

CUSTODY OF THE HOLY LAND

SUMMARY REPORT

HOLY PLACES

2012/2013

Jerusalem, 3 March 2014

Summary report 2012/2013

The Holy Land Custody has for centuries been committed to the conservation and revitalisation of the Holy Places of Christianity in the Land of Jesus and in the entire Middle East. Among the various objectives of the mission one finds the sustainment and development of the Christian minority that lives in these places, the conservation and valorisation of the archaeological zones and shrines, interventions in emergency cases, liturgy in the places of cult, the apostolic works and the assistance to the pilgrims. For the two year period 2012/2013 the Franciscan presence in the Holy Land has manifested itself through the projection, programming and carrying out of the following projects and works:

HOLY PLACES

I) PILGRIMS

1. Bethlehem

• Parish Church of St. Catherine

- We have concluded the works of enlargement of the church of St. Catherine, which included the repositioning of the altar, the choir, seating accomodation and the lowering of the floor level.

• Gethsemane

Garden of Olives

- We have concluded the restoration, maintenance and waterproofing of the roof of the Basilica of Gethsemane.
- We have concluded the project of restoration of the mosaics of the domes and floor of the Basilica.
- We have concluded the restoration of the tympanum of the external facade of the Basilica.

- Other works of maintenance and emergency have been carried out.

- **Shrine of the Flagellation**

- Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*

- We have concluded the third phase of the work for the enlargement of the library on the upper floor, to divide it into two sections.

- **Holy Sepulchre**

- Ordinary and extraordinary maintenance.

- **Convent of the Cenacle**

- A new garden with specific zones for celebrations and welcoming of pilgrims.

- **VII Station**

- We have concluded the project of conservation and restoration of the ancient columns, the altar and the painting.

- **Saint John Ein Karem**

- Ordinary and extraordinary maintenance.

- **Visitation Ein Karem**

- Ordinary and extraordinary emergency maintenance.

- **Dominus Flevit**

- Ordinary and extraordinary emergency maintenance.

- **Bethany**

- Ordinary and extraordinary maintenance works in the shrine.

2. Nazareth

- **Basilica of the Annunciation**

- We have concluded the works of developing and maintenance of part of the external area of the Basilica; the project included the rebuilding of the old boundary wall and the restructuring of the two adjacent levels (removal of plants and trees).
 - Installation of TV cameras that will offer the opportunity of transmitting Celebrations live or recorded.
 - Phase of elaboration of the new project of waterproofing of the grotto that has been damaged by infiltration of water and humidity.

- **Church of St. Joseph**

- We have concluded the installation of the new lighting system of the church and crypt.
 - New plastering, removal of part of the floor, substitution of the old windows with new protective windows, realisation and installation of a new altar dedicated to St. Joseph.
 - Realisation of a new stairway at the entrance of the church of St. Joseph and of a new ramp for persons with disability.

- Installation of TV cameras that will offer the opportunity of transmitting Celebrations live or recorded.
- **Mensa Christi Church**
 - Restoration of the painted marble, of the walls and plastering. Cleaning of the Holy Stone and of the facades.
- 3. Magdala
 - **City of Mary Magdalen**
 - Project of development of the archaeological zone, including public convenience services for pilgrims and visitors.
- 4. Capernahum
 - **Archaeological site of Capernahum**
 - The works of conservation of the archaeological zone are in progress.
 - Also in progress is the restoration of the mosaics of the Byzantine church on the House of St. Peter.
 - In progress the restoration of the public convenience services for pilgrims.
- 5. Mount Tabor
 - **Shrine of the Transfiguration**
 - Phase of projection for a new parking area (600 m²) and of the main entrance road to the convent.
- 6. Nain
 - **Shrine of Nain**
 - The works of restoration of the church have been concluded.
- 7. Sephoris
 - The works of maintenance and reconstruction of the boundary wall and the restoration of some rooms in the convent have been concluded.
- 8. Tabgha
 - **Shrine of the Primacy of St. Peter**
 - Project of realisation of new public convenience services close to the Shrine of the Primacy of Peter and other restoration works.
 - **Byzantine Chapel of the Beatitudes**

The archaeological remains of the Byzantine chapel have been consolidated, including the plastering and walls.
- 9. Cana
 - **Church of the First Miracle**

- Project for the realisation of a parish centre and a school, in order to meet the needs of the local citizens.

10. Mount Nebo (Jordan)

- **Shrine of the Memorial of Moses**

- The works of renewal and conservation of the mosaics of the Memorial Shrine of the Prophet Moses are progressing.
- Conclusion of the project for a “New protective covering for the Memorial of Moses”.
- Restructuring of the ancient walls of the archaeological section of the shrine.

