



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE **BOLLETTINO**

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BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

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Appeal for the Collection for Christians in the Holy Land

Letter from the Prefect of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches

The “Pro Terra Sancta” Collection

Summary Report of the Custody of the Holy Land on the projects and works carried out with the 2020/2021 Collection

Letter from the Prefect of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches

Ash Wednesday 2022

Dear brother in Christ,

On Palm Sunday 2021, the Holy Father used very strong words to speak of the Passion of the Lord: “This amazes us: to see the Almighty reduced to nothing ... to see the God of the universe stripped of everything ... Why, Lord, did you wish to endure all this? Jesus did it for us, to plumb the depths of our human experience, our entire existence, all our evil. To draw near to us and not abandon us in our suffering and our death. By experiencing in the flesh our deepest struggles and conflicts, he redeemed and transformed them” (Pope Francis, Homily, 28 March 2021).

Pope Francis in 2021 made two pilgrimages of hope amidst the Christian communities of the Middle East and the Holy Land. Hoping against all hope, while the whole world was still in the throes of the pandemic, he wanted to reach some of the most lonely and suffering: our brothers and sisters in Iraq, land of Abraham, land of exile, land that knew how to keep the name of Christ despite the violence of war and persecution. Alongside him with prayer and affection, we too walked the streets of Mosul and Qaraqosh, we stopped in prayer in the Syrian Catholic Cathedral of Baghdad in memory of the witnesses killed on 31 October 2010 while they were

celebrating the Liturgy, which the East loves to define as “heaven on earth”. That day the earth was tinged with blood and rubble, yet as believers, we recognize that the Easter light of the Passion and Resurrection was released, spreading the balm and perfume of those who follow the immolated Lamb with the gift of their life. In Cyprus too and then in Greece, lands of apostolic preaching, the Pope faced the suffering of division: of a land, of peoples, of believers in Christ who still cannot share the same table of the Eucharist, of those that many have come seeking refuge and welcome. There was no lack of other appeals, gestures and invitations to peace for other lands that the history of salvation and biblical events invite us to understand as “Holy Land”.

Faced with these gestures of the Holy Father which testify to the desire for closeness, for encounter, to bring at least a little relief as if it were the caress of the Nazarene, we must have the courage – as individuals and Christian communities – to ask ourselves: what do I see, what do I notice? What is the perimeter of my gaze? In the Easter towards which the Lenten journey that we have started today leads us, will I allow the Lord to visit my solitude and ours? And to the Love who will come to visit me will I be able to respond with love? Love cannot be repaid except with love!

If, in personal terms, Christ has suffered and died only once and cannot die anymore, in his Body, which is the Church, He continues to suffer, especially in the Middle East, but also in every other place in the world where the freedom to live the faith is trampled and prevented: from persecution in many cases, from the hostile environment at times, often from the globalization of indifference, from the violence of wars with which humanity unfortunately never seems to be satisfied, as happens in Ukraine.

For two consecutive years, the Christians of the Holy Land have celebrated Easter and Christmas in a sort of isolation, without the warmth and solidarity of pilgrims visiting the Holy Places and local communities. Families have suffered beyond measure, more from the lack of work than from the immediate effects of the pandemic itself.

It is by the express wish of the Popes that the Collection “*Pro Terra Sancta*” was begun and continues to be taken up, usually on the day of the saving Passion of the Lord, Good Friday. It is not something ancient or outdated, because it expresses above all our awareness of being rooted in the proclamation of redemption, which spread from Jerusalem and reached us all. The gesture of offering, even a small one, but by everyone, like the widow’s mite, allows our brothers and sisters to continue to live, to hope and to offer a living witness to the Word made flesh in places and on the streets that saw his presence. If we lose our roots, how can we be, wherever we are in the world, a tree that grows and bears fruits of love, charity and sharing?

Looking therefore at Christ who touched our human reality to its depths, letting ourselves be inspired by the gestures of closeness made by Pope Francis in his Apostolic Journeys and accepting his invitation to live solidarity with our brothers and sisters of the Holy Land, let us give new vigour to the practice of the Collection for the Holy Land. Through the competent Diocesan Offices and thanks to the presence and work all over the world of the Franciscan Commissaries of the Holy Land of the Order of Friars Minor, let us also take care of the preparation for it, through testimonies, prayers or the simple celebration of the *Via Crucis*. In Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, and in many other shrines and monasteries, prayer is offered for the Church all over the world, and we are invited to remember with the heart and with a small gift all those who pronounce our name before the Lord, giving thanks for our generosity. The information material distributed every year helps us to see the flow of charity and life made possible thanks to the Collection.

To you, to the priests, to the consecrated men and women, and to the faithful who strive for the success of the Collection, in a labour to which the Church calls all her children in various well-known ways, I have the joy of transmitting the deep gratitude of the Holy Father, Pope Francis. As I invoke abundant divine blessings on the community entrusted to you, I offer most fraternal greetings in the Lord Jesus.

Sincerely

✠ Leonardo Card. Sandri

✱ Giorgio Demetrio Gallaro

Archbishop Secretary

N.B. A summary of the works of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land and this Congregation can be found on the website of the Dicastery: www.orientchurch.va / Colletta Terra Santa.

The “Pro Terra Sancta” Collection

CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES

2021 A.D.

Introduction

The Collection “*Pro Terra Sancta*” was born from the desire of the Popes to maintain a strong link between all the faithful and the Holy Places. It is the main source of material support for Christian life in the Holy Land and the privileged instrument that the Church provides her children in other parts of the world to express solidarity with the ecclesial communities of the Middle East. In recent times, Saint Paul VI gave a decisive boost in favour of the Holy Land through the Apostolic Exhortation ‘*Nobis in Animo*’ (March 25, 1974).

