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SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

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Appeal for the Collection for Christians in the Holy Land

Letter of the Prefect of the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches

The “pro Terra Sancta” Collection

Summary Report of the Custody of the Holy Land on the projects and works realized with the 2021/2022 Collection

Letter of the Prefect of the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches

Ash Wednesday 2023

Dear Brother in the Episcopate,

In the account of the Lord’s Passion on Good Friday, we hear reported among the signs accompanying the death of Jesus, “the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, the earth shook, and the rocks split” (Mt 27:51-52). Just as humanity was slowly recovering from the consequences of the pandemic, a few weeks ago we witnessed the upheavals caused by the terrible earthquake. Felt even in Jerusalem, it caused great damage and a very high number of deaths in Syria and in southern Turkey, lands visited by the Apostles, where early Christianity thrived with outstanding monastic and eremitical traditions. We are all indebted to the theological schools that flourished there and contributed to the development of the understanding of the mystery of Christ, even if we often do not know them due to the persecutions that extinguished them.

To the drama of the war that has lasted for over twelve years in Syria, the strong seismic shocks added devastation caused by collapsed buildings. Many of our brothers and sisters in faith and in humanity have faced a new exodus from their homes, this time no longer for fear of bombs or for what the invasion of the Plain of Nineveh had meant in Iraq, but because their very houses trembled. The refuges of families and intimate

dwellings of their deepest affections faced the risk, alas often realised, of turning into deadly tombs.

The ravages of the long war and the recent earthquake have once again laid bare the fragility of the securities to which humanity entrusts its hope, and make us feel more strongly the desire to take root in the Rock of God's fidelity in the Pasch of Christ, dead and risen. We saw His image desecrated a few weeks ago by vandalism at the Church of the Flagellation, along the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem. That mutilated Crucifix invites us to recognize the pain of so many of our brothers and sisters who have seen the bodies of their loved ones tortured under the rubble or hit by bombs. We are called to walk the way of the Cross hand in hand with them, knowing that, in every age, each sepulchre, just like that of the Basilica of the *Anastasis* in the Holy City, is not the last word on the life of man. The precious presence of the Friars of the Custody of the Holy Land not only guarantees the maintenance of the sanctuaries, but also safeguards the life of the Christian communities, often tempted to lose their vocation to be Easter people in the lands blessed by the presence of the Redeemer.

In recent weeks, many houses of Franciscan Friars and Sisters, as well as those of other Religious Orders and Congregations, have become tents and shelters for the displaced in Syria as in Turkey. More generally throughout the Holy Land, they remain sources of hope by caring for the littlest ones, educating schoolchildren and youth, accompanying mothers in difficulty, attending to the elderly and the sick, as well as offering housing projects for new families and creating jobs, so that it is worthwhile continuing to stay in the Places of Salvation.

The universal Church and all of humanity have once again shown themselves attentive in this emergency, coming to the aid of those afflicted by the natural catastrophe. The Holy Father, Pope Francis, following his predecessors, this year too has instructed the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches to revive the invitation to solidarity with the Christian community of the Holy Land as Saint Paul, the Apostle to the Nations, had already done with a collection for the Church of Jerusalem. The material gesture to which he calls us is accompanied above all by a word that rekindles our sense of keeping alive the memory of the origins, as the prophet Isaiah recalls: "Consider the rock from which you were hewn" (Is 51:1). The Church spread throughout the world with the preaching of the Apostles, and each of us through Baptism, has become a stone called to remain united to the foundation, which is Christ the Lord, in order to construct a spiritual building. In Jerusalem are our wellsprings, and we want to remain united with the brothers and sisters who continue to testify to the Gospel there. Let us cherish the historical memory of the Upper Room, making our homes and parishes cenacles of prayer and charity. Let us reinforce the spaces of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre and restore them to light, but above all, let the announcement of the Risen Lord abide in our hearts. Let us maintain the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth, but let us allow our lives to be changed daily by the Word of the Lord as the Virgin Mary did. Let us join the rejoicing angels in the mosaics of the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem, but let us take care of those who are born and remain on the margins of our society, like the Holy Child in the cave, surrounded only by shepherds.

I ask you with all my heart that the Good Friday Collection therefore be generous, like so many "mites" of the widow praised by Jesus in the Gospel.

On behalf of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, I thank the bishops, the parish priests, all the religious and parish communities, as well as the commissioners of the Holy Land, who everywhere in the world help to achieve this annual pilgrimage to the sources of Christian existence. Thanks, especially on behalf of those who, through your goodness, will return to a more dignified life.

Sincerely,

✠ Claudio Gugerotti
Prefect

Rev. Flavio Pace
Under-Secretary

The “pro Terra Sancta” Collection

DICASTERY FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES

2022 A.D.

Introduction

The Collection “*Pro Terra Sancta*” was born out of the desire of the Popes to maintain a strong bond between the faithful across the world and the Holy Places. It is the main source of material support for Christian life in the Holy Land and a tool for the universal Church to express solidarity with the ecclesial communities of the Middle East. In recent times, Saint Paul VI gave a significant boost to supporting the Holy Land with 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 its many pastoral, educational, welfare, health and social facilities.

