

CUSTODY OF THE HOLY LAND



SUMMARY REPORT

HOLY PLACES

2018/2019

**CUSTODY OF THE HOLY LAND
Order of the Friars Minor**

Summary report 2018/2019

The Custody of the Holy Land, for centuries has been committed to the preservation and revitalization of the Holy Places of Christianity in the Land of Jesus and throughout the Middle East. Among the various objectives of the Franciscan mission, we recall the support and development of the Christian minority that lives there, the preservation and enhancement of archaeological areas and sanctuaries, intervention in emergencies, liturgy in places of worship, apostolic works and assistance to pilgrims. Also for the two-year period 2018/2019, the Franciscan presence in the Holy Land manifested itself through the planning, planning and execution of the following projects and works:

- I. Works aimed at pilgrims
- II. Works aimed at the local community
- III. Other works - Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Rhodes and Kos
- IV. Ordinary salaries of the Custody

The listed works have been realized thanks to various types of economic contributions, firstly the Good Friday Collection, then the fund raising activities of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL) and the Association *Pro Terra Sancta* (ATS), but also through other private and institutional donors, as well as the proceeds from the activities carried out.

Works aimed at pilgrims

Ain Karem: Sanctuary of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist

- Work is underway to renovate the roof of the church of St. John the Baptist which includes the consolidation of the stone vaults
- In the design phase, the church's restoration work suffers from serious static problems
- The archaeological excavation inside the church and the restoration of the sacristy are imminent.
- Completion of the large Crusader hall to allow worship during the ongoing restoration work in the church
- Completion of the renovation of the premises next to the sacristy for the construction of the new parlour.

Ain Karem: Sanctuary of St. John in the desert.

- Work on general maintenance for the reception of pilgrims is underway

Beit Sahour: The Shepherds' Fields

- In the course of planning, the interventions for the conservation and development of the site, a broad intervention that will include new external chapels for celebrations, the redevelopment of the cave, new toilets and infrastructures.

Bethany: Sanctuary of the House of Martha, Mary and Lazarus

- Ongoing restoration and enhancement of the Byzantine and medieval remains of the monastery at Bethany through: recovery of degraded areas; training and employment of 10 young Palestinians for restoration work; support for the entrepreneurial activities of the local women's association; educational project with primary schools to learn about local religious and archaeological sites (supported by ATS).

Bethlehem: Basilica of the Nativity

- Collaboration with the other ecclesial communities present and the Palestinian National Authority for the restoration of the Basilica of the Nativity
- The construction of new benches for the sanctuary of St. Catherine's church is underway
- Renovation of the monastery facade

Bethlehem: Sanctuary of the Milk Grotto

- Remodeling of the complex waterproofing and rearrangement of the external areas for the reception of pilgrims

Bethlehem: Casa Nova, Home for pilgrims

- Completion of the renovation of all 66 rooms, the dining-room, the corridors and the stairs of the Casa Nova
- Replacement of the two elevators for pilgrims

Capernaum: Sanctuary of the Eucharistic Promise

- Completion of the work on the premises for the reception of youth groups and / or low cost pilgrims
- Renewal of the air conditioning and hot water systems of the entire monastery, with the adoption of modern low-consumption systems

Emmaus Qubeibeh: Sanctuary of Saints Simeon and Cleophas

- Renewal of some areas of the monastery to welcome the inter-obediential community

Jericho: Sanctuary of the Good Shepherd

- Restoration of the school stadium
- Creation of 10 new bathrooms
- Creation of a stage for the various school activities
- Creation of 4 new classrooms (including air conditioning, since the temperature in Jericho can reach 50 ° C)
- Renewal of the school library

Jerusalem: Basilica of Gethsemane

- The completion of the Tunnel project and elevators for pilgrim groups to connect the basilica area and the Cedron Valley via a pedestrian pathway
- Completion of the renewal of the hermitages available for hermitical experiences
- In the course of planning: service centre for pilgrims in the Cedron Valley

Jerusalem: Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre of Our Lord

- Implementation of structural consolidation of the rock of the grotto of the Invention of the Holy Cross following instrumental investigations and in-depth analysis

Chapel of the Apparition

- Replacement of the monastery lift/elevator
- Under study in collaboration with the Sapienza University (Rome) and the Venaria Restoration Centre (TO) the restoration of the Basilica's floor and the infrastructures (in agreement with the Greek and Armenian Communities)

