



FRANCISCAN FOUNDATION FOR THE HOLY LAND



Public Relations Packet



**YOU CAN MAKE A
DIFFERENCE FOR
THE CHRISTIANS
IN THE HOLY LAND**





FACTS AT A GLANCE

FRANCISCAN FOUNDATION FOR THE HOLY LAND

PRINCIPLE PURPOSE AND MISSION

Founded in 1994, Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL) was created and established by Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land to help stop the Christian exodus from the region. Through numerous humanitarian programs and projects, FFHL is working tirelessly to provide needed resources for Christians to remain in their land.

THE CHALLENGE

Today there are approximately 175,000 Christians living in the Holy Land, making up about .2% of the total population. Due to severe political and economic hardships, an estimated 300 Christian families leave the Holy Land each year. This steady emigration suggests that one day the Christian community and church may cease to exist in this part of the world. As the Christian population struggles to thrive, oftentimes survive, FFHL uses every available resource to connect Christians with jobs, education, housing, and other opportunities.

Church leaders predict that if the current exodus continues, Christianity could easily cease to exist in the Holy Land within 50 years.

One of the solutions to this problem has been providing financial assistance towards higher education, which leads to economic advancement and stability. We believe that our University Scholarship Program is the cornerstone of the solution.

UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Since 1997, FFHL has given full university scholarships to more than 573 students who were economically marginalized but had strong academic talent. FFHL underwrites four years of college including tuition and books. Hence, through the generosity of Christians in the U.S., FFHL is holding the 'educational doors of opportunity' open for the Christian community in the Holy Land.

PROGRAM GROWTH

Over the last 20 years, FFHL has given over \$6 million in both university scholarships and special educational grants to Christian students. The current graduation rate is 97%.

MOST POPULAR FIELDS OF STUDY

- ⊕ Business Administration
- ⊕ Accounting
- ⊕ Medicine
- ⊕ Engineering
- ⊕ Law
- ⊕ Pharmacy

OUR SPIRITUAL HOMELAND AT RISK

Population in the Holy Land (2019)

Israelis	6.77 million
Muslims	6.72 million (Includes Gaza, West Bank, Israel proper)
Christians	135,000 (Indigenous)

IN THE 1950'S, INDIGENOUS CHRISTIANS REPRESENTED 25% OF THE POPULATION. TODAY, CHRISTIANS ACCOUNT FOR LESS THAN 2%.

Jerusalem:

1945 | 31,300 Christians
1967 | 24,200 Christians
2019 | 12,700 Christians

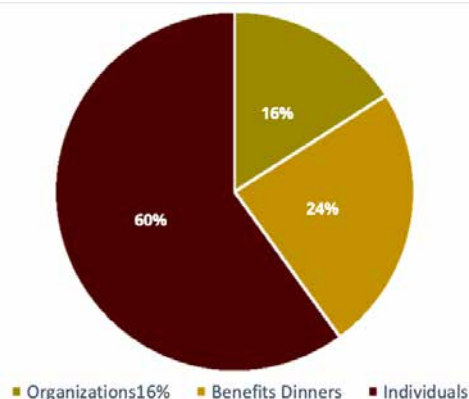
Bethlehem:

1950 | Christians 86% vs. Muslims 14%
2019 | Christians 12% vs. Muslims 88%

FINANCIAL BACKGROUND

Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land is principally supported by Individuals and Religious Organizations, Benefit Dinners, and other Public Relations Efforts.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT



*Based on 2019 analysis

DEDICATED LEADERSHIP

Father Peter 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 survive and prosper in the very place of Christ's birth, life, death and resurrection.

Father Peter is a strong champion and advocate for serving those in need. He ministers to many, and works tirelessly to bring people together in peace and security through serving as:

- U.S. Embassy and Municipality of Jerusalem liaison to the White House, including providing tours for presidents and many dignitaries.
- Chaplain for the Marine Security Guard for the U.S. consulate in Jerusalem.
- He was part of the Franciscan Custody Board of Directors, representing the care of the holy sites in the six countries it governs in the Holy Land.
- English defensor for the Custody of the Holy Land for 13+ years.

Father Peter has lived in Jerusalem for more than 34 years. Prior to entering the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land in 1981, he had a 10-year career in marketing and public relations. He has been recognized by the Vatican for his work.



FOUNDATION PROGRAMS

The focus of FFHL is to keep the Christian presence in the Holy Land by providing education, housing and employment.

EDUCATION

- **University Scholarship and Special Educational Grants Program:** Provides funding for tuition and books for four years. 573 students and 45 students for M.A \$4,000 and \$6,000 per student per year.
- **Vocational/Trade Educational Grants:** Provides funding for tuition and books for a two-year program to learn plumbing, electricity, metal works, carpentry, auto mechanics, hotel management, telecommunications and culinary arts 276 students. The cost is \$2,000 per student per year.
- **Child Sponsorship Program:** Provides primary and secondary educational financial assistance for economically marginalized families. 600 Child Sponsorship In 2019. A child sponsorship is \$500 per year for seven years.
- **Music Scholarships:** Provides tuition for young children wishing to learn piano, violin, flute or composing.

HOUSING

- **Housing Development Program:** Provides subsidized housing to Christian families who would otherwise be forced to reside abroad. The Franciscan Custody, with the assistance of FFHL, has already completed over 100 apartment units in Bethlehem and 120 units in Jerusalem. There are plans for another 30 units in Jericho and 120 units in Jaffa.

EMPLOYMENT

- **Job Placement Program:** Creates new positions to employ Christians barred indefinitely from entering Israel. Placement includes a variety of fields including administration, clerical and custodial positions in Franciscan schools, churches, parish centers and medical facilities. New jobs are also created in construction trades as FFHL housing developments are built.

OTHER FFHL PROGRAMS:

- Bethlehem Boys Home
- Children Without Borders
- Children's "March for Peace"
- Children's Christmas Program – Bethlehem
- Christian Family Center – Nazareth
- Franciscan Family Center – Bethlehem
- Franciscan Social Services – Bethlehem



07/2020

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

Toll-free: (855) 500-3345 (FFHL) • Email: info@ffhl.org • www.ffhl.org

FFHL is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the U.S. All donations are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.
EIN 33-0628775

2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND GENEROSITY



Educating **1,768** Students

Awards scholarships to deserving, marginalized Christian students in the Holy Land beginning in grade school, and offers music opportunities to university and vocational programs.



Employing over **800** Workers

Matches hardworking Christians in the Holy Land with dignified, stable employment opportunities.

(Since program start)



Sheltering approx. **330** Boys

Our Franciscan Boys Home provides young Christians a safe space with resources to rebuild their spirits.

(Since program start)



Coaching **10,000+** Children

Children Without Borders brings youth from different backgrounds together through the power of sports and teaches them to embrace the Six C's: critical thinking, creativity, cooperation, co-existence, commitment and courage.

(Since program start)



Housing **43** Families

Deserving Christian families receive homes from FFHL housing projects, giving them a stable environment to call their own.

(Since program start)



Uniting **3,600** Individuals

Building bonds of friendship and creating a consolidated feeling of accomplishment, the Children's March for Peace unites thousands of people in Bethlehem.



Embracing **4,800** Christians

Our Christmas Program allows children and their families in the Bethlehem area to forget the worries of day-to-day life and be embraced with love and happiness.



Provided **\$95K** in Supplemental Grants for Urgent Needs

FFHL provided grants to address exigencies identified by the Custos and other clergy, such as aid for Christians in Lebanon and repairs and renovations to the St. Catherine's Latin Parish Church in Bethlehem.



Become A Steward for Christianity in the Holy Land

FFHL established its **Good Shepherd Society** to help further our mission of preserving the Living Stones, the Christians of the Holy Land.

The Society recognizes donors who desire to keep contributing to FFHL's mission after they have passed and God has welcomed them into the Kingdom of Heaven. **Individuals who wish to leave a donation to FFHL in their estate will be welcomed to the Good Shepherd Society and their impact will live on through the organization.**

If you have already made arrangements for a planned gift to FFHL, we would like to express our gratitude and welcome you to charter membership. Please notify us of your intention by emailing Vice President of FFHL Denise Scalzo, OFS at: dscalzo@ffhl.org

If you have additional questions about the Good Shepherd Society or making a planned gift, please contact us at:

info@ffhl.org
855-550-3345

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FRANCISCAN FOUNDATION FOR THE HOLY LAND

Addresses Human Rights Issues

Background Information



The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land was created to inform and educate the general public about the plight of Christians in the Holy Land, where inadequate housing, high unemployment and greatly reduced educational opportunities are causing widespread suffering and a mass exodus of the indigenous Christian population. By increasing awareness of the complex human rights issues involving Christians in this part of the world, the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land seeks to establish equality of opportunity for this unrepresented minority group and safeguard their right to remain in their homeland.