The territories which benefit 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 Dicastery for the Eastern Churches, which is used for the formation of candidates to priesthood, the support of clergy, educational activities, cultural formation and for subsidies to the several ecclesiastical Circumscriptions in the Middle East.

This report is a synthesis of what the Dicastery received in 2022 and how it was distributed.

Donations received in 2022 for the Holy Land Collection	US\$ 9.043.319
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Academic, Spiritual and Human Formation of the Seminarians and Priests of the Churches under the Jurisdiction of the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches

Thanks to the Collection, contributions can be made to seminaries, religious houses of formation and cultural institutions in the relevant territories and even in Rome, supporting in various forms (scholarships, university fees and health care) young seminarians and priests, men and women religious and, depending on the funds available, some lay people. The college, which was opened five years ago to host nuns who come from various Eastern countries, this year welcomes 27 consecrated women, out of a total of 252 students, who benefit from the scholarship, and are hosted in all 7 colleges under the jurisdiction of the Dicastery.

In addition, the Dicastery contributes to the support 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 the Grand Chancellor, as well as to supporting the Committee for Cultural Collaboration which develops its activity in the ecumenical field.

Formation of seminarians, priests and nuns in Rome, Maintenance of Colleges	US\$ 3.000.000,00
Pontifical Oriental Institute (PIO)	US\$ 1.066.600,00

Extraordinary subsidies for the Committee for Cultural Collaboration (PCUC)	US\$ 50.000,00
Totale	US\$ 4.116.600,00

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.

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 in the hope they will engage in building 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 very appreciated.

Secretariat of Solidarity	US\$ 1.054.400,00
Schools of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem	US\$ 900.000,00
Bethlehem University	US\$ 1.000.000,00
Total	US\$ 2.954.400,00

Ordinary and Extraordinary Subsidies

The Dicastery contributes to supporting the Churches under its jurisdiction with subsidies drawn from the Holy Land Collection: they contribute to the daily life of all the Circumscriptions.

After 10 years of war, a devastating earthquake has recently hit northwestern Syria with buildings falling apart in Aleppo, Lattakia and Idlib, as well as southern and central Turkey, and killing thousands. The visit of the Prefect to Syria and Turkey made a week after the disaster was an opportunity to show the closeness, affection and concern of the Holy Father to the people affected in both countries, to give strength to the bishops, priests, charitable workers, and also to outline plans for future renovation and reconstruction work of the houses, schools, churches and other structures damaged or destroyed by the earthquake together with the ROACO Agencies.

The war and now the earthquake have left many people with no food, others with no medical treatment, children and youths without schools, and also orphans, wounded and widows with no one to look after them. On the one hand, there is the need to ensure the necessary means for a dignified life to those returning to Iraq and Syria, and to those who have taken refuge in neighboring countries, such as Lebanon and Jordan. On the other hand, attention must be also paid to cultural, spiritual and psychological activities which in some way bring people together despite religious and ethnic differences. To provide for all this, the collaboration of all people of good will is clearly necessary.

Ordinary Subsidies

Jerusalem	US\$ 318.000,00
Jordan	US\$ 25.000,00
Iraq	US\$ 122.000,00
Lebanon	US\$ 208.000,00

Turkey	US\$ 130.000,00
Syria	US\$ 283.000,00
Iran	US\$ 35.000,00
Egypt	US\$ 176.000,00
Ethiopia	US\$ 160.000,00
Eritrea	US\$ 168.000,00
Total	US\$ 1.625.000,00

Extraordinary Subsidies

Jerusalem	US\$ 51.000,00
Jordan	-----
Iraq	US\$ 707,00
Lebanon	US\$ 8.000,00
Turkey	US\$ 115.000,00
Syria	US\$ 40.000,00
Iran	-----
Egypt	US\$ 25.000,00
Ethiopia	US\$ 20.215,00
Eritrea	US\$ 20.000,00
Total	US\$ 279.922,00

Summary Report of the Custody of the Holy Land on the projects and works realized with the 2021/2022 Collection

Custody of the Holy Land

Order of Friars Minor

Summary Report 2021/2022

For centuries, the Custody of the Holy Land has been committed to the conservation and revitalization of the Holy Places of Christianity in the Land of Jesus and throughout the Middle East. Amongst the various objectives of the Franciscan mission, we recall the support and development of the Christian minority who live there, the conservation and enhancement of archaeological areas and sanctuaries, intervention in cases of emergency, the liturgy in places of worship, the apostolic works and assistance to pilgrims. Also for the two-year period 2021/2022, the Franciscan presence in the Holy Land was manifested through the planning, programming and execution of the following projects and works:

I. Works aimed at pilgrims.

II. Works aimed at benefiting the local community.

III. Rhodes

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

V. Ordinary salaries of the Custody of the Holy Land

The listed works were created thanks to various types of economic contributions, first of all the Good Friday Collection, then the fund raising activities of the Franciscan Foundation for the Holy Land (FFHL) and the Pro Terra Sancta association (PTS), but also from other private and institutional donors, as well as from the income from the activities carried out.