Jerusalem: Casa Nova, home for pilgrims

- Completion of the renewal of the two premises purchased recently and now used for exhibitions of local handicraft works (mother-of-pearl and other) and one used as an ice cream parlor / coffee shop
- Renewal of a management office with a permanent exhibition of local crafts

Jerusalem: Parish Centre

- The master plan for the layout of the parish centre spaces is being planned

Jerusalem: Christian Information Centre CIC

- Completion of the restaurant with panoramic views on the building's terrace
- Continuation of the realization of multimedia educational didactic films for pilgrims dedicated to understanding and learning about the Holy Sepulchre

Jerusalem: Christian Media Centre

- Renewal of the editors' offices

Jerusalem: Monastery of St. Saviour

Infirmery

- Replacement of the lift/elevator / bed carrier for the sick

Offices

- Restructuring of the premises to enable moving the Souvenir Shop in view of the realization of the future museum

Monastery

- Renewal of the monastery kitchen
- Renewal of the ground floor of the monastery of the nuns' convent
- General maintenance of the roofs

Jerusalem: Communications Office

- Design of new offices at the Terra Sancta College

Jerusalem: Maria Bambina, Home for Pilgrims

- Reception of around 1500 overnight stays for pilgrims with limited finances

Jerusalem: Sanctuary of the *Dominus Flevit*

- Implementation of an intervention by a master plan for a better reception of pilgrims and visitors to the sanctuary

Jerusalem: Terra Sancta Museum

- Ongoing structural consolidation of the premises that will complete the museum area at the Sanctuary of the Flagellation
- A modern museum centre for the enhancement of the Franciscan artistic, archaeological and cultural heritage is under construction. In the area of about 2500 m² will be included:
 - Archaeological museum: The places of the Bible in Palestine (Monastery of the Flagellation) (Third phase)
 - Historical Museum: The Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land (at the Monastery of St. Saviour)

Monte Nebo (Jordan): Memorial of St. Moses

- Completion the two new chapels to encourage pilgrim celebrations
- A project of the environment to accommodate pilgrims who wish to make retreats

Monte Thabor: Basilica of the Transfiguration

- Completion of the renovation of an external chapel for pilgrims
- In course is the planning of general interventions for the preservation of the site with the creation of a parking area inside the monastery, with a connecting road to the external car park with the internal one having a sidewalk for the disabled and services for pilgrims

Naim: Shrine of the Resurrection of the Widow's Daughter

- Interventions for the opening and development of the site are being planned

Nazareth: Basilica of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

- Restoration and maintenance work for the conservation of the sacred grotto
- Renewal of the air conditioning and hot water systems of the entire monastery, with the adoption of modern low-consumption systems

Ramleh: Sanctuary of St. Joseph of Arimathea

- Completion of the restoration of the bell tower of the sanctuary and of some classrooms

Tabgha: Sanctuary of the Primacy of St. Peter

- The access ramp for disabled pilgrims has been completed

Works aimed at the local community

Works in favour of young people

Bethlehem: Boys' Home

- Home for 27 children including 10 interns in social difficulty
- Renewal of heating system

Scholarships and subsidies

- Financing of 490 university scholarships (225 from the Custody + 265 from the FFHL) for the duration of 4 years, distributed in different universities (Bethlehem, Hebrew University, Bir Zeit, Amman); 178 grants for students in financial difficulty

Support for craft businesses

- Purchase of spare parts, production equipment, aids for securing the activities of 10 small craft activities

Activities for families

Bethlehem

- Continuing are: projects in support of the parish family counseling; the project aimed at more than 20 children (ages 6-12), coming from families in difficulty; medical assistance for families in serious financial difficulties; renovation of homes belonging to the most needy families (supported by FFHL)

Works in favour of parish communities

Bethlehem: Catholic Action

- Extraordinary general maintenance of the bathrooms in the parish swimming-pool area for the use of the local population

Schools

Amman

- Ordinary maintenance work (renovation of the kindergarten kitchen, bathrooms and cleaning of primary school floors)
- Creation of a new robotic teaching laboratory at the nursery and 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade classes. This program will be extended to all the next two years
- Purchases of the e-school educational program using modern means teaching (school management system: which fosters communication between school, parents and the student learning management system that promotes interactive teaching between teachers and students in the classroom and at home)
- The radical restructuring work of the Peace Building built in 1976 is underway