Through the funds traditionally collected on Good Friday, the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land is able to carry out the important mission to which it is called: preserving the Sacred Places, the stones of memory, and promoting the Christian presence, the living stones, through many pastoral, educational, welfare, health and social structures.

The territories that benefit in various forms of support from the Collection are Jerusalem, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Turkey, Iran and Iraq.

As a rule, the Custody of the Holy Land receives 65% of the Collection, while the remaining 35% goes to the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, which uses it for the formation of candidates for the priesthood, the support of the clergy, educational activities, cultural formation and subsidies to the various ecclesiastical circumscriptions in the Middle East.

This report is a synthesis of what the Congregation received in 2021 and how it was distributed.

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Donations received in 2021 for the Holy Land Collection | US\$ 6.062.789,90 |
|---|-------------------|

Academic, Spiritual and Human Formation of the Seminarians and Priests of the Churches under the Jurisdiction of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches

Thanks to the Collection, contributions can be made to seminaries, religious houses of formation and cultural

institutions in the territories of competence and in Rome, supporting in various forms (scholarships, university fees and health needs) young seminarians and priests, men and women religious and, depending on the funds available, and some lay people. About 223 students benefiting from scholarships reside in 7 colleges under the jurisdiction of the Dicastery in Rome.

In addition, the Dicastery contributes to the sustenance of the Pontifical Oriental Institute, a higher academic institution with two faculties, Eastern Ecclesiastical Sciences and Eastern Canon Law, of which the Cardinal Prefect is Grand Chancellor.

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Formation of seminarians, priests and nuns in Rome, Maintenance of Colleges | US\$ 1.921.103,57 |
| Pontifical Oriental Institute (PIO) | US\$ 1.000.000,00 |
| Extraordinary subsidies for the Committee for Cultural Collaboration (PCUC) | US\$ 50.000,00 |
| Total | US\$ 2.341.242,00 |

Subsidies for Educational Activities

The Patriarchal Diocese of Jerusalem, the Franciscan Custody, the Eastern Churches of the Holy Land and Religious Institutes are committed to the education of young people in the Holy Land. Keeping in mind the particular circumstances faced by Christian students and taking into account the arrival into the Holy Land of thousands of school-aged children from Syria and Iraq, the Congregation for the Eastern Churches has decided not to reduce the subsidies also for the current academic year.

The work of the Secretariat of Solidarity in the coordination and distribution of subsidies to educational institutions managed by the aforementioned institutions is also noteworthy.

One of the prestigious foundations that ensures academic formation is Bethlehem University. Almost 3,300 young people, mostly Palestinian Muslims, are trained intellectually and humanly with the hope of engaging in the construction of a country where mutual respect reigns and where human dignity is preserved. The commitment of the De La Salle Brothers in running the university is much appreciated.

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Secretariat of Solidarity | US\$ 1.045.000,00 |
| Schools of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem | US\$ 900.000,00 |
| Bethlehem University | US\$ 1.000.000,00 |
| Total | US\$ 2.945.000,00 |

Ordinary and Extraordinary Subsidies

This Congregation contributes to supporting the Churches placed under its competence with subsidies drawn from the Holy Land Collection.

The Middle East continues to live in instability and tension. There are people who have no food, others who lack medical treatment, children and youth without schools, and then those orphaned, wounded and widowed by war. The Congregation pays particular attention to the needs of these people and works to rebuild social structures through the local Eastern and Latin Dioceses, as well as by soliciting the Catholic agencies involved in the aforementioned countries. Ensuring the means necessary for a dignified life for those returning to Iraq and Syria and for refugees in neighboring countries, such as Lebanon and Jordan, requires the collaboration of all people of good will. Furthermore, cultural, spiritual and psychological activities are encouraged, which in various ways bring people closer, despite religious and ethnic differences. The persistence of the political and social crisis in Lebanon, especially after the 2020 explosion in the port of Beirut, requires constant accompaniment, keeping

track of many situations of extreme poverty. The visits of Pope Francis to Iraq, the land of Abraham, father in faith for Jews, Christians and Muslims, from 5 to 8 March 2021, and to Cyprus from 2 to 6 December 2021, were moments of grace and great encouragement for the Churches of these two countries and neighboring ones as well to spread the message of human brotherhood so necessary in these territories.

The visit of the Cardinal Prefect to Syria in the autumn of 2021 was also an opportunity to bring help and verify the development of subsequent events for the coordination of the Church's charitable works in the country.

| | |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| Jerusalem | US\$ 443.000,35 |
| Jordan | US\$ 25.000,00 |
| Iraq | US\$ 158.428,77 |
| Lebanon | US\$ 208.000,00 |
| Turkey | US\$ 165.000,00 |
| Syria | US\$ 461.500,00 |
| Iran | US\$ 35.000,00 |
| Egypt | US\$ 372.393,16 |
| Ethiopia | US\$ 377.000,00 |
| Eritrea | US\$ 168.000,00 |
| Total | US\$ 2.413.321,93 |

Conclusion

Pope Francis in his message for Lent this year invites the faithful to pray to God for the "constant patience of the farmer", reminding them of the Apostle Paul's exhortation: "Let us not tire of doing good" (Gal 6:9).

May tireless prayer and the work of people of good will around the world help support families in need, children in search of a future, assistance to refugees and displaced persons, the training of priests and religious, and conservation of the Holy Places.