Caught in the middle of an intense religious and ethnic power struggle, Christians in the Holy Land are the forgotten victims in the current political crisis in the Middle East. As a minority population in the Holy Land, Christians in Jerusalem and other Holy Land cities are often among the first to suffer when conflicts between Palestinian and Israeli interests bring new hardships to the area.

Specific Human rights issues concerning Christian Palestinians include:



- **Unemployment:** Frequent disruptions of the local economy due to religious and ethnic conflicts have taken their toll. A recent study indicates that 30 percent of all Christians living in the Holy Land (Israel, West Bank and Gaza) are unemployed. Unemployment in the area is exacerbated by the on-going closure of the West Bank and Gaza to principal Israeli cities where the majority of Palestinians had been employed. The average annual income ranges from \$4,000 - \$6,000.

- **Education:** The vast majority of Christians cannot afford the cost of higher education. The closures of territories due to the long-standing ethnic conflicts in the Holy Land completely disrupt the educational system for Christians and Muslims. During the closures, children and teachers may not be permitted to attend school for extended periods, and university students are also prohibited from pursuing their studies at schools outside the closure area.





- **Housing:** The current shortage of subsidized housing is a major factor in the ongoing exodus of Christians, for whom rent costs, even for the inferior living arrangements, are prohibitively high.

- **Medical Care:** Decreased income and high unemployment have left a great many Christians unable to afford even basic medical care for themselves and their children.



To stem the tide of emigration and protect the rights of the minority Christian population, the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land is appealing for support that will enable the organization to provide humanitarian aid to Christian Palestinians.

As the Christian minority strains to survive in the volatile political situation of the Middle East, the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land uses every available resource to address their basic needs while undertaking a communications campaign to tell the story of their ongoing dilemma. By informing the general public of the present crisis situation for Christians in the Holy Land, the organization intends to secure the humanitarian aid and financial support necessary to guarantee Christians equal opportunity in their homeland.



During the past 800 years, the Franciscan Custody has ministered to the Christians and maintained the Holy Sites and Shrines in what is now the state of Israel. Because of their long-standing presence in the region, the Franciscans are extremely knowledgeable concerning the plight of the local Christian community. In order to help a Christian population that receives little foreign aid and is without an organization to voice its concerns on a worldwide scale, the Christian churches of Jerusalem - including Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans, and Presbyterians - have come together with the Franciscans to formally express support for the goals of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land. Created in July 1994 and headquartered in Washington, D.C., the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land was established to inform and to educate as many Christians in the United States, not only about the plight of Christian Palestinians living in the Holy Land, but also of the on-going emigration from the region.





**FRANCISCAN FOUNDATION
FOR THE HOLY LAND**
Program Summaries

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The Franciscan Custos of the Holy Land, Fr. Francesco Patton, OFM, has set religious education as one of the highest priorities in order to preserve the Christian presence in the Holy Land.



UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

FFHL has given full scholarships to over 725 university students with strong academic talent, paying for all 4 years of college at a cost of \$6,000/student/year. Hence, through the generosity of Christians in the U.S., FFHL is holding the “educational doors of opportunity” open for the Christian community in the Holy Land.

CHRISTIAN STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAM



In the Holy Land, most families are unable to afford a Christ-centered primary education. Considering the investment in school tuition, books and uniforms, the cost for the full seven years of this education is \$3,500. The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land depends on our loyal and generous donors to help offset these costs so more Christian children can receive the gift of an education at our

Catholic schools. Supporting the equivalent of even one child's education can impact generations of our brothers and sisters who are able to remain in the Holy Land thanks to your generosity.



MAGNIFICAT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Magnificat Institute in the Holy City of Jerusalem has as its goal the promoting of knowledge about music with particular attention to the cultural heritage of various local communities in the Holy Land. The target goals at the heart of the Magnificat are to prepare teachers capable of teaching and transmitting love for music in schools in the Holy Land; to sing and play in the shrines and parishes of the Holy Land; to create opportunities, both choral and instrumental, to break down the cultural, religious and linguistic barriers and promote peace in the Holy Land between children of different backgrounds.



VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

FFHL, in conjunction with the Custody of the Holy Land, recognized that there was a need for educational opportunities for those who prefer to learn a trade or vocation. Young Christian adults seeking to become electricians, carpenters, auto-mechanics, plumbers, telecommunicators and chefs had very few options before. Now, with an FFHL scholarship, they have the opportunity to turn their dreams into a reality. \$2000 provides an entire year of vocational training for a young Palestinian Christian.



MAGNIFICAT INSTITUTE

The *Magnificat Institute* in the Holy City of Jerusalem has as its goal the promoting of knowledge about music with particular attention to the cultural heritage of various local communities in the Holy Land.

MAGNIFICAT GOALS

The **target goals** at the heart of the Magnificat Institute of Jerusalem are as follows:

- Prepare teachers capable of teaching and transmitting love for music in schools in the Holy Land.
- Sing and play in the shrines and parishes of the Holy Land, in particular the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, the Holy City.
- Create opportunities, both choral and instrumental, to break down the cultural, religious and linguistic barriers and promote peaceful and friendly relationships in the Holy Land between children of different backgrounds, and in particular in the Holy City of Jerusalem.

Given the critical social context in which the Magnificat Institute of Jerusalem finds itself, only some of the students are able to pay the tuition to attend the Institute and that is the reason for outside support for the musical scholarships.

For these and other reasons the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land has been providing music scholarships to our young Christians attending the Magnificat Institute in Jerusalem. Yet another approach to establishing peace and preserving the Christian presence in the Holy Land, the Institute was initiated by the Franciscan Custody.

WHY?

Music is an art that unites people of different languages and belief systems. Music overcomes differences and establishes a common purpose achieved by working together. The Magnificat Institute of Jerusalem was founded in 1995, thanks to the work of musician and composer, Fr. Armando Pierucci. Currently, the Magnificat Institute in the Holy City of Jerusalem counts among its ranks 200 Muslim, Christian, and Jewish students, mainly children, who are studying various disciplines.

The musical activities outside of school provide great opportunities and hope for the children throughout the Holy Land and for their families. The Institute has over 20 teachers and three choirs, who also fulfill the liturgical requirements of the Custody of the Holy Land for the most important liturgical celebrations. Currently it is housed in the Monastery of St. Saviour in Jerusalem but it is expanding. The school also has to its credit publications, recordings of musical CDs, foreign tours, concerts and the organization of competitions.





MAGNIFICAT OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the Magnificat Institute is to foster encounter, dialogue, peaceful coexistence, and human and social development amongst people and children of diverse cultural and religious backgrounds in the Holy Land. Learning music provides a very worthwhile alternative to otherwise difficult living situations in many families throughout the region.

The reputation of the Magnificat Institute is continually growing thanks to the great professionalism of the teachers and the new possibilities that have enabled the school to award academic diplomas which are recognized in the European Union following the agreement made with the "Pedrollo" Conservatoire of Vicenza, which guarantees and supervises the standards of quality to be observed.

The characteristic of the school of music run by the Custody of the Holy Land, however, is also that of effectively being a laboratory for peace and sharing, with teachers and pupils who are Israelis and Palestinians, Jews, Muslims and Christians, all united by music to build up a new Jerusalem of peace. This is why the Custody of the Holy Land considers the Magnificat a very important activity in its mission.

YOUR DONATIONS HELP:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>\$5 - Buys small objects for the students, like sheet music.</p> <p>\$25 - Buys larger things like rosin, reeds, brass oil, and violin or guitar strings.</p> <p>\$50 - Buys items like instrument cases, cello strings, and mouthpieces.</p> <p>\$150 - Buys inexpensive instruments like beginners' guitars.</p> | <p>\$500 - Buys more expensive instruments like violins, cellos, and flutes.</p> <p>\$1500 - Pays a teacher's monthly salary</p> <p>\$2500 - Sponsors a student for a whole year</p> <p>\$6500 - Sponsors a music festival</p> |
|---|--|



VOCATIONAL SCHOOL



The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL) in conjunction with the Custody of the Holy Land recognized that there was a need for educational opportunities for those who prefer not to go to college but to learn a trade instead. Young Christians, adults seeking to become electricians, carpenters, auto-mechanics, plumbers, telecommunicators or even chefs had very few options before. Their dreams, however, are becoming realities.



FFHL, in its quest to help stem the Christian exodus from the Holy Land, is enrolling students at the Lutheran Federation Vocational Technical School as well as students at the Notre Dame School of Cooking, both located in the Jerusalem area. Each school offers a two year study program and upon graduation, they will receive a diploma attesting to their skills and expertise in their respective fields. In addition, in order to further their success, FFHL will give each student their own tool kit based on their particular field so they will be able to immediately secure work in their communities.