Thank God, at the time this report is drafted (January 2023), here in Jerusalem as in the rest of the world, Covid-19 has greatly reduced its destructive potential and its effects no longer impede the movement of people. This is allowing a gradual recovery of the influx of pilgrims, with some economic relief for Christian families and also for the Custody. Thus we can continue the mission entrusted to us knowing that Divine Providence, which has wanted us here, does not cease to take care of us.

WORKS ADDRESSED TO PILGRIMS

Acre: "Nursery school" building

- The planning of the renovation interventions of the "Nursery school" building is underway, in anticipation of making the apartment in which the nuns who ran the work habitable again.

Ain Karem: shrine of the birthplace of St. John

- Completed the renovation of the roof of the church of St. John the Baptist which includes the consolidation of the stone vaults.
- Completed the maintenance work on the other roofs of the monastery to resolve the problems of humidity infiltration.
- Completed the restoration work on the sacristy and adjacent rooms which suffered from serious humidity problems.
- Work completed for the construction of an external draining ditch close to the wall of the building, to protect the underground part.
- Completed the maintenance work on the facade on the side of the monastery to solve problems of moisture infiltration.
- Completed the internal maintenance works of the convent of the nuns due to the problems of water infiltration from the roofs and the facade.
- In the planning stage, the restoration works of the church where archaeological excavations are foreseen.
- The safety of the electrical system of the entire complex which includes the convent, church, seminary and reception of pilgrims is under construction.

Ain Karem: Sanctuary of St. John in the Desert

- The most urgent interventions for the conservation of the sanctuary are underway, on the basis of a master plan which includes the regulation of rainwater in the area surrounding the monastery.

Beit Sahour: Shepherds' Field

- A master plan of interventions for the conservation and development of the site has been defined, a large intervention which includes new external chapels for Liturgical celebrations, the redevelopment of the shepherds' cave, new toilets and infrastructures.
- The works for the construction of a new "Pilgrims Centre" are being completed, including new toilets and some ancillary rooms with a small souvenir shop, a refreshment area and a multifunctional room for small conferences.
- Work is underway for the construction of three of the five new external chapels for the celebrations of pilgrims. The structural works have been completed and the works relating to systems and finishes are in progress.
- A project for the arrangement of the archaeological area and a new excavation campaign in collaboration between the PIAC and the SBF are also being developed.

Bethlehem: Monastery of Saint Catherine

- Completion of the pilot project which provides for the installation of photovoltaic solar panels on the roof of the convent to reduce the energy costs of the Parish and monastery and to encourage the local population to value the use of renewable energies.
- Completed the first phase of the works for the solution of the humidity problems affecting the convent of the nuns, renovating the main water distribution infrastructures.
- In the process of starting the second phase of the works to replace the pipes that collect and convey rainwater to the ancient cisterns located in the basement of the monastery.

Bethlehem: Children's home for Boys

- Refurbishment of the pantry, kitchen and laundry to adapt them to hygiene and safety regulations.
- Completion of the children's play area with resurfacing of the synthetic surface, setting up the equipped area and making the external structures safe.

Capernaum: Sanctuary of the Eucharistic Promise

- Installed new shrine signage and explanatory signs.
- Expansion of the Pilgrim Centre.

Emmaus Qubeibeh: Sanctuary of saints Simeon and Cleophas

- Completed the maintenance work on the church's drainpipes which were causing major water infiltrations.
- Work completed for the consolidation of the wooden roof structures of the church.
- Other extraordinary maintenance interventions are being planned for the conservation of the structures of the church, the monastery and the former seminary.
- The project to equip the structure with an elevator shaft for the disabled is being developed.

Jericho: Site of the Baptism on the Jordan River

- Conservation interventions are underway on the property following the recent demining and the restitution of the area of the sanctuary of the Baptism of Jesus.
- Completion of a first phase of works for the cleaning and preliminary arrangement of the site, with interventions to make the central building safe and protect it from water infiltration and interventions on the surrounding area for the drainage of rainwater and levelling of the land left in very bad condition after demining operations.
- Creation of a master plan of interventions for the enhancement and development of the site for welcoming pilgrims.
- The first phase of the interventions envisaged in the master plan is in the design phase, with the construction of toilets for pilgrims and the arrangement of the premises under the church to house a chapel for Liturgical celebrations.

Jerusalem: Basilica of Gethsemane

- The archaeological excavations have brought to light a ritual bath from the 1st century, a Byzantine church from the 5th century with a stone inscription, the perimeter of the medieval monastery-hospice and various stone finds.
- The completion of the tunnel and lifts for groups of pilgrims are underway to connect the area of the basilica and the Valley of Cedron via a pedestrian path.
- Work is at an advanced stage for the construction of the service centre for pilgrims in the Cedron Valley.
- The process of starting work on the new lighting system for the exterior of the basilica, promoted by the Municipality of Jerusalem.
- The 3 external chapels for the Liturgical celebrations in the “Garden of the Apostles” of the monastery of the Basilica of All Nations are being designed.