Summary Report of the Custody of the Holy Land on the projects and works carried out with the 2020/2021 Collection

The Custody of the Holy Land has for centuries dedicated itself to the conservation and revitalization of the Holy Places of Christianity in the Land of Jesus and in the entire Middle East. Among the various objectives of the Franciscan mission are included the sustaining and progress of the Christian minority which dwells in the mission, the conservation and valorisation of archaeological zones and sanctuaries, the interventions in cases of emergency, the liturgy of the places of cult, the apostolic works and the assistance to the pilgrims. For the two-year period 2019/2020, the Franciscan presence in the Holy Land has been characterised by the planning, programming and carrying out of the following projects and works:

1. Works in favour of pilgrims.
2. Works in favour of the local community.
3. Rhodes

4. Projects in Syria and Lebanon supported by *PTS Pro Terra Sancta*

5. The ordinary stipends of the Custody of the Holy Land

These works have been already carried out thanks to various kinds of economic contributions, and in the first place thanks to the Good Friday Collection, and then through fund raising activities of the *Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land* (FFHL) and the association *Pro Terra Sancta* (PTS), but also thanks to other private and institutional donors, as well as through incomes from other activities.

At the moment of writing of this report (January 2022), here in Jerusalem, as in the rest of the world, Covid-19 is striking ever-growing numbers in the population, with grave impact on the systems of health and economy, and also on society and the life of the Church. Ever since the end of February 2020 we have found ourselves without pilgrims, and this means serious economic difficulties for the local Christian communities, for the Christian families and also for the Custody. In the meantime, we are trying to continue the mission that has been entrusted to us, knowing that Divine Providence which has willed our presence here will continue to take care of us. Many of the works listed have thus continued in a slower pace and are resulting “in phases of planning”, since we had to give priority to interventions that were mainly concerned with the effects and problems of a social nature.

Works in favour of Pilgrims

Acre: building of the “Kindergarten”

- Phase of planning of the works of renovation of the building of the “Kindergarten”, in view of rendering more habitable the apartment in which the sisters in charge of caring for the initiative reside.

Ain Karem: Sanctuary of the Nativity of Saint John

- Conclusion of the works of the reconstruction of the roof of the church of Saint John the Baptist, which include the consolidation of the stone vaults.

- Work in progress of restoration of the sacristy and adjacent buildings, which suffer from serious problems of humidity, with the construction of a draining underground channel to protect the parts which are underground.

- Planning phase of the reconstruction of the other roofs of the friary.

- Planning phase of restoration works of the church where these include archaeological excavations.

- Planning phase of the security of the electrical system of the entire complex, which includes the friary, the church, the seminary and the pilgrims welcome house. Planning of part of the system that is linked with the sacristy.

Ain Karem: Sanctuary of Saint John in the Desert

- In the phase of being concluded is a master plan of interventions for the conservation of the sanctuary, which includes the regimentation of the rainwater in the area surrounding the friary.

Beit Sahour: Shepherds Field

- Planning phase of the interventions for the conservation and development of the site. This is a major intervention which comprises new external chapels for celebrations, the requalification of the shepherds grotto, and new bathrooms and infrastructures.

- Completing phase of the works on new bathrooms with some accessory buildings, which include a small souvenir shop, a small restaurant and a multifunctional hall for small conferences,

- Nearly ending completion are the works for the building of new external chapels for the celebrations of pilgrims.

- Phase of elaboration of a project of accommodation of the archaeological area with the continuation of excavations.

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

- Completion phase of the restoration and valorisation of the Byzantine and Mediaeval remains of the friary of Bethany through: the recovery of the degraded areas; the formation for restoration and employment of 10 Palestinian young people; the support for entrepreneurial activities of the local female association; a didactical project with primary schools for the knowledge of local religious and archaeological sites (supported by PTS).

Bethlehem: Convent of the Franciscan Sisters

- In phase of realisation are the works for the solution of problems of humidity in the convent of the sisters, as a result of the ancient underground cisterns.

Bethlehem: Boys Home

- Remaking of the store, kitchen and laundry room in order to make them compatible with the norms of hygiene and safety.

Capernaum: Sanctuary of the Eucharistic Promise

- Realisation of the explanatory signs and signposting of the sanctuary.

Emmaus Qubeibeh: Sanctuary of Saints Simon and Cleopas

- Phase of continuation of the extraordinary maintenance for the conservation of the structure of the church, of the friary and of the ex-seminary.

Jericho: Baptism site on the Jordan River

- Ongoing phase of works of conservation of the property as a result of the recent mine clearance and of the restitution of the area of the Sanctuary of the Baptism of Jesus.

- Phase or realisation of a master plan of interventions for the valorisation and development of the site for the welcoming of pilgrims.

Jerusalem: Basilica of Gethsemane

- Conclusion of the archaeological excavations that have brought to light a Hebrew ritual bath of the I century, a small Byzantine church of the V century with a stone inscription, the perimeter of the mediaeval monastery-hospice and many other stone finds.

- Continuation on the finishing touches of the tunnel and lifts for groups of pilgrims in order to connect the area of the basilica with the Kidron Valley through a pedestrian walkway.

- Continuation on the works for the building of bathrooms for the pilgrims in the Kidron Valley.

- On the point of commencement are the works for the new system of illumination of the exterior of the basilica, promoted by the municipality of Jerusalem.

- Phase of planning of 3 external chapels for the celebrations in the garden of the friary of the Agony.

