



FRANCISCAN FOUNDATION FOR THE HOLY LAND NEWSLETTER

SPRING 57

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CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF HOLY LAND IMPACT

This year marks the 30th Anniversary of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL). For three decades, FFHL has remained committed to its mission, making a significant impact in the Holy Land.

FFHL has undertaken a remarkable mission, responding to the urgent need to safeguard the Christian presence in the Holy Land amid challenging political and economic circumstances. Established in 1994, the nonprofit organization began its work by addressing the root causes of Christians leaving the Holy Land, seeking to understand and directly address these challenges.

Under the leadership of President Fr. Peter F. Vasko, OFM, FFHL underwent a significant expansion over the last 30 years, creating opportunities for young Christians and families to live and remain in the Holy Land.

In its early years, FFHL recognized the critical role of education as a catalyst for positive change. This realization led to the inception of the University Scholarship Program, a groundbreaking initiative that, to date, has awarded scholarship funding towards college education to more than 650 students. This program not only provides higher education for the youth but also focuses on breaking the cycle of economic instability faced by the Christian community, with more than 94% securing professional employment as a result of this investment in their future.



"What a milestone it has been... 30 years in helping to preserve the Christian presence in the Holy Land at a time when many young Christians were leaving the country because of political and economic factors."

FR. PETER F. VASKO, OFM

In addition to its education programs, FFHL created several humanitarian and housing programs that have been instrumental in enabling Christians to secure professional employment and find safe, affordable housing.

(Continue on page 2)

OUR MISSION

The Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land is dedicated to supporting and preserving the Christian community and heritage in the Holy Land. Our mission is to provide essential resources and opportunities to families, empowering them to thrive in their ancestral homeland. Through our unwavering commitment to preserving holy Christian sites and supporting basic human rights, we aim to be a vital resource for the community. Our donor-based humanitarian programs and independent projects are designed to help Christian families not just survive, but flourish.

A LETTER FROM THE CUSTOS

Rev. Francesco Patton, OFM

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

My prayers are with you during these challenging times. Despite the difficulties we all face, my hope is that you will continue to deepen your connection with God, discover His plans for you and strengthen your faith. May the fresh beginnings of spring bring you a renewed sense of purpose as you seek to love and serve others in new and meaningful ways.



This year, the Holy Sites remain quiet, and the streets of our city are still empty due to the ongoing conflict. Let us take a moment to think about our fellow Christians in the Holy Land who are facing hardships because of the war. We can support them through prayer and fasting. They long for the days when pilgrims will return to bring life back to our city.

In John 1:5, we are reminded that "Light shines in the darkness." Our faith assures us that even in the darkest moments, the light of Christ remains with us.

I am deeply grateful for your prayers and assistance, which play such an important role in sustaining Christianity in the Holy Land. Let us reflect on the love shown to us through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and count our blessings. Together, we can be a source of hope and renewal for our world.

Yours in the Spirit of St. Francis,



Rev. Francesco Patton, OFM
Chairman of FFHL
Custos of the Holy Land

Support from donors like you is vital to everything we do, and we deeply appreciate your commitment to our cause.



"I thank our Lord for his divine providence in selecting all the individuals who have made this foundation such a success."

FR. PETER F. VASKO, OFM

Without your generosity, we simply could not continue our mission to serve the Holy Land communities, preserve sacred sites and support those in need. Thank you for standing with us and making our work possible.

ARCHBISHOP PIERRE, SPECIAL ADVISOR TO FFHL, APPOINTED CARDINAL

Archbishop Christophe Pierre's recent appointment as Cardinal marks a significant milestone in his ministry within the Catholic Church. Known for his dedication to compassion and service, Archbishop Pierre has served as the Vatican's representative in the United States since 2016. His new role as Cardinal means that he will be playing a central role in leading the Church.



