

CUSTODY OF THE HOLY LAND



SUMMARY REPORT

HOLY PLACES

2017/2018

**CUSTODY OF THE HOLY LAND
ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR**

Summary Report 2017/2018

The Custody of the Holy Land has been for centuries 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 are the support and development of the Christian minority living there, the conservation and enhancement of archaeological sites and sanctuaries, intervention in emergency cases, the liturgy in places of worship, apostolic works and assistance to pilgrims. Also for the 2017/2018 biennium, the Franciscan presence in the Holy Land has manifested itself through management, planning and execution of the following projects and works:

- I. Works focussing on pilgrims
- II. Works focussing on the local community
- III. Other works – Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Rhodes-Cos
- IV. Ordinary salaries of the Custody

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

WORKS AIMED AT PILGRIMS

Ain Karem: sanctuary of the birth of St. John

- Work in progress: renovation of the roof of the church of St. John the Baptist
- In the planning phase: the restoration works of the church which suffers serious static problems
- Renovation of the large Crusader hall to permit worship during the general work of the church
- Construction of a new plant for the supply of gas to the heating systems and kitchens of the convent and Casa Nova
- Restructuring of the rooms next to the sacristy for a new parlor

Ain Karem: sanctuary of St. John in the Desert

- Construction of two bathrooms for pilgrim groups
- Construction of a new external laundry for use of pilgrim groups
- Reconstruction of a workshop/store room

Bethany: sanctuary of Martha, Mary and Lazarus

- Restoration and enhancement of Byzantine and medieval remains of the Bethany convent through: recovery of neglected areas; training and employment of 10 young Palestinians for the restoration; support for the business activities of the local women's association; educational project with primary schools for the knowledge of local religious and archaeological sites (supported by ATS)

Bethlehem: basilica of the Nativity

- Collaboration with other Church communities and the National Authority of Palestine for the restoration of the basilica of the Nativity
- Reconstruction of the roof, installation of lighting and audio equipment for the church of St. Catherine and adjacent sanctuaries
- Changing the fabric materials that cover the Grotto of the Nativity
- Reconstruction of the kitchen, painting and heating system of the rooms of the convent

Bethlehem: sanctuary of the Milk Grotto

- Reviewing the sanitary water system, electrical terminals and redoing the waterproofing of the complex

Bethlehem: Casa Nova, hostel for pilgrims

- Protection of the roofs of Casa Nova
- Renovating all 66 rooms, the refectory, the corridors and the staircases
- Renovating all 25 rooms of *Palace Hotel* for pilgrims

Capharnaum: sanctuary of the Eucharistic Promise

- Construction of rooms for the reception of groups of young or budget pilgrims in the basement
- Creation of a parking space for pilgrim coaches that visit the sanctuary (capacity for 23 coaches)
- Reconstruction of the sanctuary's perimeter wall for 50 meters.
- Creation of a storeroom in the space below the sacristy
- Renewal of the kitchen

Emmaus Qubeibeh: sanctuary of Sts. Simon and Cleophas

- Plan to improve and renovate the baths of the kindergarten
- Renovation of some rooms of the convent to welcome the inter-Franciscan community

Jericho: sanctuary of the Good Shepherd

- Complete restoration of the parish church: electricity, microphones, chairs ... creation of a mosaic representing the Good Shepherd done by mosaicists of Jericho
- Reconstruction of the perimeter wall and the chancel of the sanctuary
- Restructuring the garden in order to create a hall for youth meetings and the celebration of the liturgy for pilgrims

Jerusalem: basilica of Gethsemane

- Concluding phase: tunnels and lifts for pilgrim groups connecting the area of the basilica with the parking on the side of the Kidron Valley via a pedestrian path
- Changing the roof of the hermitages provided for those who wish to have a hermitage experience
- Work in progress: service center for pilgrims in the Valley of Gethsemane

Jerusalem: basilica of the Holy Sepulchre of Our Lord

- Structural survey of the Chapel of the Invention of the Holy Cross for structural consolidation
- Installation of a monitoring system for the rock of the Cave of the Invention
- Maintenance and whitewashing of the ceiling of the Chapel of the Apparition
- Construction for an elevator