Jerusalem: Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre of Our Lord

- On the point of commencement are the work of restoration of the floor of the Basilica and of the related infrastructures, in agreement with the Greeks and Armenians and in collaboration with the Università La

Sapienza (Rome) and the Centro di Restauri di Venaria (Turin).

- In course of realisation is the complete restructuring of the second floor of the friary and the building of an upper floor. In this way it will be possible to increase the number of rooms, and to make the friary more healthy, and compatible with modern standards of lighting and ventilation, as well as having a sufficient number of bathrooms.

Jerusalem: parish centre

- Phase of planning of interventions on the rationalisation of the spaces of the parish centre, with new installations and adequate bathrooms.

Jerusalem: Christian Information Centre

- Continuation of the realisation of five didactic and multi-medial halls for pilgrims, which are dedicated to the knowledge of the Holy Sepulchre.

Jerusalem: Christian Media Centre

- Completion of the renewal of the editors' offices.

- Completion of the renewal of the journalists' offices.

Jerusalem: Friary of Saint Saviour

Infirmary

- Substitution of the old drainage system which was creating problems in the infirmary and in the friary beneath.

- Phase of planning of a new air-conditioning system and domestic hot water.

Offices

- Completion of the restructuring of the areas for the transfer of the Souvenir Shop in view of the realisation of the future museum.

- Completion of the restructuring of the Legal Office with the realisation of a new office.

Friary

- Completion of the renewal of the friary kitchens.

- Completion of the interventions of extraordinary maintenance of the roofs.

- Completion of the renewal of the video surveillance system.

- In phase of commencement are the works on the restructuring of the chapter hall.

- In phase of commencement are the works of enlarging of the guest quarters.

Jerusalem: friary of Terra Sancta College

- Completion of the works of restoration of the conditions of safety in chapel as a result of damages caused by water infiltration from the roof.

- Completion of the air-conditioning system in some rooms of the friary.

Jerusalem: Maria Bambina, house of welcome for pilgrims

- Completion of the works for the security of the electrical system.

- Completion of the works of extraordinary maintenance of a portion of the edifice with 6 rooms.

- Phase of commencement of the works of restructuring of the kitchen/hall on the first floor, as part of the master plan of interventions for the improvement of the welcoming facilities.

Jerusalem: Sanctuary of Dominus Flevit

- In course of realisation is a master plan of interventions for the improvement of the welcoming of pilgrims and visitors to the sanctuary.

- Completion of the works of restoration of a building adjacent to the friary which will be used as a sacristy for an external chapel which is in the pipe-line.

Jerusalem: Terra Santa Museum

- In course of realisation is a modern museum centre for the valorisation of the Franciscan artistic, archaeological and cultural patrimony. Within an area of circa 2500 m2 will be included:

- An archaeological Museum: The places of the Bible in Palestine (Friary of the Flagellation) (Third phase)

- A historical Museum: The Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land (Friary of Saint Saviour)

- Completion of the interventions of consolidation of the areas that will be complementary to the areas dedicated to the museum in the Sanctuary of the Flagellation. The finishing touches are in the phase of being completed.

- Ongoing works of structural consolidation of the area of the museum in the friary of Saint Saviour.

Jerusalem: Friary of the Flagellation

0.0 Completion of the interventions on the safety of the electrical system of the conventual building, with the adoption of a new generator.

Mount Tabor: Basilica of the Transfiguration

- Planning phase of the general interventions for the conservation of the site with the creation of an internal parking lot for the monastery, and with a connecting road between the external and internal parking lots, including a pavement for use by disabled persons, and bathrooms for pilgrims.

- Planning phase of the interventions for the recovery of the building for the welcoming of pilgrims.

- Completion of the interventions of structural consolidation and restoration of the bell towers.

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

- Near completion of the interventions for the re-opening and development of the site.

Nazareth: Basilica of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin

- Phase of completion of the restructuring of an entire floor of the friary with an updating of the electrical system, with air-conditioning and with domestic hot water, by installing modern and cost-efficient systems.

NB: In the realisation of these works, although having to face many complications in order to gain permits during the various lockdowns, the Custody has privileged the work of manpower coming from the West Bank in order to offer work to the Christians coming from a territory that does not benefit from welfare or social benefits. During these two years these workers would otherwise have remained nearly totally deprived of economic resources.

Works in favour of the local community

·Bethlehem: Boys Home; a Home for 30 young boys coming from families with social difficulties. 20 are internals (h 24) and 10 are welcomed on a daily basis.

·Financing of 509 university scholarships (284 by the Custodial Economato and 225 by the FFHL) for a period of 4 years, distributed in various universities (Bethlehem, Hebrew University, Bir Zeit, Amman).

·Aids for the safety measures of activities in 10 small artisan activities.

·Supplementary economic aid is also sent occasionally to Bethlehem and to Jerusalem in order to meet the health expenses of some families and their basic needs for livelihood.

Schools:

Amman:

0. This year no great works have been undertaken because of Covid. Importance has been given to long-distance learning in order to follow the students in a more efficient way. However, the construction work on the vocational centre (ex-minor seminary) has been concluded, transforming the building in a multifunctional centre of welcome for spiritual retreats and youth activities. The building has 20 beds, two well-equipped conference halls, a larger chapel and new furniture.

Bethlehem:

·Accommodation of the multipurpose *Millenium Hall*.

Cana:

·Concluding phase of the works for the building of the new school (the work on the structure itself is concluded). The complex will also include a parochial centre and a covered parking lot covering a total area of 5.000m².

Jerusalem - Saint Joseph School (Jaffa Gate):

·The works of extraordinary maintenance on some of the halls of the schools have been concluded.