Cardinal Christophe Pierre, Papal Nuncio to the U.S. and Spec Advisor to the FFHL

Cardinal Pierre's kindness and wisdom have earned him respect, and many look forward to the positive impact he will continue to have on the global Catholic community. This appointment is not just a personal achievement for Cardinal Pierre but also a moment for the Church to celebrate, demonstrating his ongoing dedication to the important beliefs of the Catholic faith.

As Cardinal Christophe Pierre embarks on this new chapter, Catholics worldwide are joining together in support and prayer, confident that his leadership will bring inspiration and hope to the church's mission of spreading love and compassion.

CUSTOS OF THE HOLY LAND PRESENTS SPECIAL RECOGNITION



At a local reception at the Franciscan Curia in Jerusalem, Fr. Francesco Patton, OFM, Custos of the Holy Land and Chairman of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land, presented a special recognition to Fr. Peter F. Vasko, OFM, President of FFHL. It reads as follows:

"For his visionary leadership and unwavering commitment that has made a profound impact on the lives of countless individuals, fostering peace, understanding, and preservation of the sacred heritage in the region."

BERNIE AND FRANK SKALAK SHARE WHY THEY SUPPORT UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS

What inspired you to become sponsors of FFHL's University Scholarship Program?

Bernie went to Catholic grade school and grew up as “cradle Catholics” with our parents devout and practicing the Catholic faith. However, we were humbled by everything we learned on our first pilgrimage in 2017. We had the privilege of having Mass in the Edicule and at the site of Christ’s birth and traveled to many other sites of Christ’s ministry during our pilgrimage.

We also saw a Holy Land with many problems from the wall around Jerusalem to all the security checkpoints to the limited opportunities for stable employment without education. We have always thought education was very important (maybe much to our kids’ chagrin). We told our four children that they should use their God given talents and challenge themselves to do their best. So, it was a natural fit for us to want to support an educational need. We studied the FFHL website and learned about the options available to sponsor University students.

Tell us about the students you’ve sponsored?

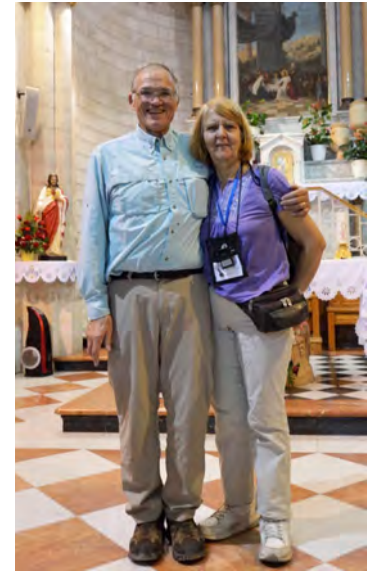
We have sponsored three university students with one each year starting with the 2021-2022 school year. We received photos of all of our students, general information on their families and the areas of study that interest them. This helped us to visualize and become more familiar with them. The three students are still in school. We hope they stay safe and can continue their education with all the problems currently going on. One of the students made a very nice video thanking us for supporting her education. We hope to hear from them when they reach their educational goals.

What’s the most meaningful part of supporting Christian students in the Holy Land?

We think it is always good to support education and hopefully this will lead to a stable Christian community. It would be a real tragedy to not have a Christian community in the place where Christ was born, preached, died and rose.

What would you say to someone to encourage them to become a sponsor?

Put your money where your mouth is. You can’t support your fellow Christians with just lip service and prayer. We need to see that prayers are answered for the Christians by supporting them monetarily to help them to stay in the Holy Land. Hopefully this will strengthen the community so that they are better able to be completely self-sustaining in the future.



Frank and Bernie Skalak visiting a church while on a pilgrimage in the Holy Land.



FATHER PETER ANNOUNCES THE FRANCISCAN RELIEF FUND

It has been nearly half a year since the war between Israel and Hamas began. During this time of great suffering, many have lost their jobs in the West Bank, especially in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. As the region’s pilgrimages have come to a halt, the tourism industry has also collapsed. Cooks, waiters, hotel staff and retail workers supporting tourism have all found themselves without the means to pay rent and feed their families.