Jerusalem: Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre of Our Lord

- Restoration work is underway on the floor of the Basilica and the related infrastructures, in agreement with the Greeks and Armenians and in collaboration with the La Sapienza University (Rome) and the Venaria Restoration Centre (TO).
- The complete renovation of the second floor of the monastery is at an advanced stage to restore the rooms and equip them with en-suite toilets. The implementation of a further plan to increase the number of cells available is also underway.
- In the process of starting the restoration work on the Crusader chapel, adjusting the lighting and ventilation of the premises and solving the problems of water infiltration from which it suffers.
- The renovation work on the first floor of the monastery (kitchen, refectory and other bedrooms) is in the planning stage.
- The safety measures for the electrical system of the monastery, the chapels and the sacristy are under construction.

Jerusalem: parish centre

- The first rationalization interventions of the parish centre spaces have been completed.
- More substantial interventions relating to the provision of adequate systems and services are being planned.

Jerusalem: Christian Information Centre

- Work completed for the construction of five multimedia educational rooms for pilgrims dedicated to knowledge of the Holy Sepulchre.

Jerusalem: Christian Media Centre

- Completed the works for the adaptation of the room used as a recording studio for the programmes.

Jerusalem: Monastery of St. Saviour

Infirmary

- Internal maintenance work completed in the infirmary rooms with replacement of the air conditioning system and painting/decorating of the rooms.

Offices

- Completed the renovation of the premises for the relocation of the Souvenir Shop in view of the creation of the historical section of the Museum of the Holy Land.
- Completed the restructuring of the former communication offices, to relocate other services of the Custody such as the master of Liturgical Ceremonies Office, the Liturgical Calendar Planner's office, etc.

Monastery

- New signage for the monastery has been erected.
- Completed the renovation works of the chapter house.
- Completed the expansion works of the friars' guesthouse with the renovation of the adjacent rooms and the construction of 5 new rooms.
- Completed the renovation/maintenance of the friars' rooms.
- Upgrading of the heating and domestic hot water system to reduce costs is under study.

Jerusalem: "Maria Bambina", Home for Pilgrims

- Maintenance work in the rooms is underway, pending more substantial work envisaged in the master plan of interventions which has been defined for the improvement of the reception of pilgrims.

Jerusalem: Sanctuary of Dominus Fleuit

- A master plan of the interventions for the improvement of the reception of pilgrims and visitors in the sanctuary is being developed.

Jerusalem: The Holy Land Museum

- A modern museum centre is under construction for the enhancement of the Franciscan artistic, archaeological and cultural heritage. The area of about 2500 m² will include:
 - Archaeological Museum: The places of the Bible in Palestine (Monastery of the Flagellation) (Third phase)
 - Historical Museum: The Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land (San Salvatore Convent)
- Structural consolidation and finishing/equipment interventions completed for the premises that will complete the museum area at the Flagellation sanctuary. The interior fittings are under construction.
- Structural consolidation works are underway in the museum area at the convent of San Salvatore.
- The design of systems, finishes and fittings of the museum area at the monastery of St. Saviour is nearing completion

Jerusalem: Dar al Consul

- Completed the renovation of the Dar al Consul complex in the Old City, recovering the disused ground floor of approximately 1200m² with enhancement of the archaeological finds and preparation of rooms for pilgrims and for cultural activities at a local level.

Jerusalem: Monastery of the Flagellation

- Completion of the works for an initial structural safety of the second floor of the most recent part of the convent.
- Work completed to improve the decor and expand the space in the courtyard available for pilgrims.
- Completion of the works for the construction of new toilets for pilgrims.
- Work completed for the renovation of the toilet facilities in the sacristy.
- The works for the installation of a new domestic hot water system are in the planning stage.

Mount Tabor: Basilica of the Transfiguration

- Structural consolidation and restoration of the bell towers completed.
- Work is underway for the renovation of a part of the Casa Nova, the construction of a small convent is planned to house the nuns who will collaborate in welcoming pilgrims.
- The study is underway for the recovery of the rest of the Casanova building, for the reception of pilgrims.

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

- Completion of the works for the reopening of the site with the construction of a prefabricated structure for

sacristy use and for the presence of a caretaker. The interventions for the arrangement of the part of the site around the church are underway.

Nazareth: Basilica of the Annunciation of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary

- Completion of the renovation of an entire floor of the monastery with installation of electrical, air conditioning and domestic hot water systems, which includes low consumption systems. The system preparations were made for the future renovation of the other floors of the monastery.

NB: In carrying out these works, there were some complicating issues due to the permits that needed to be requested and during the various lockdowns, a Christian work force from the West Bank was given privilege to work in view of the fact that they came from an area that does not benefit from welfare or “social shock absorbers” and therefore during the last two years as a result of the Covid lockdowns, they would have been totally without economic resources.

WORKS FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

- Bethlehem: **Boys Children’s Home**; a home for 30 children from families in social difficulty, 20 boarders (24 hours) and 10 day care boys.
- Financing of 509 university scholarships (284 from the Custodial Treasury and 225 through the FFHL Franciscan Holy Land Foundation) for a duration of 4 years, distributed in the various universities (Bethlehem, Hebrew University, Bir Zeit, and Amman).
- Aids for making the activities of 10 small craft businesses safe.
- In Bethlehem and Jerusalem, additional economic aid was sent on several occasions to meet the health costs of families and for basic necessities, through the parishes, during the Covid pandemic.