Jerusalem - Terra Sancta School (Damascus Gate):

·Phase of realisation of new areas for sport activities underneath the large courtyard of the school. These will comprise a swimming pool, a gymnasium and a play ground on the roof of the edifice. These buildings will also be used by the young people of the Old City.

Jerusalem - Hellen Keller School – Beth Hanina:

·Completion of the restructuring of the elementary school after the opening of the kindergarten (at this point it can receive a total of 400 pupils).

Jerusalem - Hellen Keller School (school for blind children):

·Completion of the restructuring of the school.

Jaffa:

·Phase of completion of the works of structural consolidation and restructuring of a part of the building that houses 6 halls of the elementary school.

Jericho:

·Resetting of the school library

·Acquisition of three maxi-screens with internet links for the kindergarten

·Acquisition of 4 overhead projectors for the kindergarten

- A fresco on the walls of the kindergarten

- A parking lot for the bicycles of the friary

Apartments for needy families and young couples

Jerusalem:

- Old City. Continuation of the works of restructuring of the houses of the Old City with the aim of improving the conditions of life of the residents: complete restructuring of 5 houses; partial restructuring of 6 houses; restructuring of the external buildings (facades, roofs, etc.) of 5 houses.

- *Dar al Consul renovation project*. Phase of completion of the restructuring of the residential complex of the Old City, with 42 apartments and a ground floor which was abandoned. The area of the project covers circa 2500m²:

- o Class A restructuring with major interventions for 16 houses (of which 10 are completed);

- o Class B restructuring with medium interventions for 16 houses (completed);

- o Class C restructuring with minor interventions for 10 houses (completed);

- o External restructuring of 6 houses (ongoing, of which 5 are completed);

- o Also completed are the works of recovery of the underground areas (1200m²) with the valorisation of the archaeological finds and the predisposition of areas for pilgrims and for commercial and cultural activities on a local level, destined especially for the young people of the Old City.

- *Dar el Kbire*: ongoing procedure to obtain permits for the enlargement of the building of 300-400m², and the planning of an intervention for improvement on 19 existing houses and on the externals (facades, roofs, etc.). The total area of interest for the project covers circa 2500m².

- *Tumian Palace*: ongoing procedure to obtain permits for the enlarging of the building with the realisation of 3 additional floors and 800m² for residential and religious use.

- *Abu Gerjes*: ongoing procedure to obtain permits for the enlarging of the building with the realisation of 750m² destined for offices, restaurants and shops.

- *Pisgat Zeev housing project*: ongoing procedure to obtain permits for building a new residential complex with 70-80 flats and 300m² for commercial use.

Nazareth:

- *Karm el Sacheb housing Project*: conclusion of the phase of planning and procedure to obtain permits for the realisation of a residential complex. The works on the project are beginning soon.

Other cultural works:

- *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*. Each year the Custody of the Holy Land offers economic support to the Faculty of Biblical Sciences and Archaeology of the *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum* of Jerusalem.

- Formation of 49 students in biblical sciences at the *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*. These students hail from various parts of the world and from poor religious provinces or dioceses. The Custody guarantees for them food and lodging and a scholarship. They will be destined to teach Holy Scripture in various countries of the world.

- *Christian Media Centre*. The services offered include: Website, completely renewed, simplified for use and

now *mobile friendly*; *Terra Santa News*, a weekly news bulletin on faith, history and current events in the Holy Land; transmitted by around 35 tv stations in the world in 10 languages (from this year also in Chinese); documentaries on social and religious themes, in different languages; direct transmission of liturgical celebrations and events.

·Institute of Music *Magnificat*. Affiliated to the Conservatorio di Vicenza, the *Magnificat* promotes activities of research and cultural manifestations on the local and international level. It welcomes more than 250 Christian, Muslim and Jewish students, guided by around 30 professors, who are also Jewish, Christian or Muslims.

·The International Franciscan Seminary of Saint Saviour in Jerusalem and the Seminary of Ain Karem welcome 31 young friars coming from the various Provinces of the Order of Friars Minor in order to study at the *Studium Theologicum Jerosolymitanum*.

·Formation of 60 young men in formation in the Custody (from aspirancy to specialised studies).

Rhodes

·Food aid and provision of basic necessities for the refugees that transit through the centre of temporary welcome of Rhodes and in that of Kos.

·Rhodes: weekly distribution of 530 food packs and hygienic packs for poor Greeks and refugees.

·Beginning of the restoration of the pastoral Centre of Kos after the earthquake.

·As a result of the economic crisis in Greece from 2008 till today, the Custody:

- o Helps cancer patients with psychological care;
- o Offers free lessons of English, Greek and Italian for the local population;
- o Offers scholarships for the young people of the parish.

Syria and Lebanon:

Works supported by *Pro Terra Sancta (PTS)*

Syria

Aleppo

1. 1) Centre for assistance Pro Terra Sancta - Azizieh - General emergency

Description of Project and activity: the social/emergency shelter which has been activated takes care of the distribution of food, medical assistance, vouchers for the acquisition of diesel for electricity and heating, clothes, detergents and hygiene products, diapers and powdered milk for infants. There are 25 volunteers, many of them young people, and 15 persons who accompany the staff which is largely permanent in the centre. The beneficiaries are singled out according to the following criteria: financial situation and number of components of the family; number of children present in the family and the number of elderly persons; widows with orphans under their responsibility or whose husbands are doing military service at war. During the course of 2018-2020 the aid for the support of reparation of houses has been intensified, as has that in favour of small shops and commercial activities, in order to favour an economic recovery and work in the city, besides a major support to students, including also a support for the prevention of Covid-19.