The need is great. Father Peter F. Vasko, President of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land is asking for your prayers and support: “Please help us so we can assist the Christians caught in the conflict. Please pray that peace, healing and reconciliation are restored in the Holy Land. Thank you for your faithful support.” Please scan the QR code below to view Father Peter’s full message.

To learn more about how you can make a direct impact for those affected by the crisis in the Holy Land, scan the QR code, or visit ffhl.org/humanitarian-aid.



VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM SUPPORTS DREAMS OF DESERVING STUDENTS

FFHL's commitment to Christians in the Holy Land extends beyond traditional educational scholarships for students studying at universities. The Vocational and Technical Education Program offers vital support for a two-year training curriculum in trade careers, covering tuition and materials. These programs offer Christians who want to become electricians, carpenters, auto mechanics, plumbers, telecommunications experts, or even chefs and cosmeticians a pathway to sustainable and meaningful employment. Students study at two-year vocational and technical schools such as the Notre Dame School of Cooking and the Lutheran World Federation Vocational Training Center in Jerusalem.

Many of the students who receive funding would not otherwise be able to afford to attend these schools on their own. The success of the program is evident by nearly 90% of our graduates working in their fields. In addition to teaching skills, the program creates a feeling of connection and belonging among Christians in the Holy Land. By supporting and elevating these communities, investing in vocational education not only gives young people practical abilities but also enhances their relationships and understanding within the diverse Holy Land. Since the program started in 2005, 309 students have received support from the vocational training fund which includes 13 students in 2023.



Technician trade school students learning to repair and assemble computers.



Culinary school students learning to make homemade pasta.

Below is a thank you letter from one of our students who received a vocational scholarship from FFHL and is now gratefully employed as a dental technician.

Dear FFHL,

I am writing this letter to thank you for the scholarship award as it has helped me a lot, and I truly appreciate it. Thank you so much for your generosity. It is a privilege to be chosen for this scholarship that has helped me pay for the tuition for my major as a dental technician. Without your help, I would not have been able to pursue a career as a dental technician.

Thank you once again for your support.

Sincerely, Elie Mansour

FIVE WAYS TO TURN YOUR TAX RETURN INTO HOPE

Tax season is upon us, offering an opportunity to consider how to use your tax return for positive impact. Whether through charitable donations, volunteering or supporting local businesses, there are numerous ways to give back.

Legacy giving, also known as planned giving, involves donating to nonprofit organizations through wills, trusts or estate planning. It enables individuals to support causes they care about even after their passing, ensuring the sustainability of charitable work for future generations.

There are several different types of planned gifts and ways to use our tax returns to benefit nonprofits.

Bequests

A bequest is a gift made through a will or trust, allowing the donor to designate a specific dollar amount, percentage of their estate or asset to a chosen charity. It can be revocable, permitting the donor to alter or revoke it as desired.

Charitable Remainder Trusts

A charitable remainder trust offers income to the donor for a set time, with remaining assets directed to a chosen charity upon the donor's passing or the trust's conclusion.

Charitable Lead Trusts

A charitable lead trust provides income to a charity for a designated period, with remaining assets returned to the donor or their heirs when the trust term concludes.

Life Insurance

A donor can designate a charity as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy, or donate an unneeded policy and receive a tax deduction for its cash value.

SCHOLARSHIP SPOTLIGHT: ZAKI SAHLIA

FFHL's University Scholarship Program has changed student Zaki Sahlia's life for the better. Facing adversity in the Christian Holy Land, Zaki was determined to complete a degree in higher education. With the support of our donors, he accessed opportunities that helped him grow personally and academically.

Zaki shares the below letter of gratitude for the life-changing opportunities that his university scholarship afforded him. If you're interested in supporting Holy Land Christian student education, please contact info@ffhl.org.