Jerusalem: Casa Nova, hostel for pilgrims

- Construction of a new dining room for pilgrims on the terrace with a panoramic view
- Renovation of the Reception and Bar for pilgrims
- Renovation of 25 rooms out of a total 90 that will be undertaken in the future.
- Acquisition of 2 venues: one for exhibitions of local handicraft works (mother-of-pearl and others) and another for an ice-cream parlor

Jerusalem: Christian Information Center

- Total internal renovation of the Center in which a new refreshment area for pilgrims is created and a multimedia information room for pilgrims dedicated to the knowledge of the Holy Sepulcher

Jerusalem: Convent of St. Saviour

Infirmery

- Construction of an elevator for the sick

Theological seminary

- Maintenance of the rooms of the seminarians and bathrooms of the Studium Teologicum Jerusalemitanum and improvement of the classrooms with the installation of projector whiteboards for the professors

Offices

- Renovation of the rooms of the Custody Technical Office
- Renovation of the rooms meant for the new Cultural Heritage Office
- Renovation of rooms meant for the new offices of the Franciscan Printing Press

Convent

- Renovation of new bathrooms for guests, laundry / ironing rooms and some bedrooms for guests
- General maintenance of the roof
- A new Reception at the entrance of the convent

Jerusalem: Maria Bambina, pilgrim hostel

- Renovation of new dorms, living room, kitchen and bathrooms to accommodate young or budget pilgrims
- Reception of about 1500 overnight stays of poor pilgrims

Jerusalem: sanctuary of Dominus Fleuit

- Construction of a reinforced concrete wall to protect caves near the sanctuary
- Construction of a reinforced concrete wall for the consolidation of caves near the convent.
- Construction of rooms with wooden roof and tiles to be used as storerooms
- Reconstruction of 42 meters of retaining wall on the border with the Ethiopian cemetery

Jerusalem: Terra Santa Museum

- Opening of a multimedia center at the sanctuary of the Flagellation. Besides pilgrims, the multimedia center welcomes free-of-charge, students from the neighbourhood (muslim students)
- Opening of the archeological wing dedicated to the life of Christ in the traditional House of Herod
- Work in progress: a modern museum center for the artistic, archeological and cultural patrimony of the Franciscans. In an area of about 2500 sq.m. it would include the:
 - Archeological museum: the places of the Bible in Palestine (Convent of the Flagellation) (3rd phase)
 - Historical museum: The Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land (Convent of St. Saviour)

Mount Nebo (Jordan): memorial of St. Moses

- Total reconstruction of the ticket office and entrance to the sanctuary
- Designing rooms to accommodate pilgrims wishing to make retreats
- Construction of 2 chapels to enable pilgrims to celebrate the liturgy
- Construction of bathrooms for pilgrims

Mount Tabor: basilica of the Trasfiguration

- Work in progress: conservation and planning of the site
- Creation of a parking space inside the monastery (600 sq.m.), construction of a main road connecting the external parking with the internal, and restrooms for pilgrims with a pavement for the disabled
- Total reconstruction of an external chapel for pilgrims
- Creation of 4 panoramic lookouts
- Changing the rails of the garden

Naim: sanctuary of the resurrection of the widow's son

- Work in progress: conservation and planning of the site

Nazareth: basilica of the Annunciation of the BVM

- Restoration and maintenance work to conserve the sacred Grotto

Ramleh: sanctuary of St. Joseph of Arimathea

- Restoration of the bell tower of the sanctuary

Tabgha: sanctuary of the Primacy of St. Peter

- Creation of an access ramp for disabled pilgrims

Magdala: archeological site

- Water and sewage connection to the public system

WORKS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Works to benefit youth

Bethlehem: children's home

- housing for 27 children of which 12 have social difficulties
- New solar panels for heating and the boiler
- New heating system (boiler)
- Renovation of 5 bathrooms and painting of the entire house

Student scholarships and grants

- Financing of 525 university student scholarships (222 from the Custody + 303 from FFHL) for the duration of 4 years distributed in various universities (Bethlehem, Hebrew University, Bir Zeit, Amman); 178 grants to students in difficulty