Number of beneficiaries during 2020-2021

6.800 families receive food packs, and non-food items, electricity and water (excluding 500 families with new-born/small children + 100 disabled Muslim children).

4.500 families receive support for electricity.

8.500 persons receive aid for medicine and medical assistance; 250 students receive economic help with scholarships and 120 students are directly supported with extra-curricular activities after school.

450 families are supported in the repair of houses (400 interventions of restorations); a total of 1300 repaired houses from 2018 till now. 280 shops/small commercial activities have been rehabilitated.

2. 2) Centre of assistance Pro Terra Sancta – Azizieh – Solar panels

Number of beneficiaries during 2020-2021

100 families have received solar panels to install for electricity and heating.

Cost 1 Solar water pump

Cost 1 Solar energy pump

3. 3) Franciscan Care Centre – Aleppo TSC

Description of the Project

The centre for psychological rehabilitation of children, called Franciscan Care Center, has been functioning since June 2018 close to Terra Sancta College (Saint Anthony's friary).

The activities include art therapy, music therapy, face to face assistance, teaching of English and French.

The centre also coordinates two window/centres for aid open in the area of East Aleppo, in collaboration with the Mufti and the Mukhtar of the zone, in order to help orphaned children in the area who are still not registered in the registry office - the project is called: "A name and a future", and has included the adhesion of circa 1.200 children and 600 single mothers.

Number of beneficiaries

25.000 persons/children have enjoyed the free use of the spaces and of the swimming pool during 2019-2021.

1.000 children have been registered in the centre of rehabilitation of Terra Sancta College.

24 local persons are especially involved in the centre (educators, teachers, psychologists, trainers, artists).

1. 4) Franciscan Care Centre – Centre of East Aleppo

Description of the Project

Two window/centres for aid have been opened in the area of East Aleppo, in collaboration with the Mufti and Mukhtar of the area, in order to assist orphaned children in that zone who are still not registered in the registry office - the project is called: "A name and a future", and includes the adhesion of circa 1.2000 children and 600 single mothers.

Number of beneficiaries

1.200 children/orphans of East Aleppo have been followed in the two centres

600 women from East Aleppo have been supported and formed.

43 local specialised persons are involved in 3 offices of the centre (educators, teachers, psychologists, trainers, artists).

1. 5) Rosary School - Aleppo

Description of the Project

Covering of part of the annual current expenses of the Rosary School of Aleppo: covering of 50% of the monthly salaries of the teachers; buying of computers, school benches and stationery; maintenance costs and general expenses of the structure; help to needy families for extra-curricular activities and after-school sessions for children with difficulties of learning.

Number of beneficiaries

300 children with their respective families

33 teachers

Hama

1. 6) Franciscan Care Centre - Centre for psychological rehabilitation of children

Description of the Project

The centre for psychological rehabilitation of children, called Franciscan Care Centre, has been functioning since June 2018 in some areas of Terra Santa College (friary of Saint Anthony) that have been completely restructured and assigned for the use as classes for learning and spaces for activities of rehabilitation.

Number of beneficiaries

200 children enrolled in the centre of rehabilitation of Hama, the majority of whom are Muslim.

15 local specialised persons are involved (educators, teachers, psychologists, trainers, artists).

Damascus

1. 7) Centre Pro Terra Sancta Dar Bulus – Emergency Project

Description of the Project

At the centre Pro Terra Sancta a social/emergency centre has been activated, which is occupied with the distribution of vouchers for the acquisition of food, medicine and support for medical prescriptions, diesel for electricity and heating, clothes, detergents and products for hygiene, diapers and powdered milk for children.

The centre has made an agreement with ten food shops and pharmacies for acquisition of goods through vouchers and a successive monthly payment. The beneficiaries are singled out by following the following criteria: financial situation and number of components of the family; number of children present in the family and number of elderly members; widows having responsibility of children; mothers whose husband is on the war front.

Number of beneficiaries

700 families are supported with food and non-food items every month and 600 persons are helped with medical/sanitary assistance and medicines; 200 families with new-born children are helped for expenses of milk/diapers.

250 students are supported with scholarships and scholastic material.

1. 8) Centre Terra Sancta Dar Bulus – Project for formation, development and work

Description of the Project

At the centre Pro Terra Sancta, a window has been activated to help the work of offering a course of formation for carers, with successive insertion in a working position, and a course of formation of business startup offered to young people who are chosen with successive grants to support the most original and sustainable ideas.

Number of beneficiaries

20 young people formed and accompanied to find work as specialised carers in the assistance of elderly persons.

20 startupper and formed young people and 8 young people helped with a fund in order to start their own activity.

1. 9) Centre of welcome and medical assistance - Tabbaleh

Description of the project

Support and aid to the activities of assistance for sick persons welcomed in the Franciscan centre of Tabbaleh. The building houses 24 rooms, and for a few years now it has been giving hospitality to persons who are seriously ill and who have to undergo medical treatment for long periods in the hospitals of Damascus: the covering of part of the costs of medical treatment; acquisition of medicines and covering of expenses of the rooms of the building; covering of expenses to guarantee one meal a day. The intention is that of increasing the number of sick people who receive help and assistance,

Number of beneficiaries

140 sick patients who receive hospitality in the centre every year.

120 persons who receive help with the distribution of medicines and the covering of the operational costs and the costs of hospitalisation.