Schools:

Amman:

- During 2021 there were no major works due to the Covid Pandemic. The emphasis was on distance learning and following students’ wellbeing. However, the renovation of the vocational centre (the former minor seminary) was completed, transforming it into a multifunctional reception house for spiritual retreats and youth activities, number of beds 20, two well-equipped conference rooms, lift, enlargement of the chapel, new furniture.
- In 2022 work began to cover part of the square and to arrange the infrastructure for the Terra Sancta College’s sports activities.

Bethlehem:

- Arrangement of the multipurpose Millennium classroom.

Cana:

- Completed the works for the construction of the new school. The complex also includes the parish centre and a covered car park of an area of 5,000m².

Jerusalem - Saint Joseph’s School (Jaffa Gate):

- Maintenance work completed on some of the school's classrooms and service areas.

Jerusalem - Terra Sancta School (Damascus Gate):

- Work is nearing completion for the construction of new premises for sports facilities below the large school courtyard, which will house a swimming pool, gymnasium and playing fields on the roof of the building. These premises will also be for the use of the youth of the Old City.

Jerusalem - Helen Keller School – Beth Hanina:

- Completed the renovation of the elementary school after the opening of the kindergarten (currently 400 pupils in total).

Jerusalem - Helen Keller School (school for the visually impaired):

- Completion of the renovation of the school.

Jaffa – Elementary School:

- Structural consolidation work completed on a portion of the building that houses 6 elementary school classrooms, restoring the safety conditions necessary for the use of the premises. At the same time, the systems and finishes were renewed.

Jericho:

- Rearrangement of the school library
- Acquisition of three giant screens with internet access for the kindergarten
- Acquisition of 4 overhead projectors for kindergarten
- Creation of a fresco around the walls of the kindergarten
- Construction of a bicycle parking area

Apartments for the needy and young couples

Jerusalem:

- Old City. The renovation work on the houses in the Old City continues with the aim of improving the living conditions of the residents:

- o complete renovation of 8 houses;
- o partial renovation of 6 houses;
- o extraordinary maintenance of the exteriors (facades, roofs, etc.) of 7 homes.
- o ordinary maintenance or emergency interventions in numerous homes.

- **Dar el Kbire:** the procedure is underway for obtaining permits for the expansion of the building by 300-400m² and the design of the improvement intervention on the 19 existing houses and the exteriors (facades, roofs, etc.). The total area affected by the project is approximately 2500m².
- **Tumian Palace:** the procedure is underway for obtaining permits for the expansion of the building with the construction of 3 additional floors and 800m² for residential and religious use.
- **Abu Geries:** the procedure is underway for obtaining permits for the expansion of the building with the construction of 750m² for offices, restaurants and shops.
- **Pisgat Zeev** housing project: the procedure is underway for obtaining permits for the construction of the new residential complex with 70-80 residential units and 300m² for commercial use.

Nazareth:

- **Karm el Sacheb** housing Project: once the design phase and the procedure for obtaining permits for the construction of a residential complex have been completed, the construction works on the project must begin.

Other cultural works:

- **Studium Biblicum Franciscanum.** Every year the Custody of the Holy Land financially supports the Faculty of Biblical Sciences and Archaeology of the *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum* in Jerusalem.
- Formation of 62 students in biblical sciences at the *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum* from various parts of the world and from poor religious provinces and dioceses, to whom the Custody guarantees room and board and a scholarship. They are destined to teach Sacred Scripture in various countries of the world.
- **Christian Media Centre.** The services offered include: Website, completely renewed, simplified in use and now mobile friendly; Terra Santa News weekly news bulletin that tells about the faith, history and current events of the Holy Land; broadcast by about 35 broadcasters worldwide in 10 languages (from this year also in Chinese); documentaries on social and religious themes, in several languages; live coverage of liturgical celebrations and events.
- **Institute of Music The Magnificat.** Affiliated with the Vicenza Conservatory, the *Magnificat* promotes research activities and cultural events at a local and international level. It welcomes more than 220 Christian, Muslim and Jewish students, led by about 30 professors who are also Jewish, Christian and Muslim.
- Reception in the **International Franciscan Seminary of St Saviour** in Jerusalem and in the Seminary of Ain Karem and theological formation at the Studium Theologicum Jerosolymitanum of 31 young people from the various Provinces of the Order of Friars Minor.
- Formation of 60 young people in formation in the Custody (from aspirancy to specialist studies).

RHODES

- Distribution of food, medical and dental care for refugees in transit in reception centres on Rhodes and Kos.
- Rhodes: weekly distribution of up to 700 food parcels and basic necessities for hygiene to needy locals and refugees.
- Restructuring of the Pastoral Centre of the parish of Kos following the 2017 earthquake.

- Due to the economic crisis in Greece from 2008 to today, the Custody:
 - o help with psychological support for cancer patients;
 - o offering free English, Greek and Italian lessons to local people and refugees;
 - o offering scholarships for the youth of the parish and for children with learning difficulties.