“We are supremely proud of this new endeavor,” exclaimed Fr. Pizzaballa, OFM, former Chairman of FFHL. “It now gives an opportunity, as well as hope, to these young Christian students who have different gifts and capabilities which in the end will prove beneficial for them and the Christian community.”

The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land is very excited about the FFHL graduates who have completed their studies and received their certificates of expertise in the various fields of training.

“We must continue to open all avenues of work for the Christian youth especially those who have graduated from high school in order to give them opportunities for higher education whether it be on a college level or at a vocational school level. Each will provide them a means of securing future employment and thus giving them hope.” – Fr. Pizzaballa, OFM, former Chairman of FFHL

YOUR DONATIONS HELP:

\$2000

Provides an entire year of vocational training
for a young Palestinian Christian.

JOB PLACEMENT PROGRAM

The majority of Christian Palestinians have been and continue to look to the tourism industry for employment. Many Christians work as guides for pilgrims or provide transportation and others are hotel managers or shop owners. There has always been a special connection that many pilgrims find upon meeting their brother Christians in the Holy Land in an atmosphere of service reminiscent of Christ serving his apostles.

The Holy Land suffers from many challenges from the current situation which has led to drastic numbers of unemployment stemming from a lack of tourism and pilgrims in the Holy Land. Currently, 65% of Palestinian Christians are Unemployed!

It is a constant goal of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land to provide opportunities to keep Christians employed. The Franciscan Press based at St. Savior's Monastery in Jerusalem has been an avenue to provide some employment for the struggling Christians. The Franciscans continue to employ them at 70% of their wage even when there has been no work.

The housing projects funded by the generosity of donors through the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land have helped to curb unemployment. Construction companies working with the Custody of the Holy Land employ Christian workers in the construction of these projects.

Production of olive wood products handmade in the Holy Land has drastically decreased. There has been very little work in this area, especially since many of the olive trees used in production have been intentionally destroyed. This is a painful reality for many families since their livelihood has been diminished.



EXCERPTS FROM "A PILGRIM'S PERSPECTIVE" - A REFLECTION BY A HOLY LAND PILGRIM

Everywhere we went, we were introduced to people simply as pilgrims from the U.S. We were showered with hugs, handshakes and blessings, and without exception, they all said, "Please, pray for us." However, their stores and businesses are closed - due to a lack of business and tourism. Most of them, especially the Palestinian Christians, are just barely hanging on, with no support from the government. These are a very strong, proud people, that don't want handouts or charity but a chance to earn a living and remain in their homes. Yet for most, their livelihood depends on tourism -and there is so very little. How it broke my heart to see a priest begging outside his church or to hear an elderly man ask, "Why does your President support only Israel...can't he see what is happening here!" The situation is extreme and urgent! The Franciscans are doing everything they can to help the severe unemployment problem but they need help . . . your help!

You can reach out to these Palestinian Christians by helping the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land:

- fund new housing projects employing many Christians
- support the production of handmade olive wood products
- contacting us if there is anyone you may know or a contact that could help provide jobs for your brother and sister Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land

HOUSING PROGRAMS

SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

One of the fundamental goals of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land is to provide housing for Christian families. The Foundation partners with Christian construction companies to develop two and three bedroom apartment buildings. Currently there are subsidized housing units in Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Bethany.

- St. Francis Village in Bethphage, a suburb of Jerusalem has 78 units completed in 2006 and opened in 2011.
- Child Jesus in Bethlehem has 36 units completed in 2005.
- Beit-Hanina, a suburb of Jerusalem has 10 units completed in 2001
- Ram Housing in Jerusalem has 13 units completed in 1999
- Friendship Housing in Bethany has 20 units completed in 1994.



HOUSING RENOVATION

There are many houses in Bethlehem and in the surrounding areas that are in dire need of repair. The Emergency Job Creation Program was established by FFHL's Franciscan Family Center to accomplish two purposes. One is to provide employment for local Palestinian Christians and the other is to upgrade houses so that the inhabitants can reside in improved living conditions. One of the projects that was recently completed involved a family of four whose bathroom and kitchen were in poor shape. \$3500 enabled the FFHL to replace old tile, rusted water and sewage pipes, broken fixtures and the floor in the bathroom as well as install new kitchen cabinets.



YOUR DONATIONS HELP:

- \$100** - Covers utility expenses for 1 month
- \$250** - Pays a Christian family's rent for 1 month
- \$3000** - Pays a Christian family's rent for 1 year



FRANCISCAN FOUNDATION FOR THE HOLY LAND

Program Summaries

SOCIAL SERVICES



THE FRANCISCAN BOYS HOME

Located in the city of Bethlehem, this home looks after Christian children with special needs in Bethlehem and those who suffer from serious social, psychological and economic problems, to provide them a safe and caring shelter and to look after them from the different educational and spiritual sides. Therefore, the Home affords for them a convenient environment that would help them in the process of social adaptation in their life in a natural way. This happens according to sound professional scientific programs in cooperation and coordination with their parents, supervisors and specialists to achieve the best service to this targeted group. The Home relies in its work and philosophy on the values of respecting the human rights, love and forgiveness according to the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the call of St. Francis of Assisi.

FRANCISCAN FAMILY CENTERS – BETHLEHEM AND NAZARETH

The Franciscan Family Center was established in Bethlehem to provide professional counseling to those Christian families who have suffered psychological trauma. They also provide sponsored educational programs for children and adults. The Center collaborates with the Franciscan Parish in Bethlehem to promote services and assistance for Christian families. FFC also created programs for employment for the Bethlehem community as well as working with the marginalized Christian families to assist in house renovations.



CHILDREN WITHOUT BORDERS – JERUSALEM

The mission of Children without Borders is to cultivate and invest in children everything that is creative, constructive, and industrious; to empower and enhance their vision of peace, coexistence, and gender equality; and to expose them to new experiences in their own lives, and those of other children living in other parts of the world. Children without Borders seeks to ensure a mental, moral and physical empowerment of children living in the different cities of the Holy Land. The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land funds the program at a cost of \$500/child/year.

FRANCISCAN SOCIAL SERVICES

The Franciscan Social Services Organization (FSSO) was established to care for the financially, psycho-socially and medically needy individuals and families in the Bethlehem area. The organization does its utmost to reach all needy families and individuals by making home visits and taking care of cases recommended by the parish priest. This past year, FSSO asked the FFHL to assist them by funding the needed medicines for those who are unable to pay.



CATHOLIC ACTION CENTER – BETHLEHEM

The Catholic Action Center is a place for all ages to gather. Here one finds a theater, swimming pool, teaching classrooms, a computer lab, dining facilities, offices, a new physical fitness room, a conference center, and a new sports center. Every year the Center organizes a summer camp for children during their summer recess. The Center serves as a place of Christian friendship, community and fellowship, vital to the needs of Christians in the Holy Land.

For more information, please contact:

FRANCISCAN FOUNDATION
FOR THE HOLY LAND
P.O.Box 29086
Washington, D.C. 20017-9086

Tel: 855-500-3345 (toll-free)

Email: info@ffhl.org
www.ffhl.org



The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL) is a worldwide ecumenical organization that seeks to keep a Christian presence in the Holy Land by providing education, employment and housing.

The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land is a registered 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization in the United States. Your contribution is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.



FRANCISCAN FOUNDATION
FOR THE HOLY LAND

Rev. Francesco Patton, OFM

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD



Fr. Francesco Patton was born in Vigo Meano in the diocese of Trent on December 23rd, 1963. He belongs to the Franciscan Province of St. Anthony in Italy. He is fluent in English and Spanish, besides his native Italian.

He made his first religious profession on September 7th 1983 and his solemn profession on October 4th, 1986; then was ordained to the ministerial priesthood on May 26th, 1989. In 1993 he earned a Licentiate in Communication Sciences at the Pontifical Salesian University in Rome.

He served in various capacities in his province and also within the Order. He was twice Secretary General of the General Chapters in 2003 and 2009; Visitor General in 2003, Minister Provincial of St. Vigilium (Trent, Italy) from 2008 to 2016; President of the Conference of Provincial Ministers of Italy and Albania (COMPI)

He also served in many capacities outside of the Order: as member of the Diocesan Presbyteral Council and secretary of the Diocesan Pastoral Council of the archdiocese of Trent; professor of Social Communications at the Studio Teologico Accademico Tridentino; collaborator of the Diocesan Weekly, the Diocesan Radio and Telepace Trento; and enrolled with the journalists of Trentino-Alto Adige as publicist since 1991.

FRANCISCAN FOUNDATION FOR THE HOLY LAND

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. Our Tax ID Number is 33-0628775. Your gift is fully tax deductible to the extent of the law.