Dear FFHL,

I am Zaki Sahlia, a former beneficiary of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land scholarships and presently working as an attorney. My upbringing was in a Christian household in Jaffa/Tel-Aviv, alongside my four siblings. We were regular attendees at the Franciscan Parish of St. Anthony's in Jaffa, and I received my education at the Terra Santa School there.

At the age of 13, a significant turning point occurred when my father suffered a stroke, rendering him unable to work. This tragic event had a profound impact on our family, leading my mother to enter the workforce to support our education, basic needs, and more.

During this challenging period, the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land came to our aid, providing crucial financial assistance for our school tuition. I will forever be grateful for their support.

Subsequently, with the help of an FFHL scholarship, I pursued higher education at Hebrew University, earning a BS.C in Chemistry in 2008. The FFHL continued to support my academic journey, enabling me to attain an LLB law degree in 2012 and an LLM degree in 2014.

Following my graduation, I served as a teacher in Terra Santa schools and completed a law internship at a prominent Israeli firm. Currently, I hold the position as head of the endowment and property department at the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and serve as the Legal advisor of the assembly of the ordinaries in the Holy Land.

Living as a Christian in Jerusalem has its joys, surrounded by the sacred sites where Jesus walked, performed miracles and rose from the dead. However, Christians in the Holy Land face unique challenges due to political turmoil. Despite adversity, the local Christians remain steadfast in their faith, finding hope in their existence through education and employment opportunities.

Opening my own private law firm specializing in real estate and property management in Jerusalem was a dream come true, made possible by the support of FFHL. I appreciate the Franciscan Friars for their continuous efforts in ministry development, aiding those in need, promoting education and empowering Christians.

I express heartfelt gratitude to FFHL and its generous donors for providing the support that allowed me to stay in the Holy Land and lead a life centered on Christ. The assistance given to young Christians for college education is a priceless gift, promoting professional growth and strengthening our faith in the homeland of Christ.

Thank you once again for making a significant impact on my life and the lives of many others.

Forever grateful, Zaki Sahlia



Zaki Sahlia standing in front of the doors of his own law firm in Jerusalem.

Tax Benefits of Planned Giving

Planned giving offers donors significant tax benefits. Contributions to charities can yield a tax deduction for the full value of the gift, reducing both income tax liability and estate taxes.

For instance, a \$100,000 bequest could save heirs up to \$40,000 in estate taxes at a 40% rate. Additionally, donors can benefit from charitable gift annuities, receiving a fixed income for life while enjoying tax advantages.

By making a planned gift, individuals can also receive significant tax benefits, which can reduce their income tax liability and lower their estate taxes.

For personalized guidance on making a planned gift to the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL), consult an estate planning professional. They'll assist in selecting the right gift type and ensure proper documentation. For more information on planned giving, visit ffhlegacy.org.

Note: This document offers general information and not tax advice. Please consult a qualified tax professional for tailored advice.



UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

2023

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, four-year university scholarships to over 640 students who were economically marginalized but had strong academic talent. With specific guidelines to protect your investment, the scholarship program pays for four 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 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



UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS B.A.



Afram Abel-Ahad – Lives in Bethlehem with his parents and two younger siblings. He will be attending Al Quds University and majoring in Medicine. **His sponsor is Mr. Robert Matejek of Dallas, TX.**



Beatrice Aleasa – Resides in Ramleh with her mother. She will be attending Hadassa Academic College and majoring in Optometry. **Her sponsors are Mr. & Mr. David Yost of Dallas, TX.**



Ghassan Al-Tawil – Lives in Bethlehem with his parents and one younger sibling. He will be attending Bethlehem University and majoring in Business Administration. **His sponsors are Mr. & Mrs. James Einspani of Dallas, TX.**



Nicolas Asfour – Lives with his parents and three younger siblings in Jerusalem. He will be majoring in Nursing at Hebrew University. **His sponsors are Mr. & Mrs. Richard Stanzel of Dallas, TX.**