SYRIA AND LEBANON:

WORKS SUPPORTED BY *PRO TERRA SANCTA* (PTS)

Syria

Aleppo

- 1) **Pro Terra Sancta Assistance Centre – Azizieh – General emergency**

Project description and activity: the activated social/emergency centre deals with the distribution of food, medical assistance, vouchers to purchase diesel for electricity and heating, clothes, detergents and hygiene products, diapers and powdered milk for children. There are 25 volunteers, mostly young people, 15 people who make up the more or less permanent staff of the centre. The beneficiaries are identified according to the following criteria: financial situation and number of family members; number of children in the family and number of elderly people; widows with dependent children or husbands at war. During 2021-2022 a kitchen was activated, with approximately 20 staff, cooks and volunteers involved, to prepare and offer hot meals, meeting the skyrocketing prices and the almost total lack of electricity to allow cooking at home.

Beneficiaries reached 2021-2022

3,000 families receive parcels of food and non-food items, electricity and water (including 500 families with infants/toddlers + 100 disabled Muslim children).

1,200 people a day receive a hot meal, prepared and distributed in the Franciscan social kitchen of the centre.

4,500 people helped with medicines and medical assistance.

250 students supported financially with scholarships and 120 students directly supported with after-school activities.

- 2) **Pro Terra Sancta Assistance Centre – Azizieh – Solar panels**

Beneficiaries reached

150 families receive installation of solar panels for electricity and heating.

Cost 1 Solar water pump + Cost 1 Energy solar panel = 2.500 EUR

- 3) **Franciscan Care Centre – Aleppo TSC**

Project Description:

The psychological rehabilitation centre for children, called the Franciscan Care Centre, has been in operation since June 2018 in some of the premises of the Terra Sancta College (at St. Anthony's Monastery).

The activities range from art therapy, music therapy, sports, face to face assistance, teaching of English and French.

Beneficiaries reached:

1,000 children and adolescents enrolled and assisted at the rehabilitation centre at Terra Sancta College.

24 specialized local people involved at the centre (educators, teachers, psychologists, coaches, artists).

• 4) **Franciscan Care Centre – Centres of East Aleppo**

Project Description

Three aid and reception centres opened in the East Aleppo area (a new centre was activated in 2022), in collaboration with the Mufti and the Mukthar of the area, to assist: orphaned children in that area and not yet registered at the Registry Office – the project is called: "A name-a future"; children who have been living in the context of war for almost 10 years, in poor areas and in a strong state of degradation; children aged 9-10 who are forced to leave school to work; support and help to women and mothers in East Aleppo.

Beneficiaries reached:

3,200 children/orphans from East Aleppo helped and looked after in the 3 centres.

600 women of East Aleppo supported and trained and 200 adults helped with training and job assistance.

43 specialized local people involved in the 3 centres of the centre (educators, teachers, psychologists, coaches, artists).

• 5) **Rosary School - Aleppo**

Project Description:

Coverage of part of the sum to purchase a minibus to transport children to the new school premises.

Beneficiaries reached:

300 children and their families

33 teachers

Hama

• 6) **Franciscan Care Centre - Psychological rehabilitation centre for children**

Project Description:

The psychological rehabilitation centre for children, called the Franciscan Care Centre, has also been activated

in Hama, at the complex of the church of the Immaculate Virgin Mary of the Syriac Catholics of Hama.

Beneficiaries reached:

200 children enrolled and assisted at the Hama rehabilitation centre, mostly Muslims.

15 specialized local people involved (educators, teachers, psychologists, coaches, artists).

Damascus

• 7) *Pro Terra Sancta* Dar Bulus Centre – Emergency Project

Project Description:

A social/emergency centre has been activated at the *Pro Terra Sancta* centre, which deals with the distribution of vouchers for the purchase of food, medicines 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 reached an agreement with a dozen food shops and pharmacies for the purchase through vouchers and the subsequent monthly payment. The beneficiaries are identified according to the following criteria: financial situation and number of family members; number of children in the family and number of elderly people; widows with dependent children; mothers with husbands at war.

• 8) *Pro Terra Sancta* Dar Bulus Centre – Training, development and work project

Project Description:

At the *Pro Terra Sancta* centre, a work aid desk was launched, which provided for the offer of a training course for caregivers, with subsequent job placement, and a business start-up training course offered to selected young people with a subsequent grant to support the most original and sustainable ideas.

Beneficiaries reached:

60 young people trained in business start-ups and 30 helped with a fund to start their own businesses.

• 9) **Reception and medical assistance centre - Tabbaleh**

Project Description:

Support and help in assistance activities for the sick received at the Franciscan centre of Tabbaleh. The complex has 24 rooms, and for some years has been hosting seriously ill people, cancer patients, who have to undergo long-term medical treatments in hospitals in Damascus: coverage of part of the medical treatments; purchase of medicines and coverage of room costs; expenses to guarantee one meal a day. The intention is to increase the number of patients helped and assisted.

Beneficiaries reached:

140 sick people hosted at the centre annually.

120 people helped with the distribution of medicines and covering the costs of operations and hospitalizations.