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FRANCISCAN FOUNDATION
FOR THE HOLY LAND

Rev. Peter F. Vasko, OFM

P R E S I D E N T



Father Peter F. Vasko, a native New Yorker, entered the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land in 1981, after a ten-year career in marketing and public relations. Fr. Peter attended The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., where he majored in philosophy and theology. He later attended Duke University in North Carolina for graduate studies in anthropology and received additional training in archaeology at the Franciscan Studium Biblicum in Jerusalem.

Fr. Peter was ordained to the diaconate in Jerusalem and, in 1987 was ordained to the priesthood in Washington, DC. Prior to his seminary training, he was a member of the Jaycees, Rotary International and the Public Relations Society of America. He is a former member of the St. Ives Society, an organization assisting in the civil rights of Palestinian people.

Actively involved in the international diplomatic community in Jerusalem, Fr. Peter serves as a liaison and guide for the White House through the U.S. Embassy, as well as with the municipality of Jerusalem. He serves as Chaplain for the U.S. Marine Security Guard for the U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem. In 2008, Fr. Peter was bestowed the prestigious recognition of "Honorary Marine" by the former Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, General James T. Conway, USMC. The ceremony was held at the Pentagon in Washington D.C.

Presently, Fr. Peter is President of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land, an organization created to provide a worldwide voice for Christians living in the Holy Land and to ensure the continued Christian presence in the area.

With extensive live interview experience for both secular and religious media, Fr. Peter has developed a reputation as a skilled and versatile communicator. He is a compelling spokesman and public speaker, who has addressed many Catholic organizations including Legatus International, Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre, Knights of Columbus, Serra Club, and Eucharistic Conference in Atlanta. Fr. Peter has appeared on several television specials about the Holy Land that were aired on Discovery Channel, BBC, NBC and CBS and many national radio talk shows. He has been a guest on EWTN's "Mother Angelica Live" and "The World Over" on numerous occasions. He has also appeared on The 700 Club to address issues concerning the Christian exodus in the Holy Land and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He was named one of the "Top Ten People in the Catholic Church" in the January 2006 issue of "Inside the Vatican" magazine.

He is the author of "See the Holy Land", a photo essay of Israel/Palestine and has just finished a new third edition named "Our Visit to the Holy Land". In addition, he has also completed a 75-minute video about the Holy Land, entitled "On the Road to Christ." Fr. Peter was also instrumental in the production of "Turning Point: Crisis in the Holy Land," a television video documentary about the Christian exodus from the Holy Land, and was narrator for the video, "The Life of Jesus: a Scriptural Journey in the Holy Land." He also co-produced a ten-part mini television series for EWTN entitled 'THE HOLY LAND WITH FR. PETER F. VASKO, OFM'. His speaking engagements on the Middle East and the Holy Land have taken him to throughout the United States as well as Europe, Asia and Africa.

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FOR THE HOLY LAND

Archbishop Christophe Pierre

(FFHL Special Advisor)

A P O S T O L I C N U N C I O T O T H E U N I T E D S T A T E S



Archbishop Christophe Pierre was born on January 30, 1946 in Rennes, France. He completed his primary education in Antsirabé, Madagascar, and his secondary schooling in Saint-Malo, France, and in Marrakech, Morocco. He attended the Major Seminary of the Archdiocese of Rennes (1963-1969) and the Catholic Institute of Paris (1969-1971).

He did the Military Service from July, 1965, to October, 1966. Was ordained priest on April 5, 1970, in Saint-Malo, France and incardinated in the Archdiocese of Rennes. He has been Parochial Vicar of the St. Peter and St. Paul Parish in Colombes, Diocese of Nanterre, France (1970-1973).

He has a Master in Sacred Theology (Paris, 1971) and a Doctorate in Canon Law from the Pontifical Lateran University, Rome (1973-1977).

He completed his studies at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, in Rome (1973-1977), and started his service in the Diplomatic Corps of the Holy See on March 5, 1977.

He was appointed first to the Pontifical Representation in New Zealand and the Islands of the Pacific Ocean (1977-1981). Subsequently he served in Mozambique (1981); in Zimbabwe (1982-1986); in Cuba (1986-1989); in Brazil (1989-1991); at the Permanent Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland (1991-1995).

He was elected Titular Archbishop of Gunela on July 12, 1995, and received the Episcopal Consecration on September 24, 1995, in Saint-Malo, France.

Archbishop Christophe Pierre was appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Haiti, on July 12, 1995, where he served until 1999. He has been the Papal Representative to Uganda (1999- 2007) and to Mexico (2007-2016). On April 12, 2016 His Holiness Pope Francis appointed him Apostolic Nuncio to the United States of America.

Archbishop Pierre speaks French, Italian, English, Spanish and Portuguese.

FRANCISCAN FOUNDATION FOR THE HOLY LAND

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. Our Tax ID Number is 33-0628775. Your gift is fully tax deductible to the extent of the law.

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139 Harristown Rd • Glen Rock, NJ 07452
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www.charitynavigator.org

March 1, 2021

Father Peter Vasko
Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land
P.O. Box 29086
Washington, DC 20017

Dear Father Peter Vasko:

On behalf of Charity Navigator, I wish to congratulate Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land on attaining the coveted 4-star rating for demonstrating strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency.

The nonprofit sector is advancing and expanding. As our organizations evolve, so do the desires and interests of our supporters. Astute donors are yearning for greater accountability, transparency, and for concrete results from us. With more than 1.5 million American charities, Charity Navigator aims to accentuate the work of efficient and transparent organizations. The intent of our work is to provide donors with essential information to give them greater confidence in both the charitable decisions that they make and the nonprofit sector.

Based on the most recent information available, we have issued a new rating for your organization. We are proud to announce Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land has earned our eighth consecutive 4-star rating. This is our highest possible rating and indicates that your organization adheres to sector best practices and executes its mission in a financially efficient way. Attaining a 4-star rating verifies that Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in your area of work. Only 6% of the charities we evaluate have received at least 8 consecutive 4-star evaluations, indicating that Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land outperforms most other charities in America. This exceptional designation from Charity Navigator sets Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land apart from its peers and demonstrates to the public its trustworthiness.

Forbes, *Business Week*, and *Kiplinger's Financial Magazine*, among others, have profiled and celebrated our unique method of applying data-driven analysis to the charitable sector. We evaluate ten times more charities than our nearest competitor and currently attract more visitors to our website than all other charity rating groups combined, thus making us the leading charity evaluator in America. Our data shows that users of our site donated more than they planned to before viewing our findings, and in fact, it is estimated that last year Charity Navigator influenced approximately \$10 billion in charitable gifts.

Your achievement and the 4-star rating will enhance your organization's fundraising and public relations efforts. Our favorable review of Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land's financial health and commitment to accountability & transparency is now visible on our website.

We wish you continued success in your charitable endeavors.

Sincerely,

Michael Thatcher
President and CEO

Congratulations on your 2021 Platinum Seal of Transparency

Wed, Oct 6, 2021 at 3:12 PM



Hello there,

Congratulations. You've earned a Platinum Seal of Transparency!

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الكنيسة الإخيلية اللوثرية في القدس
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jerusalem

BISHOP MUNIB A. YOUNAN

المطران منيب أ. يونان

Jerusalem on February 14th, 2000

The Rev. Father Peter F. Vasko, OFM
The Holy Land Foundation
Middle East Office
JERUSALEM

Subject: **The Holy Land Foundation.**

Dear Fr. Vasko,

Salaam and peace to you from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I would like to thank you for your visit in my office on February 8th, 2000. It was a good opportunity to hear from you about the aims and activities of the "Holy Land Foundation" in the service of the local Christians in the Holy Land.

I do agree with the fact that Palestinian Christians are the first victims of the wars, disturbances and violence, which took place throughout the last century. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict that caused political, social and economic hardships drove a big number of the Christian population to emigrate. As a result, the number of Christians has drastically dwindled to 3% of the total population.

The tendency of Christian emigration still continues until present date. On the other hand, Palestinian Christians still remaining in the Holy Land are suffering of unemployment, continuous struggle for coexistence, and lack of housing and steady income. Many of them, especially the young people, are tend to find opportunities to emigrate, which the Church does not encourage.

In my capacity, as head of a church, together with the other heads of churches in Jerusalem, we are extremely concerned about this problem. We discuss this issue nearly in every encounter of our monthly meetings as to how to alleviate this problem, and further put an end to Christian emigration. The emigration can stop when community based education is fostered, small businesses are encouraged and housing is provided

We therefore encourage and support THE HOLY LAND FOUNDATION to go ahead with its goals in the service of promoting and fostering the Christian presence in the Holy Land. For there is no Holy Land without the holy people of the Land.

May God bless you in your endeavors. We are ready for any

Yours in Him,

+ Bishop *Munib A. Younan*
Bishop Munib A. Younan
The Lutheran Bishop in Jerusalem.