Ayman Awwad – Lives with his parents and one younger sibling in Bethlehem. He will be studying Medicine at Al-Quds University. **His sponsor is Cradling Christianity out of Columbus, OH.**



Lourdes Azar – Resides in Bethlehem with her parents and two younger siblings. She will be attending Al Quds University and majoring in Science-Mathematics. **Her sponsors are Mr. & Mrs. Skalak of Massillon, OH.**



Andrew Bazazo – Resides in Jerusalem with his parents and one younger sibling. He is planning to attend Hadassah Academic College and majoring in Computer Science. **His sponsor is Mr. Robert Matejek of Dallas, TX.**



Joe Batto – Resides in Jerusalem with his parents and four younger siblings. He will be attending Bethlehem University and majoring in Physio-Therapy. **Sponsored by the estate of Helen Mary Bernard.**



Talin Burbar – Resides with her mother and two younger siblings. She is majoring in Financial Management at Atid Becan Technology College. **Sponsored by the estate of Carl Bieniewski.**



Dina Elias – Resides in Bethlehem with her parents and one younger sibling. She will be attending Bethlehem University and majoring in Business Administration. **Her sponsors are Mr. & Mrs. B. Murchison of Dallas, TX.**



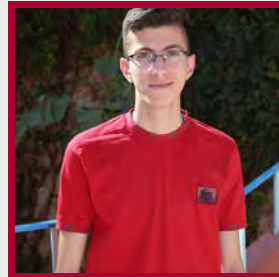
Nasri Geday – Resides in Jaffa with his parents and two younger siblings. He will be majoring in Civil and Environmental Engineering at Technion University. **His sponsors are Mr. & Mrs. H. Longwell of Dallas, TX.**



Angela Abu Gharfeh – Lives in Jerusalem with her parents and four younger siblings. She plans to attend Hadassah College and major in Psychology. **Her sponsor is Mr. Richard Kelly of Dallas, TX.**



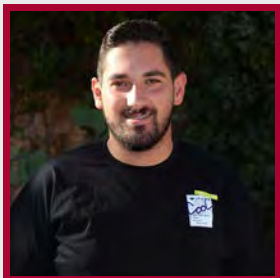
Antonio Giacaman – Resides in Bethlehem with his parents. He is planning to attend Al Quds University and major in Medicine. **His sponsors are Mr. & Mrs. B. Murchison of Dallas, TX.**



Cizar Haddad – Resides in Jerusalem. He is planning to attend Birzeit University and major in Law. **His sponsor is Mr. Richard Kelly of Dallas, TX.**



Joyce Hanania – Lives in Bethlehem with her parents and two younger siblings. She is planning to attend the University of Jordan and major in Psychology. **Her sponsor is Dr. Crystal Kronenberger of Dallas, TX.**



Ivan Hazboun – Resides in Bethlehem with his parents and one younger sibling. He will be attending Birzeit University and majoring in Engineering. **His sponsor is Cradling Christianity out of Columbus, OH.**



Georgette Husary – Resides in Ramallah with her parents. She plans to attend Birzeit University with a major in Commerce and Economics. **Her sponsor is Mr. William Keifer of Georgetown, TX.**



Jiries Jaqaman – Resides in Bethlehem with his parents and one younger sibling. He will be attending Bethlehem University and majoring in Business Administration. **His sponsors are Mr. & Mrs. John J. Stephens of Dallas, TX.**



Shireen Jildeh – Resides with her parents and two younger siblings in Jerusalem. She will be attending Hebrew University and majoring in Business. **Sponsored by the estate of Stanley Borowski.**



Nairy Kassabian – Lives with her parents and one younger sibling. She will be attending Hebrew University and majoring in Business and Social Work. **Sponsored by the estate of Rev. Michael J. Chonko.**



Ameen Khader – Lives with his parents and one younger sibling. He will be attending Hebrew University and majoring in Law. **His sponsors are Mr. & Mrs. William Sladek of Dallas, TX.**