Support for artisan companies

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

Activities for families

Bethlehem

- Work in progress: projects supporting parish family counseling; project aimed at more than 20 youths (age 6-12) coming from families with difficulties; medical assistance to families in serious economic difficulties; renovation of homes belonging to the most needy families

Works benefitting the parish community

Bethlehem: Catholic Action

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

Jericho

- The completion of a building that will guarantee about 460 sq.m. for parish activities

Schools

Amman

- New wing of the college: a building of 4,500 sq.m. spread over 3 floors in a section adjacent to the college where about 20 classes and various function rooms are built (laboratories, library, computer lab, multipurpose room, art room and classes for art and music etc) to enable the integration into the IGCSE International Program in the school
- Construction of 3 classrooms and 2 offices on the first floor of the college of an area of 237 sq.m. to cope with the increase of students at the college

Bethlehem:

- Reorganization of the school's external basketball field and general painting work
- Technological laboratory for the new branch of studies within the school
- Upgrading of blackboards in all the classes

Cana:

- Work in progress: construction of a new school (structural works completed). The complex will also include the parish center and a covered parking of an area about 5000 sq.m.

Jericho

- Installations of whiteboard projectors in classrooms
- Construction of a stage for the school theater and 4 new classrooms
- Erection of a tent to protect children in the courtyards from the sun
- Installation of air-conditioners in the school (summer temperatures reach 50° C)
- Creation of a computer room for students

Jerusalem: Helen Keller School

- Completion of the acquisition of the school
- Total renovation of one floor of the school
- Opening of a kindergarten for about 80 boys

Jerusalem: Terra Sancta College elementary level

- Reconstruction of several classrooms with institutional funding

Jerusalem: Terra Sancta College middle and upper levels

- Ongoing reconstruction of the parish school with institutional funding
- Planning of two levels below the basketball court, to be used as a sports center

Jaffa

- Restoration of some classrooms of the elementary school

Ramleh

- Restoration of some classrooms of the elementary school

Appartments for needy and young couples

Jerusalem

- Old City: The renovation of the houses continues with the aim of improving the living conditions of the residents: total renovation of 7 dwellings (4 in 2015, 3 in 2016, 7 in 2018); partial renovation of 6 homes (2 in 2015, 4 in 2016, 5 in 2017-18); renovation of the exterior of 5 buildings
- External repairs (facades, roofs etc.) 11
- *Dar al Consul renovation project*. Work in progress of the renovation of a residential complex in the Old City, with 40 appartments and a ground floor in disuse. The area of the project covers about 2500 sq.m.
 - Classe A restructuring with major works on 14 houses (ongoing of which 5 are completed)
 - Classe B restructuring with intermediate works for 16 homes (ongoing of which 8 are completed)
 - Classe C restructuring with minor works for 10 houses (ongoing of which 4 are completed)
 - external restructuring of 6 buildings in progress (3 completed)
- *Dar el Kbire*: Designing the extension of the building of 300-400 sq.m. and improvement work on the 19 existing homes (6 are completed). The total area affected by the project is about 2500 sq.m.
- *Tumian Palace*: In the planning stage, the expansion of the building with the construction of 3 additional floors and 800 sq.m. for residential use
- *Abu Geries*: in the planning stage, the expansion of the building with the construction of 750 sq.m. for offices, restaurants and shops
- *St James housing project at Beit Hanina*: it is a complex of 6 buildings with a total of 42 appartments divided in 3 floors. The building permit for two additional floors in each of the buildings was obtained, for a total of 24 appartments. Executive planning is in progress for this superelevation.
- *Betphage (Mount of Olives)*: 10 new appartments were built, an extension of about 750 sq.m. of the residential complex consisting of 10 buildings; building of a wall to protect the property.
- *Pisgat Zeev housing project*: Planning of a new residential complex with 70-80 living units and 300 sq.m. for commercial use.

Jaffa

- Work in progress: *the Franciscan Neighborhood* – permission to construct 124 appartments destined for christian families of the parish was obtained. The total area of the appartments is about 10,000 sq.m.