20 March 2000

The Most Rev. Giovanni Battistelli, OFM
Chairman
The Holy Land Foundation
St. Savior's Monastery
PO Box 186
Jerusalem 91001

Dear Bishop Battistelli,

Salaam and Grace in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and blessed greetings from St. George's Cathedral in Jerusalem.

The Anglican Church has long worked towards emphasizing the importance of the existence of the indigenous Christian community in the Holy Land, which I feel is in dire need of attention and care.

Palestinian Christians from the Holy Land are slowly dissipating, making us a very small minority within a city in which our faith began. Although there are many circumstances which one can emphasize regarding the decreasing number of Christians in this Land, such as the political situation, economic difficulties and racial discrimination, I would like to draw attention to the need for reversing the present situation.

The Holy Land Foundation in its efforts to help the indigenous Churches and Christians in this land is essential in maintaining the 'Living Stones'. I fully support the work of the Foundation and am encouraged by the hard and challenging work they do for our community.

Know that this comes with my prayers and continued good wishes.

In Christ,

+Rt. Rev. Riah Abu El-Assal

DAMASCUS دمشق

ص.ب. ١١١٢٩٧ كنيسة جنين القديسين

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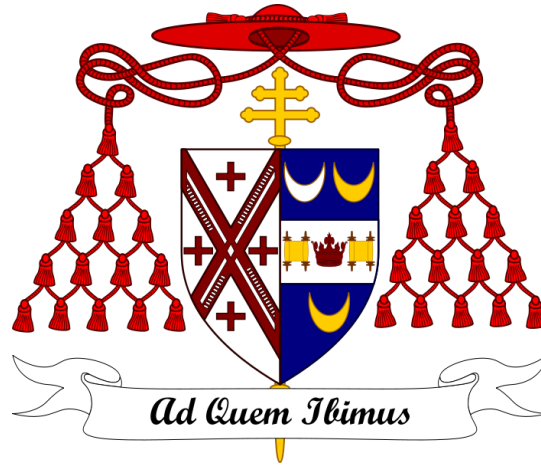
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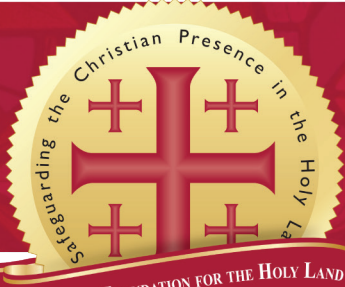
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The plight of Christians in the Holy Land continues to be precarious. Giving them hope for the future and dignity in their lives has been the mission of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land, an organization whose task is to stem their exodus and support their historic presence in their homeland. I would greatly encourage our Catholic faithful here in the United States to support such a mission to help maintain the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan
Archbishop of New York
Member Board of Trustees - FFHL



FRANCISCAN FOUNDATION FOR THE HOLY LAND

FRANCISCAN FOUNDATION FOR THE HOLY LAND NEWSLETTER

SPRING #53

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Woman in prayer at the Stone of Anointing in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre | CR: Renee Mills

THE MODERN-DAY CHRISTIAN EXODUS AND HOW YOU CAN HELP

The heart of our mission at FFHL is to preserve the presence of Christianity in the Holy Land. Our efforts centralize around safeguarding our Christian brothers and sisters in their homeland by providing access to meaningful employment, safe housing, and life-changing education. We continue seeing the population of Christians in the Middle East dwindling at a rapid pace. It is an extraordinarily large trend that is not being addressed, and the crisis continues to worsen.

“As recent as 1950, around 80% of Bethlehem’s population was Christian. Today, the population of Christians comprise less than 20% of the total Christian population.”

Recently, Fareed Zakaria, Indian-American journalist and host of CNN’s segment “[Fareed Zakaria GPS](#), On GPS: A Christian Exodus,” covered a story about the dwindling population of Christianity in the Middle East. Fareed, along with guest Janine di Giovanni, journalist and author of the book, “The Vanishing: Faith, Loss and the

(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.

LEARN
MORE

24

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EMAIL: INFO@FFHL.ORG

LETTER FROM THE CUSTOS

Rev. Francesco Patton, OFM

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

During this Lenten season, let us experience God's great mercy; and in turn, may we demonstrate selfless compassion to others. It is my hope that you have been drawn more closely to our Lord and Savior through prayer and devotion. May God remind us constantly through times of uncertainty that we are Easter people and that the Resurrection of the Lord conquered death and opened the way of life for us!

This Christian hope allows us to confront a world that needs more love and compassion. You have remembered the insurmountable challenges and struggles faced by our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land, and I thank you for your faithfulness.

As we prepare to celebrate Easter and reflect upon the great sacrifice our Savior made for us on the cross, let us rejoice and count our numerous blessings from Him. As a community of faith, may we open our hearts to the opportunities that God is providing us to love our dear neighbor during this time. Together we can accomplish many things. For all of you, I give thanks.

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



Rev. Francesco Patton, OFM

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

(Continued from Pg 1: The Modern-Day Christian Exodus and How You Can Help)

Twilight of Christianity,” discussed the changes in political climate that have caused the Christian population from Egypt, Syria, Iraq and beyond to hastily diminish. Zakaria shared, “As recent as 1950, around 80% of Bethlehem’s population was Christian. Today, the population of Christians comprise less than 20% of the total Christian population.”

Since the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, many Christians fled Iraq out of fear. After Israel’s founding in the late 1940s, hundreds of thousands of Jews were displaced from their homes in Iraq where their families had resided for centuries. In 2014, when ISIS established its presence, things grew much worse and presented many more challenges for Christians living in the region.

“There have been very few censuses taken since the rule of Saddam Hussein. At that time, there was an estimated 1.5 million Christians in Iraq. According to data published by the Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel for 2021, Christians living in Israel are about 182,000, 1.9% of the total population. (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2021)

With these staggering statistics, FFHL will continue raising awareness and funds to bring Christ’s gospel message of love and mercy to thousands of Holy Land Christians. We fund many different educational, humanitarian and housing programs. Since our founding in 1994, we have helped over 1,750 marginalized Christian students from grade school through college; assisted over 800 individuals find stable employment; provided 43 families with stable shelter; and aided thousands of others through our programs, resources and supplemental grants for urgent needs.

Through donors’ prayer and financial support, we can continue providing these essential resources and programs that enable Christians to remain and thrive in the Holy Land.

Sources:

“Fareed Zakaria GPS, On GPS: A Christian Exodus,” by Fareed Zakaria, CNN.com, December 18, 2021.
<https://www.cnn.com/videos/tv/2021/12/18/exp-1226-janine-di-giovanni-christians-vanishing.cnn>

“Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel in Figures: Selected Data from the Statistical Abstract of Israel,” 2021.
https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/publications/DocLib/isr_in_n/sr_in_n21e.pdf

New Kitchen for the Boys Home in Bethlehem

This past February, Fr. Francesco Patton, OFM, Chairman of FFHL blessed the new kitchen for the Franciscan Boys Home which included new freezers, stoves, microwaves, and refrigerators. The cost for the kitchen was paid for by FFHL, Pontifical Missions, and ATS, all local charitable organizations. The Director of the Boys Home is Fr. Sandro Tomasevic, OFM and he is responsible for the thirty boys living there. Later, lunch was served for the guests.



▲ All Photos: Celebrating kitchen remodel at Franciscan Boys Home in Bethlehem

Servant Leadership – Loving God, Loving Others

How University Scholarship Program Coordinator Elie Hajjar Leads with a Servant's Heart

The Gospel of Matthew states Jesus' definitive answer for the first and greatest commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." The second commandment follows with: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matthew 22:37-39).

"I am convinced that only education can create a change in society and help people achieve their goals."

– Elie Hajjar



Loving one another is not easy. Servant leadership is found in the daily grind. It means loving one another and modeling a Christ-like spirit to others. It means seeing potential in people and working to help them develop skills and talents. It means going to work every day and using your skills to bless others. It means leading with grace, mercy and patience for people that you are influencing. It means bringing God's glory to every encounter.

You don't have to be in a place of power to be a servant leader. You can build the kingdom of God by serving others. The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land's Elie Hajjar is a true servant leader, loving others and building the Kingdom of God through his work as University Scholarship Program Coordinator.

We recently interviewed Elie about his role, his hopes for the [University Scholarship Program](#) and the young scholars who inspire him. We invite you to join us as we get to know Elie a little better.

Q: Tell us about your background and education.

A: I am a 34-year-old accountant. I grew up in the Old City of Jerusalem, where I lived with my parents and my three sisters. My father is a full-time employee, and my mother a housewife. Being a moderate-income family did not prevent my parents from teaching me and my siblings and making all four of us well-educated children. At Bethlehem University, I studied Accounting as a major and Business Administration as a minor. Having the opportunity to work within the scholarship program at FFHL has been a great experience. Because of it, I have seen the progress of the young people in my country and the significant life changes they have made. I am convinced that only education can create a change in society and help people achieve their goals.