Aml Khoury – Resides in Galilee with her parents and one younger sibling. She will be attending Safad College and majoring in Social Work. **Her sponsors are the 2022 Holy Land Pilgrims of FL.**



Lour Khoury – Resides in Jerusalem with her parents. She will be attending Tel Aviv University and majoring in Law. **Her sponsors are Mr. & Mrs. D. Walo of Dallas, TX.**



Marian Khoury – Lives with her parents and one younger sibling. She will be majoring in Computer Science at Hebrew University. **Her sponsors are St. Mary's 2023 Holy Land Pilgrims out of Plantersville, TX.**



Tala Khoury – Resides in Jerusalem with her parents and two younger siblings. She will be attending Al Quds University and her major is Medicine. **Her sponsors are Mr. & Mrs. Matt Kramer and Mr. & Mrs. David Martinez of Dallas, TX.**



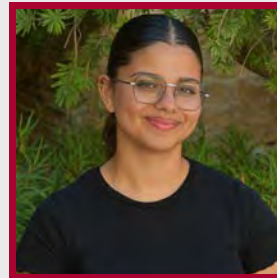
Nicole Kort – Resides in Jerusalem with her parents and one younger sibling. She will be attending Hebrew University and majoring in International Relations. **Sponsored by the estate of John C. Druding.**



Josef Lion – Resides in Haifa with his parents and one younger sibling. He will be attending Ort Brandon University and majoring in Civil Engineering. **Sponsored by the estate of Michael J. Eivers.**



Christine Mattia – Resides with her parents in Jerusalem. She will be majoring in Occupational Therapy at Bethlehem University. **Sponsored by the estate of Palma Farr.**



Leen Mina – Resides with her parents and three younger siblings. She will be attending Hebrew University and majoring in Accounting. **Her sponsors are Mr. & Mrs. G. Braun of Dallas, TX.**



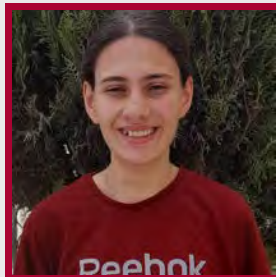
Jovita Mitri – Resides in Jerusalem with her parents and two younger siblings. She plans to major in Engineering at Azrieli College of Engineering. **Her sponsor is Cradling Christianity of Columbus, OH.**



Lamar Mogannam – Resides in Jerusalem with her parents and two younger siblings. She will be attending Al Quds University and her major will be Medicine. **Her sponsors are Dr. & Mrs. Luis Arango, Mr. & Mrs. Victor Arias, and Mr. & Mrs. Mauricio Delgado.**



Viola Musleh – Resides with her parents in Bethlehem. She will be attending Al Quds University and majoring in Dentistry. **Her sponsor is Mr. William Keifer of Georgetown, TX.**



Sarah Sabagh – Lives in Ramallah with her parents and three younger siblings. She will be attending Birzeit University and majoring in Engineering. **Sponsored by the estate of Raphael Hellmann.**



Jeries Saeed – Lives in Jerusalem with his parents and two younger siblings. He is planning to attend Al Quds University and major in Medicine. **His sponsor is Mr. William Keifer of Georgetown, TX.**



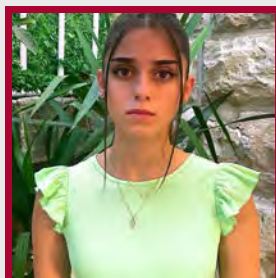
Nasri Al-Sayeh – Resides in Bethlehem with his sister. He will be attending Bethlehem University and will be majoring in Medical and Lab Tech. **His sponsors are Dr. Jeff & Dr. Mayra Thompson of Dallas, TX.**



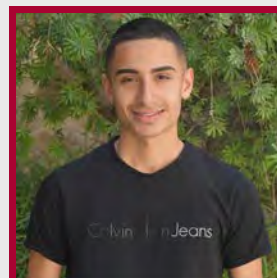
Anita Shio – Resides with her parents and one younger sibling in Bethlehem. She will be attending Bethlehem University and majoring in Nursing. **Sponsored by the estate of Anna J. Kunke.**



