



The Episcopal (Anglican) Church in Jerusalem & The Middle East
The Most Revd. Suheil Salman Dawani
President Bishop (Primate) and Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem

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Dear Bishop,

Supporting the Mission and Ministry of the Friends of the Holy Land

Please excuse this standard letter which I am writing to every Diocesan Bishop in England as I seek your prayers and support for the extraordinary work of the Friends of the Holy Land (FHL).

Many of you will be familiar with FHL, a UK based Charity, with a strong presence in this region supporting the most vulnerable Christians in the West Bank, Gaza, Israel and Jordan. FHL has an office in Bethlehem and the Very Reverend Hosam Naoum (Dean of St George's Cathedral, Jerusalem) is on their local Committee. FHL is one of the few organisations identifying and helping disadvantaged Christian families in the Holy Land.

FHL is not only apolitical in its activity; it is also a wonderful sign of ecumenism both here and in the UK. Launched in 2009 initially as a Catholic Charity, since 2012 it has been ecumenical, with both Cardinal Vincent and Archbishop Justin as its patrons. And Bishops in most RC and Anglican dioceses in the UK have an appointed FHL representative.

We, as the Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem, have been blessed with the support of FHL. Grants to the Diocese of Jerusalem from FHL, including from diocesan Lent, Advent and other appeals, have made a significant difference to the lives of many and have simultaneously increased awareness of FHL and encouraged prayer from parishioners across the participating dioceses. Such appeals have proved a very successful model.

The Diocese of Jerusalem provides more than 30 institutions, including 17 schools and 2 hospitals, one in Nablus and one in Gaza. With an Anglican population of only 7,000 persons, we are not able to maintain these institutions without help from outside agencies. FHL has for example, enabled us to fund Christian staff working in our hospital in Gaza. This hospital provides the majority of its services for free in one of the most deprived corners of the world. Further, FHL allow us to provide medical facilities for Christian families in Ramallah and Nablus, as well as educational grants to Christian families throughout the Israel and the West Bank. FHL has also renovated and equipped housing for poor Christian families in and around Bethlehem.

The work of FHL helps us witness to the love of Christ for all peoples that live in this region bringing relief to many of those who lives feel ignored and forgotten. Our prayerful partnership brings the gift of hope to many Christians in this land, especially as they come under increasing pressure to leave the region (Christians now make up less than 2% of the population in in this region).

I know that FHL brings unique benefits to the people of this land, and I believe that it has the potential to bring wonderful benefits to Christians in the UK, for example through engaging with FHL, Christians in the UK can:

- gain a real connection with the Christians that still live in the Holy Land. This connection is made possible through pray and through understanding the stories that face 21st century Christians in this region;
- engage in partnerships with our parishes and so explore and find fellowship with Christians across cultures;
- consider pilgrimage to this land, which can transform a Christians understanding of scripture; and
- most importantly, participate in our prayer for peace in this region.

If you were able to encourage the parishes under your care to engage with FHL, it would - I believe - make a wonderful difference to all those who live in this land. I know that Peter Rand, FHL's Vice Chairman, would be delighted to come and explain more about the FHL work. Peter is a volunteer and travels to the Holy Land every 2-3 months. He can be contacted by email at peter.rand@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk.

I continue to hold your ministry in my prayers,

Grace and Peace,



Archbishop Suheil Dawani
Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem
President Bishop (Primate) of the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East

cc.

The Most Reverend and Right Honourable the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury

Peter Rand, Vice-Chair, Friends of the Holy Land