Q: How did you get involved with the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land and the University Scholarship Program?

A: After graduating from Bethlehem University, I started my work at the Custody of the Holy Land in 2009 as an accountant. After three years, I was also asked to work for the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land's University Scholarship program. It is a great pleasure to work for a foundation so well-known for its mission to help those in great need in the Holy Land.

Q: How has the pandemic affected education in the Holy Land? What are some of the biggest challenges facing students?

A: At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not easy for students to shift into the new online method of learning, but in time they began adapting. After the COVID-19 lockdown, many families suffered economically and socially. A lot of families lost their main source of income, preventing them from providing for their basic needs. As the COVID-19 crisis continues, families are still unable to meet their monthly commitments towards utilities and rent, making it nearly impossible for many students to continue paying their university tuition fees.

Fortunately, funds raised from FFHL's generous donors afford many students opportunities to focus on their scholarly studies without concern for tuition fees. FFHL scholarship students are challenged to earn high marks, and they work hard to comply with the terms of the program, so they do not lose their scholarship.

(Continued on Pg 4)

Q: What are some of the accomplishments that you are proud of?

A: It is very important for me to see the progress of the students, particularly those who were uncertain about what to study in the beginning. After finally completing a B.A. degree, students find greater success in life and in the workplace. I have formed great relationships with the universities, making it easier now to facilitate student registration and stay current on the student's progress. It is very satisfying to know that after students graduate, they can become successful in their life and obtain high positions in society. These students are very grateful for the opportunity the scholarship program has afforded them.

Q: What are some ways that earning a scholarship for a degree in higher education helps Christians in the Holy Land?

A: Without a degree in higher education, it is very difficult to find a job. Pursuing a college degree opens doors for a brighter future.

Q: What are the greatest needs that the University Scholarship Program faces today?

A: The University Scholarship program is making very significant progress and giving students many opportunities to achieve their goals. Because this program helps decrease the unemployment rate, many students are encouraged to pursue a higher education degree. However, with limited foundation funds, not all students are able to be accepted into the program.

Q: What would you say to someone to encourage them to financially support scholarships?

A: FFHL's University Scholarship program gives hope to students in real need of college education financing. A scholarship can help future generations make a lasting impact on the world. Without the generous help of the good people who gave with love, many students wouldn't have been able to continue their education. Their lives were changed because of this program. Without a university scholarship, these students would still be relying on the church and society for social help and donations.



Scholarship Student Receives Outstanding Student Award



We are proud to recognize University Scholarship recipient Laith Abusada, for his excellent academic achievement at King Hussein School of Computing Sciences at Princess Sumaya University for Technology. Laith received the Outstanding Student award during the 2020-2021 academic year. He is sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. John R. Landon of Dallas, Texas through FFHL's University Scholarship Program. Laith shares his gratitude and appreciation in this letter of thanks. His sponsors, Mr. and Mrs. Landon, are helping him achieve his dreams.

◀ FFHL University Scholarship Student, Laith Abusada, poses with achievement award outside of school.

(Continued on Pg 5)

A Letter of Thanks from FFHL University Scholarship Student Laith

Greetings,

I hope everything is well with you. I am glad to inform you that I have received an Outstanding Student award from Princess Sumaya University for Technology. I was awarded a certificate of recognition for my academic achievement from the School of Computing Sciences at a special ceremony on November 18, 2021.

This would not have been possible without your help. Your generosity is much appreciated, and with your continued support, I will keep doing better and better.

Yours truly,

Laith Abusada



Children's Christmas Program in Bethlehem

Each year the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land gives Christmas treats to over 600 needy children in the Bethlehem area, many of which attend our Terra Santa School in Bethlehem. This year Fr. Francesco Patton, Chairman of FFHL, Fr. Peter F. Vasko, President, and Fr. Ibrahim Faltas, Superintendent of Private Schools participated by first giving out Christmas candy to all the students in the school. Later they attended a Christmas show that FFHL puts on for the younger children who are all dressed up in Santa Claus outfits. Children are invited up to the stage to sing or to dance. It is a wonderful occasion for the Christmas season.



▲ (Left to right) Fr. Ibrahim Faltas, Superintendent of Private Schools, Fr. Francesco Patton, Chairman of FFHL, Fr. Peter F. Vasko President deliver presents to children at school during Christmas celebrations.

Together
we gave.

Nov 30, 2021

Thank you!

We raised over
\$10,000 for this
campaign in 2021



GIVING
TUESDAY

Thank You! FFHL's Giving Tuesday Success

We are proud to announce that over the last three years we have accomplished the following:

- ✚ FFHL has raised \$42,710 from our GivingTuesday campaigns.
- ✚ We have 224 total donors who have contributed to our GivingTuesday campaigns.
- ✚ The average gift for our GivingTuesday campaign is \$191.

We are continually humbled by the outpouring of prayer and support from our FFHL family. Thank you for being a faithful and generous supporter of Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land. You are making a profound difference in the lives of these individuals by giving them a hopeful future.

2022 Events & Regional Updates:



- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Apr. 26 th | Good Shepherd Society Luncheon (Dallas) |
| Sep. 10 th | Dallas Region Gala Dinner |
| Sep. 22 nd | Cradling Christianity Dinner (Columbus) |

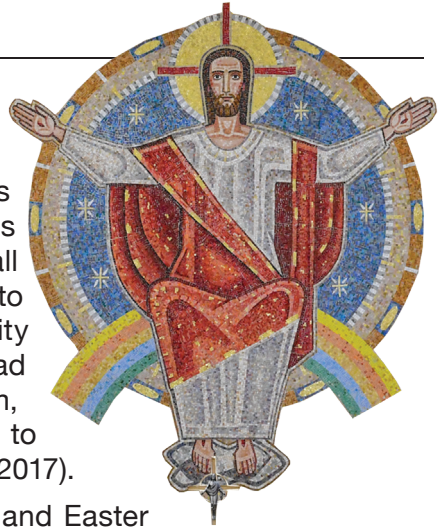
Lent and Easter in the Holy Land

Pilgrimages are a lifeline for the many Holy Land residents who rely on tourism. At its height in 2019, tourism was booming with 4.5 million visitors and revenue of over \$7 billion, largely attributed to Christian pilgrims. In 2020, the pandemic decimated Israel's tourism industry when only a few hundred thousand visitors were able to travel to Israel. Last year, visitors climbed to 400,000, bringing in \$618 million in revenue for the region, but still far below 2019's level. FFHL hopes to begin Pilgrimages again in Fall 2022.

For Christians in the Holy Land who have endured many hardships, Lent is a time of hope and reassurance. Pope Francis explains: "Lent is a path: it leads to the triumph of mercy over all that would crush us or reduce us to something unworthy of our dignity as God's children. Lent is the road leading from slavery to freedom, from suffering to joy, from death to life" (Homily for Ash Wednesday 2017).

For the third year in a row, Lent and Easter will look very different in the Holy Land with the absence of tens of thousands of faithful pilgrims from around the world.

"Holy Week continues to play a pivotal role in Christian spirituality. It marks the culmination of salvation history; beginning with desperate suffering and ending in joyous hope," says Father Peter F. Vasko, OFM. "As a Franciscan friar who has lived and ministered in the Holy Land for the last thirty-five years, this week has particular meaning for me. We Franciscans continue the legacy of our founder and father, St. Francis of Assisi, who, some 800 years ago was entrusted with protecting the holy sites in this precious land. We also have a special calling to minister to the indigenous Christians here, those 'Guardians of Christianity' who have courageously maintained their faith and heritage over these many centuries in spite of misunderstanding, persecution, discrimination and suffering. To be in Jerusalem on Good Friday is an experience unlike any other. To join the throngs jamming the Via Dolorosa where Christ carried His cross, to stand for a moment at the first station where Jesus was scourged, crowned, and then condemned to death by Pilate is a moving encounter for any believer."



▲ Father Peter F. Vasko, OFM, President of FFHL leading 2019 pilgrimage group through sacred sights of the Holy Land.

Although due to the pandemic, Father Peter won't be able to escort pilgrims through the cramped streets of Jerusalem, or the byways of Nazareth this Easter, he looks forward to hopefully welcoming pilgrims in the Fall to see where Christ walked and experience what life is like for His followers in the Holy Land today. Please visit <https://ffhl.org/holy-land-pilgrimages> to find out more about FFHL's planned pilgrimages.