Rose Smerat – Resides in Jenin with her parents and two younger siblings. She plans to attend the Arab American University and major in Dentistry. **Sponsored by the estate of Manuel Linan.**



Maya Stavridi – Resides in Jerusalem with her parents. She will be attending Bethlehem University and majoring in Business Administration. **Sponsored by the estate of Margaret McElroy.**



Zahi Tadros – Resides with his parents in Jerusalem. He will be majoring in Dentistry at the Arab American University. **Sponsored by the estate of Edmund Morelle.**



Fareed Taweel – Resides in Jerusalem with his parents and two younger siblings. He will be attending Hebrew University and majoring in Engineering. **His sponsors are Mr. & Mrs. Pat Thompson of Dallas, TX.**

GRADUATE STUDENTS M.A.



Nathalie Batarseh – Resides in Jerusalem. She finished her B.A. in the field of Law in June 2021 at Birzeit University. She is now planning to secure her M.A. in Civil Law at Hebrew University.
Sponsored by the estate of Richard J. Noel.



Elsa Qumsieh – Resides in Beit-Sahour. She finished her B.A. in the field of Nursing at Bethlehem University November 2020. She is now planning to secure her M.A. in Critical Care at Ahlija University.
Sponsored by the estate of Sharon Pfister.



Michael Sinni – Resides in Nazareth. He finished his B.A. in the field of Law and Accounting in 2012 at Tel Aviv University. He is now planning to secure his M.A. in Accounting at Bar-Ilan University.
Sponsored by the estate of Rosemary L. Phelps.



Maroun Tarsha – Resides in Jerusalem. He finished his B.A. in Science Biomedical Engineering in May 2008 from the University of Iowa. He is now planning to secure his M.A. at Hebrew University in Business Administration.
Sponsored by the estate of Clotilda Smith.



Legacy gifts through the Good Shepherd Society provide access to quality higher education for economically-challenged Christian students. Donors who join GSS and make legacy gifts create lasting impacts, helping future generations benefit through faith-centered education and brighter futures.

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

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

CONGRATULATIONS

Thanks to our loyal sponsors and generous community, FFHL awarded **44 University scholarships in 2023**. We are proud of our students and their dedication to building a future locally, and helping preserve Christianity in the Holy Land.

44
SCHOLARSHIPS
AWARDED

40
UNDERGRAD,
B.A.

4
GRADUATE,
M.A.

26
FAMILY/GROUP
SPONSORED

18
GSS
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 25 years, FFHL has given over \$15 million in both university scholarships and special educational grants to Christian students. The current graduation rate is 94%, and to-date, only one graduate has relocated away from the Holy Land.

CALL OR EMAIL TODAY! (855) 550-3345 | INFO@FFHL.ORG

OR START YOUR PLEDGE ONLINE AT:

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

2024 EVENTS CALENDAR



MAY 9 *Good Shepherd Society Luncheon*
NAPLES, FL

SEP 7 *Dallas Fundraising Event*
DALLAS, TX

SEP 12 *Cradling Christianity Fundraising Event*
COLUMBUS, OH



Pilgrims praying for peace in Jerusalem on October 10, 2023 following the surprise outbreak of violence in Israel days prior.

With Christians facing unprecedented hardships, FFHL remains committed to upholding basic human rights and promoting peaceful relations through cross-cultural dialogue. Scalzo's insights shed light on the pressing need for solidarity and support as Christians navigate through the complex socio-political landscape of the Holy Land.

To read the complete article, visit angelusnews.com/news/world/la-catholics-israel-hamas-aid/.