Bethlehem:

- Continuation of the rearrangement of the external basketball court of the school and general painting of the same
- Creation of six classrooms for the professional branch (tailoring, carpentry, electricity laboratory, beauty and beauty branch)

Cana:

- Works for the construction of a new school (structural works completed) are underway. The complex will also include the parish centre and a covered parking of an area of 5000m²

Jericho

- Installation of whiteboards in the classrooms
- Construction of a stage for the school theatre and 4 new classrooms
- Creation of a tent to protect the children in the courtyards alone
- Installation of air conditioning in the school (the temperature rises in the summer up to 50° C)
- Creation of a computer room for students

Jerusalem: Saint Joseph School (Jaffa Gate)

- Renovation works of the electrical system completed

Jerusalem: Terra Sancta School (Damascus Gate)

- Ongoing construction of new sports facilities below the large courtyard of the school, which will house a swimming pool, a gym and playgrounds on the building's roof. These premises will also be used by the youth of the Old City
 - Renewal of school premises continues
- Jerusalem: Helen Keller School - Beth Hanina
- After the opening of a kindergarten two years ago with 80 students this will progressively lead to the opening of the first section of a primary school.

Jerusalem: Helen Keller School (School for the Visually Impaired)

- Completion of the acquisition of this school

Jaffa

- Restoration of some elementary school classrooms

Ramleh

- Restoration of some elementary school classrooms

Apartments for the needy and young couples

Jerusalem

- Old City. The renovation work of the houses in the Old City continues with the aim of improving the living conditions of the residents: complete renovation of 7 dwellings (4 in 2015, 3 in 2016, 7 in 2018); partial renovation of 6 dwellings (2 in 2015, 4 in 2016, 5 in 2017-18); renovation of the exterior (facades, roofs, etc.) of 5 buildings
- **Dar Consul renovation project.** The renovation of the residential complex in the Old Town is underway, with 40 apartments and a disused ground floor. The project area is around 2500m²
 - Class A restructuring with major interventions for 14 homes (of which 7 are completed)
 - Class B renovation with medium interventions for 16 homes (of which 10 completed)
 - Class C restructuring with minor interventions for 10 homes (of which 6 completed)
 - External renovation of 6 buildings (4 of which are completed)
- **Dar el Kbire:** Design of the 300-400m² extension of the building and improvement of the 19 existing dwellings (6 are completed). The total area covered by the project is around 2500m²
- **Tumian Palace:** Design of the extension of the building with the construction of 3 additional floors and 800m² for residential use
- **Abu Geries:** Design of the extension of the building with the construction of 750m² for offices, catering and shops
- **Saint James housing project at Beit Hanina:** Already obtained is the building permit for two additional floors in each of the 6 buildings, for a total of 24 apartments. The executive planning for an elevated extension is in progress.
- **Betfage (Monte degli Olivi):** 10 new apartments built, an extension of approximately 750m² of the residential complex consisting of 10 buildings. The apartments have been completed and handed over to families.
- **Pisgat Zeev housing project:** Design of the new residential complex with 70-80 housing units and 300m² for commercial use

Jaffa

- The Franciscan Neighbourhood: the building permit has been obtained for 124 apartments for Christian families in the parish. The total area of the apartments will be around 10,000m²

Nazareth

- Karm el Sacheb housing Project: project for the construction of a residential complex (church, rooms for social use, 80 apartments for young families)

Other cultural works

- **Studium Biblicum Franciscanum.** Every year the Custody of the Holy Land financially supports the Faculty of Biblical Sciences and Archeology at the **Studium Biblicum Franciscanum** in Jerusalem. It offers around 30 scholarships to students from different dioceses, for the duration of their studies
- **Christian Media Centre.** The services offered include: Website, completely renewed, simplified in use and now mobile friendly; Terra Sancta News a weekly news that tells about faith, history, current events in the Holy Land; broadcast by around 35 broadcasters worldwide in 6 languages; documentaries on social and religious themes, in different languages; broadcasting directly liturgical celebrations and events
- **Institute of the Magnificat Music School.** It is affiliated to the Vicenza Conservatory, the Magnificat promotes research activities and cultural events at local and international level. It welcomes more than 220 Christian, Muslim and Jewish students, led by 25 professor who are Jewish, Christians and Muslims
- Training of 50 Franciscan students from developing countries to whom the Custody guarantees food, accommodation and financing all studies in Jerusalem between STJ and SBF
- Training of 72 young people in formation in the Custody (from the aspirant to specialist studies)