1. 10) Kindergarten at Damascus - Tabbaleh

Description of the Project

Support and aid to the kindergarten at Tabbaleh. The kindergarten is found in some areas of the building of the Franciscan friary. It consists of 6 classes for children aged 2,5 to 5 years, for a total of 140 children, 10 teachers and 2 employees for the office/cleaning. The project has supported the kindergarten through the following activities: acquisition of 150 new chairs and table (9 tables and 50 chairs for each class); acquisition of a generator for electricity; acquisition of general materials; payment of 20% of the monthly salary of the teachers; restructuring of some areas which were degraded.

Number of beneficiaries

140 children and their respective families.

10 teachers and 2 local employees of the school.

1. 11) Syrian Music Centre - Tabbaleh

Description of the Project

At the beginning of 2018 the Franciscan Music Centre was created. It is a small school of music, born in the unused areas of the building of the friary. The centre was born in collaboration with a local pianist and director of the "Centre of harmony for musical education in Damascus." The Centre proposes for Syrian children and pre-adolescents courses of guitar, pianoforte, violin and battery. ProTS sustains the current courses, the acquisition of musical instruments and part of the salaries of the teachers.

Number of beneficiaries

100 children + 8 local teachers of music.

1. 12) PSS activities for youth – Tabbaleh

Description of the Project

In collaboration with CRS, there is a possibility to add a third floor above the kindergarten, to create 1-2 halls for PSS activities for young people in Damascus. CRS has shown itself interested and ready to consider a budget for the building/implementation. The hall which will be created will also help for the activities of the kindergarten, in particular during winter.

Number of beneficiaries

100 young people.

1. 13) Centre for medical assistance

Description of the Project

In the quarter of Jaramana, one of the poorest quarters of Damascus, since 2015 a medical studio has been established, which is active for 5 hours daily for 5 days a week and is specialised in blood analysis, studies of peripheric blood, bone marrow aspiration, and biopsy of the bone marrow. The patients coming from poor families who need medical assistance have grown exponentially since the end of 2016. For this reason Pro TS, in agreement with the parish of the Franciscans of Bab Touma, has decided to support the medical centre, covering the current and general expenses of the building and in particular offering economic assistance to the poorest patients and those in serious conditions.

Number of beneficiaries

4.000 patients assisted and cured in the same institution.

2 doctors and 4 nurses employed at the medical centre.

1. 14) Saint George Kindergarten - Maaloula

Description of the Project

Maaloula is a small village in the governorate of Rif Dimsahq some 56 km north-east of Damascus. The kindergarten of St. George is found within the building of the Greek-Melchite Catholic Church of St. George and

represents the only educative institution for infants which is still functioning in the area. The building is very modest and up till now the kindergarten consists of 5 classes and two adjacent bathrooms. During the course of these war-torn years the building has suffered many damages, some of the halls are in a dangerous condition, and all the rooms present serious water-infiltration problems. The various costs of the building are being supported as well as the economic coverage for some families who do not succeed in paying their monthly fees.

Number of beneficiaries

30 children enrolled in the kindergarten and their respective families; 3 teachers

Knaye

1. 15) Emergency Centre Pro Terra Sancta - Knaye and Yacoubieh (province of Idlib)

Description of the Project

A social/emergency centre has been activated in the friary of Knaye. It is occupied with the distribution of food, medicines, vouchers for the buying of diesel for electricity and heating, clothes, detergents and products for hygiene, baby diapers and powdered milk for infants. The beneficiaries are singled out following these criteria: financial situation and number of components of the family; number of children present in the family and number of elderly persons; widows with the responsibility of children; women whose husbands are on the war front.

Number of beneficiaries

260 families are supported in order to have water, electricity and heating + 60 families who are homeless receive hospitality in the friary during the course of the year.

70 children and their respective families; 65 students and 11 local teachers.

1. 16) Kindergarten of Darkoush - Idlib

Description of the Project

Through the Franciscan presence in Knaye it is possible to support a kindergarten in the village of Darkoush, south of Idlib - this is the only structure for maternity and infancy which is functioning in the area. The kindergarten welcomes children aged from 4 to 6 years, who belong of very poor Muslim families. The support of ProTS for now has been geared towards the acquisition of furniture, the repainting of the halls and of the dining room, and the acquisition of games and didactic material.

Number of beneficiaries

150 children frequent this kindergarten + 6 local teachers

Latakiah

1. 17) Centre of Assistance Pro Terra Sancta – Latakiah – General emergency

Description of the Project

A social/emergency centre has been opened in the friary of Latakiah. It is occupied with the distribution of food, medicine and medical assistance, vouchers for the acquisition of diesel for electricity and heating, clothes, detergents and products for hygiene, baby diapers and milk powder for infants. A contribution is given also by the children themselves through the covering of the major part of the cost for scholastic material (books, stationery, and part of the school fees). 2 collaborators Pro TS (Eva and Hinryette) are directly involved in the activity of the project, together with some other volunteers. The beneficiaries are singled out by following these criteria: financial situation and number of components of the family; number of children present in the family and number of elderly persons; widows who have children to take care of.

Number of beneficiaries

380 families are helped with food and non food items, monthly rent of the house; 450 receive milk and diapers.

130 persons every month receive help for medicine and health assistance.

150 students and their respective families.

1. 18) Centre of Assistance Pro Terra Sancta – Latakiah – Medical dispensary

Description of the Project

In collaboration with AVSI and the Apostolic Nunciature of Damascus, a dispensary has been activated in the medical centre.

Number of beneficiaries

380 families helped with food and non-food items, monthly rent of the house; 45 receive milk and diapers.