FFHL IN THE NEWS

Fr. Peter Vasko Addresses Recent Holy Land Challenges

FFHL President Fr. Peter F. Vasko was recently interviewed by the Catholic Herald of London regarding increasing challenges facing Christians in the Holy Land. The article highlights the significance of the Franciscan legacy and presence in the region, examines the historical origins of the enduring conflict, and discusses ways in which the West can help stem the Christian exodus.

To read the complete article, visit catholicherald.co.uk/developing-struggles-surrounding-the-christians-in-the-holy-land/.



Fr. Peter Vasko, OFM, President of FFHL, discussing the struggles facing Christians in the Holy Land.

FFHL's Efforts for Peace in the Holy Land

Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land's Vice President Denise Scalzo, OFS was featured in an Angelus News article, where she discusses FFHL's mission of preserving the Christian presence in the Holy Land in the midst of multifaceted challenges. Scalzo underscores FFHL's commitment to supplementing income from the Holy Land collection and ensuring the provision of essential humanitarian aid and educational resources that bolster local communities.

In a time marked by escalating struggles and adversity, Scalzo emphasizes the critical importance of supporting grassroots initiatives and organizations actively engaged in the region.

ORLANDO FUNDRAISING DINNER

Last April, the annual Orlando Dinner was held at the Diocesan (Diocese of Orlando) San Pedro Spiritual Development Center in Winter Park, Florida. The dinner was hosted by committee members Hugette and Selim Ayoub, Manijeh Bahrami, Nicholas Degel, Faith Libbe and Tim and Diana Moon.



"We were blessed to have Mass with four priests prior to our dinner in the beautiful chapel (Fr. David Scotchie was one of them). We had a champagne reception with appetizers, followed by dinner and our program with a keynote speech by Fr. Peter F. Vasko, OFM. The majority of the guests were pilgrims that went on pilgrimages with Father Peter over the years or those interested in going on a future pilgrimage. I was pleased to see the many new faces at our dinner!"

FAITH LIBBE



San Pedro Chapel in Winter Park, FL, where Mass was held before dinner



Four priests, including Fr. David Scotchie and Fr. Peter F. Vasko, who presided over Mass



Orlando committee members with the Keynote Speaker, Fr. Peter F. Vasko

YOU ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE HOLY LAND

Thank you for your faithful generosity to the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land. Thanks to your giving, we are able to continue our good work in the Holy Land. We have many areas of need and are grateful for any special contributions to these programs. Thank you for your prayers and gifts that help us continue to support the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

Different Areas You Can Designate Your Donation



EDUCATION

University Scholarships
Technical & Vocational Programs
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Magnificat Music Program



HUMANITARIAN

Children Without Borders
Franciscan Boys Home
Children's Christmas Program in Bethlehem
Job Placement Program
Children's March for Peace
Christian Social Services Support



HOUSING

Housing Renovation & Construction
Subsidized Housing



LEGACY

Good Shepherd Society Legacy Program



OTHER

Maintenance of the Holy Sites (Holy Sepulchre)

All gifts are tax-exempt.

For a full summary of all our programs, scan the QR code, or visit ffhl.org/media and click on **Program Summaries** under 'Brochures'.



GET YOUR KEEPSAKE TODAY

Introducing Our Exclusive Holy Land Bandanas

We are thrilled to introduce our new, exclusive Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land bandanas.

The design highlights many of the Holy Sites and biblical events visited during a pilgrimage in the Holy Land – Church of the Nativity, Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River, Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jesus' Journey with the Cross on Via Dolorosa, Temple Mount, Mount of Beatitudes, and the Sea of Galilee.

These are a great keepsake for those who have previously walked in Jesus' footsteps during a Holy Land pilgrimage. They are also a great reminder of our continued support for Holy Land Christians and the landmarks of Christ's love and ultimate sacrifice for us.

PLACE YOUR ORDER TODAY – FFHL.ORG/BANDANAS



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For exciting updates and events, visit ffhl.org/regions.

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If you haven't already, please take a moment to answer our brief survey.



Scan the QR code or visit surveymonkey.com/r/NL56-FFHL to fill out the survey.