Children Without Borders - March for Peace in Bethlehem

On January 4, 2022, Christian Media Center published a story highlighting more than 500 children from FFHL's supported program, Children Without Borders' marching for peace in Bethlehem. The march started in the square of Catholic Action, continued in front of the Basilica of the Nativity and concluded at the School of the Holy Land.

Fr. Peter F. Vasko, OFM, President, FFHL and President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports of the Palestinian Authority, along with Fr. Francesco Patton, Custos of the Holy Land and Fr. Ibrahim Faltas, President of the Children Without Borders Sports Academy, participated in the event.

(Continued on Pg 7)



▲ FFHL sponsored Children Without Borders participates in the annual March for Peace.

“These are people who have worked for peace. It is very important for our children to see this meeting, and for them to learn to work for peace as well.” – Fr. Ibrahim Faltas

In spite of war, siege, deprivation, and persecution, Children Without Borders offers peace, liberty, and camaraderie to children through the fun and fellowship of sport. Children Without Borders provides a safe and educational environment for children after school. It also provides the opportunity for these children to discover the talent given to them by God. Jerusalem has more than 300 participants and Bethlehem has more than 120 participants with three coaches, three assistant coaches and additional volunteers.

The children’s march for peace seeks to go beyond just Bethlehem’s streets and become a path to a better future for the nation.

See the full Christian Media Center article at: <https://cmc-terrasanta.org/en/media/terra-santa-news/25368/children-march-for-peace-in-bethlehem/>

Cradling Christianity: Rooted in Cause



Cradling Christianity®

Cradling Christianity was founded in 2006 by a small group of Catholics from Columbus, Ohio. Each founding member participated in a group pilgrimage, not knowing one another initially. During their travels, the group grew very close through their shared experiences. Being from the same general region, this small group returned home forever changed after their journey to the Holy Land. They soon realized they could not resume their normal lives without acting to bring awareness, hope and change to the struggling Christians they met on their journey. They banded together to form a collective group called Cradling Christianity. Still operating today, its mission is to raise funds for the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land to provide education, housing and employment to Christians in the Holy Land.

In a recent interview, founding members Gene and Judith Alfonsi from Dublin, Ohio shared their insight about the history of Cradling Christianity.

Cradling Christianity Launches

Gene and Judy had an opportunity to join the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem and participated in their first pilgrimage to the Holy Land, led by tour guide Fr. Peter F. Vasko. The group of 50 pilgrims embraced one other and grew very close during their time together. The Alfonsi’s describe their pilgrimage as “a selfless, enlightening experience. You can read about the Holy Land, but to have a chance to go in person is such an incredible eye-opener. It makes the Bible so real.”

Upon returning home and not knowing what steps to take, the Alfonsi’s called their group of local pilgrims. Each person knew they needed to do something to curb the tide of emigration. The pilgrims brainstormed ideas and [Cradling Christianity](#) was born.

Their first fundraising dinner event was held in May 2006, where Fr. Peter spoke about life in the Holy Land. Since then, Cradling Christianity has hosted 14 consecutive years of annual fundraising dinners. Unfortunately, the 2020 and 2021 events were canceled due to COVID-19.

Notable Success

It is largely due to the efforts of the grassroots group of individual donors that Cradling Christianity has enjoyed so much success. To date, Cradling Christianity has raised over \$1 million for Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land. Cradling Christianity has also sponsored numerous scholarship students through FFHL’s University Scholarship Program over the years.

Of the original group of founding members, sadly three have since passed away, and only a handful are still active on the committee. Previous chairs Don and Monica Brown, Chuck and Ardith Mers, Charles and Venetia Bramlage, Russ and Pat Howard with Gene and Judy played an integral part in the overall success of Cradling Christianity through their gift of time, talent and treasure. Gene has also devoted his support to FFHL as a Board Member since 2010, and currently serves on the finance committee.

The Alfonsis are excited to welcome Dee and Kris Pellissier as co-chairs for the next fundraising dinner. The Pellissiers become the sixth chairs since the organization’s founding. The Pellissiers have also had the privilege of attending a pilgrimage with Fr. Peter F. Vasko and have been touched first-hand by that experience.

If you are interested in learning more about our mission, joining an upcoming pilgrimage, or finding out how you can help stem the Christian exodus in the Holy Land, please email Shawn Lurie at slurie@ffhl.org.



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

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PILGRIMAGE REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY STARTS HERE
VISIT THE HOLY LAND



Fall Pilgrimage: Nov 27 - Dec 7, 2022

Elevate your faith to the next level on a life-changing journey through the Holy Land. Join us on our upcoming Fall Pilgrimage. Reserve your space today. Individual and group reservations available.

(*Due to evolving government mandates and restrictions, travel dates are subject to change.)

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

We Want To Hear From You!

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

~ SHARE WITH US ~



GIVING INCENTIVES FOR YOUR INDIVIDUAL RETIREMENT ACCOUNT

When considering the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), there are a few important things to consider:

- ✦ Donating your RMD to a 501(c)3 is a great opportunity to increase your charitable giving and avoid heavy taxation on any amount not withdrawn. If you have an employer-sponsored retirement plan and are at the age of 72, you will have a RMD.
- ✦ Donating IRA funds you do not need is a great way to expand your philanthropic support of a cause that has personal meaning to you. RMD funds, up to \$100,000, that are donated to a charity will not be included in your taxable income.
- ✦ Calculate your RMD in advance and decide how much you are planning to donate. Once you have given your gift, make sure to include your donation on a relevant tax document when you file for your annual taxes. Planning and staying abreast of evolving tax code changes will not only provide tax benefits but will allow you to expand your charitable giving portfolio.

We are thinking of our family of supporters during these times of uncertainty and want you to know that we appreciate you. We know this is a challenging time for many people. It continues to be challenging for us too, yet we will continue pressing forward in our work and mission to preserve the Living Stones of the Holy Land. If you would like to speak to us about gift planning strategies, we are here to help.

Disclaimer: This information is provided as a public service to highlight a matter of current interest. It is not intended to constitute a full review of any subject matter, nor is it a substitute for obtaining financial or legal advice from an accountant or financial advisor, or an attorney. Information contained within was accurate at the time of publication on December 6, 2021.

Source: "Donating Your IRA Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) to Charity by <https://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=content.view&cpid=9221>"





2021

UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS

AWARDS

FFHL.ORG/PROGRAMS/EDUCATIONAL-PROGRAMS/UNIVERSITY-SCHOLARSHIPS/



Through your generosity, FFHL is holding the doors of educational opportunity open for the Christian community in the Holy Land.

Help extend an olive branch for:

- » Masters and Bachelors Equivalent
- » Associates Equivalent
- » Vocational Programs
- » Technical Programs
- » Continued Education

THE PROGRAM

Since 1997, FFHL has given full, 4-year university scholarships to over 615 students who were economically marginalized but had strong academic talent. With specific guidelines to protect your investment, the scholarship program pays for 4 years of college tuition and books.

THE GOAL

This program provides academic scholarships to talented but underprivileged Christian students with high initiative and a desire to remain in the Holy Land, thus giving them the necessary skills for successful employment and stability needed to thrive.

We thank all of our sponsors for their continued dedication to these students. Learn about how you can become a sponsor today!



“Education will be the key in keeping our young people in the Holy land.” –Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

Preserving THE LIVING STONES OF
CHRISTIANITY IN THE *Holy Land*

LEARN MORE

FFHL.ORG/PROGRAMS



**CHARITY
NAVIGATOR**

★★★★★

Four Star Charity



2021

UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS

AWARDS

FFHL.ORG/PROGRAMS/EDUCATIONAL-PROGRAMS/UNIVERSITY-SCHOLARSHIPS/

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS B.A



Christine Abu Jaghab - She resides in Ramallah, a suburb of Jerusalem with her parents. She will be attending Hebrew University in Jerusalem and majoring in Science. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Haya Akawi - She lives with her parents and one younger sibling in Nazareth. She will be attending Tel Aviv University and pursuing a degree in the field of the Arts. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Hazar Abu Akeh - She lives with her parents in Bethlehem and will be attending Bethlehem University, majoring in English Literature. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Daniela Anastas - She lives with her parents and three younger siblings in Bethlehem. She is planning to attend Birzeit University in Jerusalem and major in the field of Architectural Engineering. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Munir Abdallah Atallah - He lives with his parents and one younger sibling in Jerusalem. He will be attending Azrieli College of Engineering and pursuing a degree in Mechanical Engineering. **His sponsor is FFHL.**



Khader Bandak - He lives in Bethlehem with his parents and one younger sibling. He will be attending Bir Zeit University in Jerusalem and majoring in Software Engineering. **His sponsor is FFHL.**