Other works

Assistance given to the Syrian and Iraqi population, Christians and others has continued and intensified in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. The people are living in a situation of extreme necessity, they are helped through the presence of the Friars of the Custody of the Holy Land with financial support and collaboration especially from ATS (Association Terra Santa NGO)

In Lebanon

- Reception and temporary support for 14 Iraqi families in Deir Mimas and over 47 in the area of Harissa and Jounieh.
- Educational help for 28 Iraqi children and young Iraqis in Deir Mimas, over 35 in the Harissa area and almost 65 in Jounieh. Aid to 40 young Syrians in Jounieh and Beirut

In Syria

Aid for the people given through the parishes of Aleppo, Damascus, Knayeh, Yakoubieh and Latakieh.

- Aleppo emergency centre at the parish and Terra Sancta College:
 - distribution of food parcels
 - health care for pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum care for both mother and child
 - care of all cases of infertility in all Christian families of all Rites,
 - care of children and their growth from all points of view
 - + primary needs of milk, diapers for children in the parish, with a monthly subsidy for each child,
 - + Post-traumatic War Treatment Centre for children and young adults for Christians and Muslims
 - + clothing distribution, twice a year to more than 1,000 children ...
 - + Acquisition of catechism centres and summer oratories in the poorest parishes, from all points of view,
 - + summer oratory for more than 1300 children, material acquisitions, logistics and content for 6 summer oratories and five parishes,
 - + "after school" project for 60 children with limited comprehension
 - + top quality English course in the city, at different levels in the city for 65 academically able children
 - + "mental arithmetic" course for 77 academically able children (new 2019),
 - + Assumption of children with special talents (private piano lessons for 6 students),
 - school support (monthly sum awarded) to students of schools and universities, for students of the Latin Rite,
 - repair / reconstruction of damaged houses (of three different levels of damage): we have rebuilt 1500 houses to date (in favour of all Christians of all Rites)
 - help given to start small businesses and work activities (1000 people), in favour of all Christians of all Rites)
 - project to accommodate 120 Christian soldiers discharged after 8 years of compulsory military service: help through creating job opportunities for each of them (new 2019),
 - aid project for Christian, Orthodox and Catholic fiancés, for example: wedding gift (one-year home rental, electricity, one or two-room furniture, home repair ...)
 - free funeral service and project to help with the burial service and purchase of the coffin,
 - Project to support the families of priests and their poor families, for all Catholic and Orthodox Rites.
- Support projects of the Armenian Orthodox Church (new 2019)

- support for the clergy with a monthly sum for each priest who receives a low salary,
- logistic and material help for Orthodox priests to collect data on families, using three of our employees,
- assumption of young poor families with a food package and health care (in place),
- assumption of new catechism centres, where they do not yet exist.

• **Damascus (Bab Touma, House of Ananias, Tabbale and Salhie):**

- repair of structures damaged by bombing
- help for poor families and young people
- medicines and medical interventions
- children and students study aids
- renovation of interior spaces on the ground floor of the Bab Touma parish, for youth activities
- study and restructuring space for a parish cultural centre for young people at the **House of Ananias**
- Help and support aids for the sick
- Education, help for kindergarten children in Tabbale
- A Post-traumatic War Treatment Centre for children and young people

• **Latakiah:**

- purchase of land to build a pastoral centre at the service of the local parish community
- monthly distribution of food parcels to around 300 families
- A Post-Traumatic War treatment Centre for children and young people

- Aid for refugees in the 3 villages of Knaye, Jacoubie and Sjeide

In Rhodes - Kos

- Food aid and first aid for refugees passing through the temporary reception centre of Rhodes and Kos
- Project to repair the parish church, cemetery and monastery in Kos after the earthquake

Ordinary salaries of the Custody

- Monthly salaries of around 1150 employees in Israel and Palestine divided between 15 schools (60% of the total number of employees), 4 *Casa Nova* Homes for pilgrims (20% of the number of employees), 80 sanctuaries, 25 parishes and many other activities.

Jerusalem, 20th October, 2019