Nazareth

- Work in progress: *Karm el Sacheb housing Project* – a project to build a residential complex (church, space for social activities, 80 appartments for young families)

Parish cemetery at Mt. Zion

- General maintenance of the section of the Polish tombs (institutional funding)

Other cultural works

- *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*. Every year the Custody of the Holy Land sustains economically the Faculty of Biblical Science and Archeology at *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum* in Jerusalem. It offers about 30 scholarships to students coming from various dioceses, for the duration of the studies
- *Christian Media Center*. The services offered include a website which was totally renewed and simplified in order to be user friendly; *Terra Santa News* a weekly report on the faith, history and events of the Holy Land transmitted to about 35 world networks in 6 languages; documentaries on social and religious themes in various languages; direct transmission of liturgical celebrations and events
- *Magnificat Music Institute*. Affiliated to the Conservatory of Vicenza, the institute promotes research activities and cultural events at local and international levels. It welcomes more than 210 Jewish, Christian and Muslim students led by some 20 professors who are themselves Jews, Christians and Muslims
- Formation of 50 Franciscan students from developing countries to whom the Custody guarantees food, accommodation and payment of studies in Jerusalem at the STJ and SBF
- Training of 72 youths in formation in the Custody (from aspirancy to specialised studies)

OTHER WORKS

Aid to the Syrian and Iraqi population in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon is continuing and intensified, not only to

christians, who live in extreme circumstances, through the presence of the friars of the Custody of the Holy Land with the financial support and collaboration especially from ATS.

In Lebanon

- Temporary reception and support for 14 Iraqi families in Deir Mimas and over 47 in the Harissa and Jounieh area.
- Educational aid for 28 young Iraqis and children in Deir Mimas, over 35 in the Harissa area and almost 65 in Jounieh. Aid to young Syrians in Jounieh and Beirut number about 40

In Syria

Aid through the parishes of Aleppo, Damascus, Knayeh, Yakoubieh and Latakieh

- Emergency Center of Aleppo in the parish and Terra Santa College:
 - project to distribute drinking water to people without it;
 - payment for electricity from generators scattered along the streets to more than 600 families
 - distribution of food packs to 3700 families every month
 - emergency health aid (up to \$70,000 in costs)
 - care for babies and their growth from all perspectives (spiritual, human including educational) and their primary needs of milk, diapers ...
 - repair/reconstruction of 1300 damaged homes
 - help to start up small businesses and work activities for around 500 people who have lost their jobs
 - “After school” project for 150 children
 - sustaining 1300 young families with monthly food packs
 - health care for pregnancy, delivery, and post-natal care for both mother and child
 - distribution of clothes twice a year to more than 900 children
 - summer oratory for more than 1300 children
 - project to adopt 600 muslim refugee children
 - center for the treatment of post-war trauma for children and youths
- **Damascus** (Baba Touma, House of Ananias, Tabbale and Salhie):
 - repair of damaged structures due to bombings
 - aid to poor families and youths
 - medicine and medical surgeries
 - educational aid to children and students
 - restructuring internal spaces of the ground floor of the Bab Touma parish for youth activities
 - study and renovation of space for a parish cultural center for young people at the House of Ananias
 - aid, reception and support for the sick
 - education and aid to the nursery children at Tabbale
 - center for the treatment of post-war trauma in children and youths
- **Latakieh**:
 - acquisition of a piece of land for the building of a pastoral center to serve the local parish community
 - monthly distribution of food packs to about 300 families
 - center for the treatment of post-war trauma in children and youths
- Aid to refugees in 3 villages of **Knaye, Jacobie e Sjeide**

Rhodes and Kos

- Aid in the form of foodstuff and primary assistance to refugees in transit to the reception centers in Rhodes and Kos
- project to repair the parish church after the earthquake

ORDINARY SALARIES OF THE CUSTODY

Monthly salaries of about 1300 employees in Israel and Palestine are divided among 15 schools (60% of the total number of employees), 4 Casa Novas for pilgrims (20% of the employees), 80 sanctuaries, 25 parishes and many various activities.

Jerusalem, 30 November 2018