Stavroula Bazazo - She lives in Jerusalem with her parents and two younger siblings. She is planning to attend the Jerusalem Academy of Music at Hebrew University and majoring in Performing Arts. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Kareen N. Edbaya - She lives in Cana in Galilee with her parents and two younger siblings. She will be attending Hebrew University and will be majoring in Medicine. She is the recipient of the Candace Tara Eoff Scholarship. **Her sponsor is Mr. Richard Kelly of Dallas, Texas.**



Maria Eideh - She lives with her parents in Jerusalem and is planning to attend American University of Madaba, Jordan and majoring in the field of Science. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Leann Elias - She lives with her parents and two younger siblings in Bethlehem. She is planning to attend Bethlehem University and major in Nursing. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Aspina Emerzian - She lives in Jerusalem with her parents and three younger siblings. She will be attending Hebrew University and wishes to major in Education. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Merail Ewies - She lives in Jerusalem with her parents and two young siblings. She will be attending Abu Dis University. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Selina Gharo - She lives with her parents and one younger sibling in Jerusalem. She plans to attend Bethlehem University and study English Literature. **Her sponsors are Mr. and Mrs. A. Schwertner from Armarillo, Texas.**



Fadi Ghattas - He lives with his parents and one younger sibling in Bethlehem. He is planning to attend Bir Zeit University in Jerusalem and majoring in the field of Engineering and Technology. **His sponsor is FFHL.**



Ellen Habash - She lives with her parents and younger sister in Beit Jala, a suburb of Bethlehem. She plans to attend An Najah National University in Nablus, Palestine and to major in Computer Science. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Therese Hadid - She lives in Jaffa, a suburb of Tel Aviv, with her parents and two siblings. She will be attending Tel Aviv University and majoring in Arts and Education. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Maria Ishaq - She lives with her parents and two younger siblings in Jerusalem. She is planning to attend Hebrew University and majoring in Dentistry. **Her sponsors are Mr. and Mrs. John R. Landon of Dallas, Texas.**



Sireen Kasabre - She lives in Akko, Galilee, with her parents and one sibling. She will be attending Haifa University and majoring in Humanities. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Emily N. Kassichie - She lives with her parents in Jerusalem and is planning to attend Hebrew University to study Engineering. **Her sponsor is the Robert Matejek Family Foundation in Dallas, Texas.**



Jesiella Khalil - She resides in Jerusalem with her parents and younger sibling. She is planning to attend Al Quds University in Jerusalem to study Medicine. **Her sponsor is M&M Group from Venice, Florida.**



2021

UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS

AWARDS

FFHL.ORG/PROGRAMS/EDUCATIONAL-PROGRAMS/UNIVERSITY-SCHOLARSHIPS/

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS B.A



Lamar J. Khamashta - She lives with her parents and two younger siblings in Jerusalem. She is planning to attend Hebrew University and major in Computer Science. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Nicole Khoury - She lives with her parents and one younger sibling in Jerusalem. She will be attending Hebrew University and studying Criminology. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Celina Kouba - She lives with her parents and one sibling in Jerusalem. She will be attending Hebrew University and majoring in Chemistry. **Her sponsor is Mr. William Keifer of Georgetown, Texas.**



Maria Mansour - She lives with her parents and two younger siblings in Bethlehem. She will be attending Bethlehem University and majoring in Science. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Shada Mansour - She lives with her parents and one sibling in Nazareth. She is planning to attend Hadassah College in Jerusalem and pursue a degree in the field of Behavioral Sciences. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Maram Marjeh - She lives with her parents and younger sibling in Jaffa/Nazareth. She is planning to attend Ariel University and study Humanities/Social Sciences. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Dima Marjeh - She lives with her parents and one younger sibling in Jaffa/Nazareth. She plans to attend Nedanga College and pursue a degree in Law. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Luna Massou - She lives with her parents and one younger sibling in Jerusalem. She will be attending Jordan University of Science and Technology and majoring in Medicine. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Mina Mina - He lives with his parents and two younger siblings in Jerusalem. He is planning to attend Hebrew University and will be majoring in Veterinary Medicine. **His sponsor is FFHL.**



Henry Abu Mohor - He lives with his parents in Bethlehem and will be attending Al-Quds University in Jerusalem. He will be majoring in Medicine. **His sponsor is Mr. William Keifer of Georgetown, Texas.**



Kira Mousallam - She lives with her parents and three younger siblings in Bethlehem. She will be attending Bethlehem University as a Psychology major. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Gabriel Rofa - He lives with his parents and two other siblings in Jerusalem. He is planning to attend the Interdisciplinary Center/College in Herzliya and pursue a degree in Communications. **His sponsor is FFHL.**



Jeries Rofa - He lives with his parents in Jerusalem and plans to attend Hebrew University and study Information Technology. **His sponsor is Mr. William Keifer of Georgetown, Texas.**



George Abu Said - He lives with his parents and one younger sibling in Jerusalem. He will be attending Azmieli College of Engineering in Jerusalem. **His sponsors are Mr. and Mrs. Frank Skalaf of Massillon, Ohio.**



Katrina Abdallah Salameh - She resides in Jerusalem with her parents and a younger sibling. She will be attending Hebrew University in Jerusalem and majoring in Engineering. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Angela Salem - She lives with her parents and two younger siblings in Bethlehem. She is planning to attend Bethlehem University and majoring in Science. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Antoinette Srouji - She lives in Jerusalem with her parents and two brothers. She is planning to attend Hebrew University and majoring in Mathematics. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Elias Tabban - He lives with his parents in Jaffa. He is planning to attend The Academic College in Tel Aviv and major in Management of Human Resources. **His sponsor is FFHL.**



George Terazi - He lives in Ramleh, a suburb of Jerusalem, with his parents and two younger siblings. He is planning to attend Tel Aviv University as a Psychology major. **His sponsor is Mr. Patrick Carney of San Antonio, Texas.**



Maria Al Youssef - She lives with her parents and two younger siblings in Jerusalem. She is planning to attend Al-Quds University in Jerusalem and will be majoring in Pharmacy. **Her sponsor is Mr. William Keifer from Georgetown, Texas.**



2021

UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS

AWARDS

FFHL.ORG/PROGRAMS/EDUCATIONAL-PROGRAMS/UNIVERSITY-SCHOLARSHIPS/

GRADUATE STUDENTS M.A.



Nura Araman Abu Sada - She resides in Jerusalem. She finished her B.A. in Social Work at Hebrew University in 2019. She is now planning to secure her M.A. in Social Work/Clinical. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**



Shahd Basil - She resides in Beit Jala, a suburb of Jerusalem. She finished her B.A. in Business Administration at Bethlehem University in December 2018. She is now planning to secure her M.A. in International Cooperation and Development at Bethlehem University. **Her sponsor is FFHL.**

THE **AVERAGE YEARLY COST** TO ATTEND COLLEGE IN THE HOLY LAND IS **\$6,000**, COMPARED TO **\$34,000** IN THE UNITED STATES.
(2018 STATISTIC)

IN THE 1950'S, INDIGENOUS CHRISTIANS REPRESENTED 25% OF THE POPULATION.

TODAY, **CHRISTIANS ACCOUNT FOR LESS THAN 2% OF THE HOLY LAND POPULATION.**



WE BELIEVE THAT OUR **UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP** PROGRAM IS THE CORNERSTONE OF **THE SOLUTION.**

MOST POPULAR FIELDS OF STUDY

- ⊕ Business Admin
- ⊕ Engineering
- ⊕ Accounting
- ⊕ Law
- ⊕ Medicine
- ⊕ Pharmacy

CONGRATULATIONS!

Thanks to our loyal sponsors and generous community, FFHL awarded **42 University scholarships in 2021**. We are proud of our students and their dedication to building a future locally, and helping preserve Christianity in the Holy Land.

42
AWARDED
SCHOLARSHIPS

40
UNDERGRAD/
B.A.

2
GRADUATE/
M.A.

11
FAMILY/GROUP
SPONSORED

31
FFHL FUND
SPONSORED

THE PROBLEM

Due to severe political and economic hardships, an estimated 300 Christian families leave the Holy Land each year. This steady emigration suggests that one day the Christian community and church may cease to exist in this part of the world. As the Christian population struggles to thrive, oftentimes survive, FFHL uses every available resource to connect Christians with jobs, education, housing, and other opportunities.

THE SOLUTION

One of the pillars of FFHL's mission is to support access to education for young people. Without the assistance from generous scholarship donors, these deserving young scholars would have no ability to earn a marketable university degree and obtain a secure job. Over the last 21 years, FFHL has given over \$15 million in both university scholarships and special educational grants to Christian students. The current graduation rate is 97%, and to-date, *only one graduate has relocated away from the Holy Land.*



WORK WITH US TO BUILD UP MINDS, LIVES, AND HOPES IN THE HOLY LAND.

Call or Email Today! (855) 500-3345 (FFHL) | info@ffhl.org
Or start your pledge online at:

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