated to helping Christians living in the Holy Land to survive and prosper. Under his guidance, the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land has initiated and funded numerous humanitarian programs and projects. FFHL uses every available resource to connect Christians with jobs, education, housing, and other critical life-sustaining opportunities.

One of the solutions to this growing problem has been providing financial assistance in support of higher education. This investment in young Christian scholars in the Holy Land ultimately leads to economic advancement and stability.

Thanks to donations from individuals and churches since the program started, our university scholarship program has become the cornerstone of the solution representing over \$15 million invested in both University scholarships and special education grants.

FFHL has been able to provide full University scholarships to more than 573 economically marginalized students with strong academic promise.

In addition, the child sponsorship program provides primary and secondary educational financial assistance for economically marginalized families. In 2019,

170 child sponsorships were granted equaling \$500 per year for seven years. Another vital area that the FFHL supports is housing development and job placement. The housing development program provides subsidized housing to Christian families who would otherwise be forced to move abroad.

With the assistance of FFHL, the Franciscan Custody has completed over 100 apartment units in Bethlehem and 120 units in Jerusalem. Perhaps equally important to sustaining a Christian presence in the Holy Land is employment.

The job placement program creates steady opportunities within a variety of fields with the goal of employing Christians who are barred indefinitely from entering Israel.

Social programs also support the needs of Christians including a residential Franciscan Boys Home, a Christian family center in Nazareth, and Franciscan social services in Bethlehem.

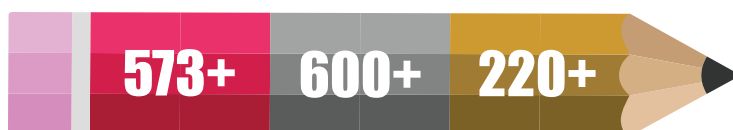
FFHL is grateful for the continued partnership of so many faith organizations and individuals in supporting all of these important programs.

If you would like to help our mission by making a gift to preserve Christians – the living stones – in the Holy Land, please visit www.ffhl.org/donate-now/. ■



▲ The Housing Renovation Program provides double services. Workers are hired to build homes that are gifted to families in need.

Support for Education, Housing and Employment Programs



University Scholarships
awarded to date.



Child Education Scholarships
awarded to date



Housing Units to date (in collaboration with Custos)

St. Paul Methodist Church (Monroe, Louisiana) Sponsors a Student



▲ Members of St. Paul's had the privilege of hosting high school student Yazan William Hanna Giacaman for lunch at the Franciscan Casa Nova in Bethlehem. Left to right: Yazan Giacaman (student), Dr. Randy Hall, Cathy Hall, Gay Morris

We are honored to recognize a recent University Scholarship Program sponsor, St. Paul Methodist Church in Monroe, Louisiana.

During a recent pilgrimage, members of St. Paul had the privilege of meeting their sponsored student, Yazan William Hanna Giacaman, for lunch at the Franciscan Casa Nova in Bethlehem. Below is an excerpt from Yazan's letter of appreciation to his sponsor, St. Paul Methodist Church who helped him achieve his dream. ■



A Letter of Thanks from FFHL University Scholarship Student Yazan

My name is Yazan William Hanna Giacaman. I was born September 20, 2001 in Bethlehem. I still live in Bethlehem, and I started school at

Terra Sancta College in 2004. In 2019 I graduated and placed first in my school on the Scientific Stream, and 6th place in the city of Bethlehem.

I started attending University in September 2019, and finished my first semester with straight A's. I will continue doing my best in my medical studies, since I am most interested in pursuing a humanitarian career so I can help others.

I will finish my first general 6 years, and then seek another University abroad to continue a specialized study.

I have two sisters and one brother. In 2010, my mom left my dad, so we have been living with just my dad since then. At the time, I was nine years old, my sisters were six and seven years old, and my brother was two years old. It was difficult to live without our mother. My dad hasn't been able to work since 2015 so he can look after us. He does the cooking and we all help him with the cleaning and housework.

In January 2020, I met with some members from St. Paul Methodist Church. We had lunch together and learned about one another. It was so nice to meet them here in the Holy Land and get to have lunch together. I hope I will have a chance to meet them in the United States someday. I really love St. Paul's Methodist Church.

The people are so kind and we have frequent contact with each other. I am so thankful for them!

Best Regards!
Yazan



Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land
P.O. Box 29086
Washington, DC 20017-9086

POSTAGE
HERE

<<Name>>
<<Address 1>>
<<Address 2>>
<<Address 3>>
<<City>>, <<State>>
<<Zip>>

*Join us this
#GIVINGTUESDAY
to celebrate the world's
generosity and shine
a light on important
philanthropic efforts.*

*Together, we can make a difference for
Christians in the Holy Land.*

Thank you for supporting the Franciscan Foundation
for the Holy Land with your #GIVINGTUESDAY gift
now through December 1, 2020.

OUR SINCEREST GRATITUDE

Our forward motion will not slow and our connections will not break. FFHL is driven by our donors. This has never been more true than in recent months. COVID-19 continues to challenge the world, but our community continues to stand strong in support of our mission. We are grateful for each and every generous heart that supports the forward motion of our mission to preserve Christianity in the birthplace of our Lord and Savior.

Tuesday, December 1, 2020

**GIVING
TUESDAY**

GIVE ONLINE AT FFHL.ORG

One Day of Giving
Changes Lives

NOV. 2021 PILGRIMAGES IS OPEN FOR REGISTRATION

EXPLORE a Fresh Journey of Faith AS YOU
Reconnect WITH *Christ in the Holy Land*



» CALL 855.500.FFHL(3345) » EMAIL INFO@FFHL.ORG » VISIT WWW.FFHL.ORG

We Want To Hear From You!

~ SHARE WITH US ~



What do you want to read about in FFHL's upcoming news-
letter? Email your stories and ideas to smartini@ffhl.org.
If you are interested in becoming more involved with FFHL,
please contact slurie@ffhl.org.