II) LOCAL COMMUNITIES

1. **Works in favour of youth**

- Scholarships. Payment of 295 Scholarships for University Studies for a period of four years, distributed in various universities: Bethlehem, Hebrew at Jerusalem and Haifa, Bir Zeit, Amman and others.
- Artisan initiatives. Project to sustain ten small artisan firms through the acquisition of spare parts, components for production, and other aids for the security and safety of the various crafts.

2. **Activities for families**

- Bethlehem

- Project to sustain a parish **Family Counselling** that helps the principal needs of families on an assistential level.
- **Franciscan Boys Home**. A project in favour of more than twenty boys of between six and twelve years of age, coming from poor families or families in difficulty. Besides the welcoming and assistance for study, the boys are followed by an educator, a social assistant and a psychologist.
- **Medical Assistance**. The project of medical assistance to families in grave economical difficulties and without any medical insurance is proceeding, with a partial or complete payment of medical expenses.
- **Home projects**. Projects to restore houses belonging to poor families. The restoration is done by local employees who would otherwise be unemployed. Besides helping the families, the project assures on a periodical basis hundreds of work opportunities.

3. **Parish communities**

- Jerusalem

- Inauguration of the sport areas in the parish centre of **Beit Hanina**.

- Ordinary maintenance and restructuring of the infrastructure in the residential blocks of Beit Hanina (St. Anton Building Project, St. Paul Building Project and St. James Building Project) and of Beit Fage (St. Francis Building Project) in favour of the Christian community of Jerusalem.
- We have obtained permission to build new apartments at the St. James housing project in Beit Hanina.
- **Catholic Scout Centre:** Restoration and renewal of the centre for the Scout group of Jerusalem.
- Bethlehem
 - Functioning of the public convenience services at the St. Francis Millennium Centre, for the use of tourists and pilgrims.
 - We have concluded the work on the space destined to become craft laboratories of olive wood and mother of pearl at the **St. Francis Millenuim Centre**.
 - We have concluded the restructuring of the **cemetery** of Bethlehem.
- Nazareth.
 - We have concluded the works on the creation of **football fields** and other recreational spaces for the children of the Nazareth parish.
- Jericho.
 - We are in the phase of projecting the boundary wall of the plot of land destined to become the new **cemetery**.

4. Schools

- **Terra Sancta school for Girls Jerusalem**
 - We have concluded the works for securing the open space which was dangerous, and for the restructuring of the basements and for the public convenience services at the Terra Sancta School for Girls – St. Joseph.
 - Works of ordinary and extraordinary maintenance.
- **Terra Sancta school Jerusalem**
 - Works of ordinary and extraordinary maintenance.
- **Terra Sancta School Jericho**
 - We have concluded the works on the finishing touches of the courtyards, of the external structures and the entrance hallway to the school.
 - We have concluded the preparation of the furniture for the classrooms and the common spaces.
- **Kindergarten Jaffa**
 - We have concluded the restoration works and the renewal of the kindergarten, within the elementary school.
 - Phase of planning of the library of the elementary school.

- **Terra Sancta School Nicosia**

- We have concluded the works of reinforcing of the structure of the building.

5. Building of apartments for poor families and for young couples

- Jerusalem

- Old City

Restructuring of the houses of the Old City. The renewal and restoration of the houses in the Old City is an ongoing project.

- Partial restorations 28 (13 in 2012 and 15 in 2013).
- External restorations 31 (16 in 2012 and 15 in 2013).
- Complete restorations 31 (16 in 2012 and 15 in 2013).

- Bethlehem

- Ordinary maintenance and restructuring of the residential areas: Jesus the Child Building project, St. Catherine building project, St. Francis Building project.

- Jaffa

- *The Franciscan Neighbourhood*. We are proceeding with the project of preparation of 124 apartments destined for Christian families of the parish.

6. Other cultural projects

- Every year the Holy Land Custody sustains economically the Faculty of Biblical Sciences and Archaeology of the *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum* of Jerusalem. It offers around 30 scholarships for students coming from diverse dioceses, for the entire length of their studies.
- **Franciscan Media Centre**. A new form of communication through an updated website, with the help of TV networks which spread in real time facts and events linked with the Holy Places of Christian cult.
- **Magnificat**. In a few years the activity of the Magnificat Institute has become a school of music, which is capable of preparing various students coming from diverse cultures. The Magnificat Institute promotes activities of research and cultural manifestations on the local and international level.

Besides the works realised and projected in Israel and Palestine, we have given particular attention to Christians in **Lebanon** and especially in **Syria**, who are presently living in a fragile situation of necessity. The Custody has embarked on constantly sending sums of money in order to support the local populations in difficulty in all kinds of needs.