- 10) **Memorial Kindergarten - Tabbaleh**

Project Description:

Support and help to the kindergarten of Tabbaleh. The kindergarten is located in some rooms of the complex of the Franciscan Monastery. It has 6 classes for children aged 2.5 to 5, for a total of 140 children, 10 teachers and 2 secretarial/cleaning employees.

· **Beneficiaries reached:**

140 children and their families.

10 teachers and 2 local school employees.

- 11) **Franciscan Music Centre - Tabbaleh**

Project Description:

The Franciscan Music Centre, a small music school, built in the disused premises of the monastery complex. The centre was born in collaboration with a local pianist and director of the "Damascus Harmony Centre for Music Education". Guitar, piano, violin and drum lessons are offered to Syrian children and teenagers. *Pro Terra Sancta* covers running costs, the purchase of musical instruments and part of the teachers' salaries.

Beneficiaries reached:

100 children + 8 local music teachers.

- 12) **PSS activities for youth – Tabbaleh**

Project Description:

In collaboration with CRS, PSS and art therapy activities for young people and adolescents are offered in some rooms of the kindergarten and monastery.

Beneficiaries reached:

100 young people from the poor neighbourhoods of Damascus.

- 13) **Medical Assistance Centre**

Project Description:

Since 2015, in the Jaramana district, one of the poorest districts of Damascus, there has been a medical assistance centre active 5 hours a day for 5 days a week and specialized in blood tests, study of peripheral blood, bone marrow aspiration, bone marrow biopsy . *Pro Terra Sancta*, in agreement with the Franciscan parish of Bab Touma, also during 2022 has decided to support part of the costs of the medical centre, covering the current and general expenses of the structure and in particular by offering economic assistance to the poorest and most seriously ill patients.

Beneficiaries reached:

4,000 patients assisted and treated at the facility.

2 doctors and 4 nurses employed at the medical centre.

• 14) **St. George's Kindergarten - Maaloula**

Project Description:

Maaloula is a small village in Rif Dimashq governorate 56 km northeast of Damascus. The St. George's kindergarten is within the complex of St. George's Greek-Melchite Catholic church and represents the only educational reality aimed at the youngest still functioning in the area. The building is very modest and today the kindergarten consists of 5 classrooms and adjacent bathrooms. During the years of war the building has suffered a lot of damage, some classrooms are unsafe and in all the rooms there is serious infiltration of water. The current costs of the structure and economic coverage for some families who are unable to pay the monthly fee are supported.

Beneficiaries reached:

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

Knaye

• 15) ***Pro Terra Sancta* Emergency Centre - Knaye e Yacoubieh (Province of Idlib)**

Project Description:

At the Monastery of Knaye, a social/emergency centre has been activated, which deals with the distribution of food, medicines, vouchers to buy diesel for electricity and heating, clothes, detergents and hygiene products, diapers and powdered milk for children. The beneficiaries are identified according to the following criteria: financial situation and number of family members; number of children in the family and number of elderly people; widows with dependent children; mothers with husbands at war.

Beneficiaries reached:

240 families supported with water, electricity, heating (Christian and Muslim families).

60 children and their families; 65 students and 11 local teachers.

• 16) **Darkoush Kindergarten - Idlib**

Project Description:

Through the Franciscan presence in Knaye, a kindergarten is supported in the village of Darkoush, south of Idlib

- The only functioning nursery and childcare facility in the area. The kindergarten welcomes children from 4 to 6 years old, children of very poor Muslim families. The support of *Pro Terra Sancta* has so far foreseen the purchase of lockers, the repainting of the classrooms and the canteen, the purchase of games and educational materials.

Beneficiaries reached:

150 children attending kindergarten + 6 local teachers

Lattachieh

- 17) ***Pro Terra Sancta Assistance Centre – Latakia – General emergency***

Project Description:

A social/emergency centre was activated at the Franciscan convent of Lattakia, which deals with the distribution of food, medicines and medical assistance, vouchers to purchase diesel to generate electricity and heating, clothes, detergents and hygiene products, diapers and powdered milk for children. A contribution is also given to children through the coverage of most of the expenses for school materials (books, stationery, part of the school fees).

Beneficiaries reached:

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

130 people a month helped with medicines and health care.

150 students and their families.

- 18) ***Pro Terra Sancta Assistance Centre – Latakia – Medical dispensary***

Project Description:

In collaboration with AVSI and the apostolic Nunciature in Damascus, a medical dispensary has been set up within the centre, which will see those most in need.

Beneficiaries reached:

500 people helped with free medical visits and weekly distribution of medicines.

- 19) ***Pro Terra Sancta Assistance Centre – Latakia – Women's support and development***

Project Description: To facilitate and develop Women's support and development.

Beneficiaries reached:

50 women helped in life skills training and job placement, through a support program of activities and business start-ups.

40 women attended the 6-month cutting and sewing course and were then helped to find a job placement.

- 20) ***Lattakia Summer Camp – recreation and psychological support centre for children***

Project Description:

The project, which has so far been aimed at young people from families of internally displaced persons, has proposed recovery and rehabilitation activities through art, sport and cooking workshops, also involving teachers

and specialized personnel.