130 persons every month receive help with medicines and health assistance.

150 students and their respective families.

19. 19) Centre of Assistance Pro Terra Sancta – Latakiah – Support and development for women

Description of the Project**Number of beneficiaries**

15 women receive help in the formation of life skills and insertion into work.

30 women have frequented the tailoring and sewing course for 6 months and are then helped to find work.

50 women are helped with courses of formation and grants in order to start a job of their own.

20. 20) Latakiah Summer Camp – centre for recreation and psychological support for children

Description of the Project

Until now the project has been directed at children coming from families who have been internally displaced. It has proposed activities of recovery and rehabilitation through laboratories of art, sports and cooking, involving also teachers and specialised personnel.

Number of beneficiaries

200 children/young people who are internally displaced + 22 teachers and specialised staff who are involved + 12 orphaned children who are assisted on an annual basis.

Lebanon

Beirut

1. 21) Centre of Assistance Pro Terra Sancta – Jemmaize – General emergency

Description of the Project and activity

The social/emergency centre is found within the building of the friary of Jemmaize, where two rooms have been recovered for the offices of Pro Terra Sancta. Around 10 persons work there, consisting of permanent staff and collaborators.

Number of beneficiaries

650 families of Beirut, Tripoli and Tyre who are reached with the distribution of goods of basic necessities.

35 houses have been repaired and 35 families have now returned to live in security in their own homes.

350 persons have been helped with medicines and covering of medical expenses.

80 scholarships for needy students in the are of Beirut.

50 scholarships for the university students who are in need in the area of Beirut and Harissa.

1. 22) Franciscan Care Centre - Centre for psychological rehabilitation for children

Description of the Project

The centre for psychological rehabilitation for children, called Franciscan Care Centre, has been functioning also in Beirut since November 2021. 4 rooms and a big hall have been recovered.

Numbers of beneficiaries

200 children are enrolled in the centre of rehabilitation in Hama, the majority of whom are Muslims.

40 young people between 25 and 35 years old are helped with psychological support and also in order to find work, and in life skills.

15 local specialised persons are involved (educators, teachers, psychologists, trainers, artists).

1. 23) Centre of assistance Pro Terra Sancta – Jemmaize – Education project (2022)

Description of the Project

Hypothesis for a wider project of education and after-school extra-curricular activities.

Number of beneficiaries

200 children are involved.

Tripoli

1. 24) Centre of Assistance Pro Terra Sancta – Medical dispensary

Description of the Project

Within the building of the friary of Tripoli, 3 rooms have just been renewed and prepared to become a medical dispensary. They are active for two days a week with 3 doctors who are available (including a pediatrician), and with the distribution of medicines.

Number of beneficiaries

250 persons have received help during the first month, including 70 children.

1. 25) "Saint Francis Sports Centre" – El Mina

Description of the Project

In the friary of San Francesco in Tripoli there is a large sports centre composed of: a football field, a basket-ball court, an playground. The sports centre is very important in the quarter and is presently frequented by children and adolescents, both Christian and Muslim, who come from Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian families. The aim is that of supporting the development of the centre, by providing aid for the beginning of the works in order to arrange the spaces dedicated for play, to cover the fields and to renew the changing rooms and organise sports tournaments and courses.

Number of beneficiaries

300 children and young people coming from poor Lebanese families and Palestinian and Syrian refugees have made use, whenever possible, of the sports field and of the training sessions organised and proposed by the centre.

1. 26) Support for education – Tripoli

Description of the Project

In collaboration with local schools (Tripoli, Adonis, Carmelites, Gbaleh, Menjez) some scholarships have been instituted during the year in support of the students and of the families most in need.

Number of beneficiaries

100 scholarships for children and families who are most in need.

1. 27) Centre PAD – Gbaleh, Tripoli

Description of the Project

Support to the centre of psychological recovery PAD, instituted near the building of the school of the sisters of Ivrea in Gbaleh.

Number of beneficiaries

40 families helped by psychologists and professionals in a course of psychological recovery.

Tyre

1. 28) Cultural centre of Tyre

Description of the Project

Within the building of the friary of Tyre, there is the intention of creating a large hall-cinema and using it as a cultural centre and as a space of events for young people and open meetings.

1. 29) Bakery at Deir Mimas

Description of the Project

Intention to cover the costs of a bakery that can function in favour of poor people in Tyre and Deir Mimas, involving 7 local persons in the production of bread and other hot meals for the poor families of the area.

Number of beneficiaries

150 families are helped every week.

Ordinary Stipends of the Custody of the Holy Land

Monthly stipends of circa 1.020 employees in Israel and Palestine divided between 15 schools (60% of the total number of workers), 4 Case Nove for pilgrims (20% of the number of workers), 80 sanctuaries, 25 parishes and many other various activities.

During the COVID pandemic the employees having residence in Israel could benefit from a form of subsidy (*halat*) until October 2021. The State paid this subsidy and it corresponded to 70% of their salary. The workers of the State of Palestine, instead, were totally deprived of any welfare. For this reason, the Custody chose to continue to pay half of the salary of the employees from Palestinian territories who remained at home, and obviously 100% for those who could come to work. The Custody also tried to see to it that in the works in the friaries and other restoration works, it employed in a special way those Christian workers coming from the West Bank, in order to guarantee a livelihood for their families. This choice has obviously been a burden on the Custody during a time in which the offerings coming in from the pilgrims in the sanctuaries were nil. This has been the situation since February 2020.

Jerusalem, 8 January 2022