Beneficiaries reached:

200 internally displaced children/young people + 22 teachers and specialized staff involved

15 orphan children assisted annually

Lebanon

Beirut

- 21) **Pro Terra Sancta Assistance Centre – Gemmaize – General emergency**

Description Project and activity:

The social/emergency is located within the Gemmaize monastery complex, where two rooms have been recovered for the *Pro Terra Sancta* offices. About 10 people work between permanent staff and collaborators.

A project is carried out to include various social activities.

Beneficiaries reached:

650 families in Beirut, Tripoli and Tire reached by the distribution and aid of basic necessities.

35 houses repaired and 35 families who have returned to live in safety in their homes.

350 people helped with medicines and coverage of medical expenses.

80 scholarships for needy students in the Beirut area.

50 scholarships for needy university students in the Beirut and Harissa area.

- 22) **Franciscan Care Centre - Psychological rehabilitation centre for children**

Project Description:

The psychological rehabilitation centre for children, called the Franciscan Care Centre, has also been in operation in Beirut since November 2021. 4 rooms and a large living room have been recovered

Beneficiaries reached:

300 children enrolled and assisted at the Hama rehabilitation centre, mostly Muslims.

60 young people aged between 25 and 35 helped with psychological support and help for job placement, life skills.

15 specialized local people involved (educators, teachers, psychologists, coaches, artists).

- 23) **Pro Terra Sancta Assistance Centre – Gemmaize – Educational project (2022)**

Project Description:

Work continues on a wider education and after-school project.

Beneficiaries reached

350 children involved.

Tripoli

- 24) *Pro Terra Sancta* Assistance Centre – Medical Dispensary

Project Description

Within the Tripoli monastery complex, 3 rooms have just been renovated and used as a medical dispensary, active two days a week with 3 doctors available (including a paediatrician) and distribution of medicines.

Beneficiaries reached:

500 people helped in the first month, including 70 children.

- 25) “The St. Francis’ Sports Centre” – El Mina

Project Description:

At the monastery of St. Francis, in Tripoli, there is a large sports centre consisting of: a football field, a basketball court, a playground area. The sports centre is of great importance in the neighbourhood and is currently attended by Christian and Muslim children and young people from Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian families. We continue to support the improvement and expansion of the centre, work continues to arrange the playing spaces, cover the fields and renovate the locker room and organize tournaments and sports courses.

During 2022 it was also possible to complete the roofing of the football field, to allow its use in any weather condition, and work began to expand the sports center by creating a new structure that houses the gym for judo, dance and table tennis.

Beneficiaries reached:

300 children and young people from poor Lebanese families and Palestinian and Syrian refugees took advantage, when possible, of the camps and organized training offered by the centre.

- 26) Education support – Tripoli

Project Description:

In collaboration with local schools (Tripoli, Adonis, Carmelitani, Gbaleh, Menjez) scholarships were established and granted during the year to support the most needy students and families.

Beneficiaries reached:

100 scholarships for the most needy children and families.

- 27) **PAD Centre – Gbaleh, Tripoli**

Project Description:

Support to the PAD psychological recovery centre, set up at the school complex of the Franciscan Sisters of Ivrea di Gbaleh.

Beneficiaries reached:

40 families helped by psychologists and professionals in a path of psychological rehabilitation.

Shot

- 28) **Cultural Centre in Tyre**

Project Description:

Inside the complex of the convent of Tiro, the first works of recovery of two rooms have been completed, for the activities of distribution of food aid, medicines, hospitality.

A small souvenir shop has also been opened and the first works have begun for the new guest-house, the construction of baths and a small bar to welcome pilgrims and young people.

- 29) **Bakery in Deir Mimas**

Project Description:

The intention is to finance and build a bakery that is operational for the poor of Tire and Deir Mimas, involving 7 local people in the production of bread and other hot meals for poor families in the area.

Beneficiaries reached:

150 families reached weekly.

Project underway to promote the sale of handicraft products with the aim of involving and thus helping new families from the surrounding villages.

- 30) **Sidon**

Recovery of the Christian presence in Sidon, maturation of a project of interreligious and cultural activity.

ORDINARY SALARIES

OF THE CUSTODY OF THE HOLY LAND

Monthly salaries of approximately 1,027 employees in Israel (69%) and Palestine (31%) divided between 15 schools (62% of the total number of employees), 4 Casa Nova **Hostel** for pilgrims (8% of the number of employees), 80 sanctuaries, 25 parishes and many other various activities.

During the COVID pandemic, employees residing in Israel were able to benefit from a form of redundancy fund

(halat) until October 2021 which the State paid them and corresponded to 70% of their salary. The workers of the State of Palestine, on the other hand, were totally deprived of any form of welfare. For this reason the Custody chose to continue to pay half the salary of the employees of the Palestinian Territories who remained at home and obviously 100% of those who were able come to work. The Custody also tried to use mainly Christian people to work in the monasteries and in the projects involving restoration works, employing Palestinians from the West Bank to ensure a livelihood for their families. This choice obviously weighted and weighs heavily on the economy of the Custody at a time when there was no income from the sanctuaries due to the absolute lack of pilgrims from the end of February 2020 until a few months ago.

Jerusalem, 1st of January 2023
