



CONGREGATIO
PRO ECCLESIIS ORIENTALIBUS

Lent 2011

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Prot. N. 1/2011

Your Excellency,

Remembering the Good Friday Collection means recalling a commitment that dates back to apostolic times. St Paul testifies to it in his Letter to the Christians of Galatia: *they would have us remember the poor, which very thing I was eager to do (2:10)*. And he reasserted this to the brethren of Corinth and of Rome (1 Co 16; 2 Co 8-9; Rm 15): *However, I am going... to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem*.

The Holy Land expects the brotherhood of the universal Church and desires to reciprocate it in sharing the experience of grace and suffering that marks her journey. She wishes to recognize, first of all, the grace of the Synod of Bishops for the Middle East, and that of the Papal Visit to Cyprus. These events have increased the interest of the world and the return of a great number of pilgrims in the historical footsteps of the Lord Jesus. Yet also tangible is sorrow at the escalating violence to Christians in Eastern regions whose consequences are felt acutely in the Holy Land. The Christians of the East are experiencing the actuality of martyrdom and are suffering because of the instability or absence of peace. The most disturbing sign of this is their inexorable exodus. Indeed a few positive signs in some situations do not suffice to invert the sorrowful tendency of Christian emigration which impoverishes the entire area, draining it of the most vital forces constituted by the young generations.

It is therefore up to us to join the Holy Father to encourage the Christians of Jerusalem, Israel and Palestine, of Jordan and of the surrounding Eastern countries, with his same words: *We must never resign ourselves to the absence of peace. Peace is possible. Peace is urgent. Peace is the indispensable condition for a life worthy of humanity and society. Peace is also the best remedy to avoid emigration from the Middle East* (Benedict XVI, Homily at the Mass for the closing of the Special Assembly for the Middle East of the Synod of Bishops).

This appeal for the Collection is inherent in the cause of peace, of which the brothers and sisters of the Holy Land desire to be effective instruments in the hands of the Lord for the good of the whole of the East.

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His Excellency the Most Reverend
Msgr. Edward K. BRAXTON
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It takes place at the beginning of the Lenten journey towards Easter and can culminate on Good Friday or on the occasions considered most favourable in each local context. However, the Collection everywhere remains the ordinary and indispensable means of promoting the life of Christians in that beloved Land.

The Congregation for the Eastern Churches acts as spokesperson for these Churches' needs for pastoral care, education, social assistance and charity. Thanks to universal solidarity, they continue to be integrated in the sufferings and hopes of the respective peoples, developing in ecumenical and interreligious collaboration. They will give glory to God and will defend the rights and duties of the individuals and communities, starting with the personal and public exercise of religious freedom. They will stand beside the poor, without any distinction, contributing to the social promotion of the Middle East. Above all, they will live out the Gospel Beatitudes in forgiveness and reconciliation.

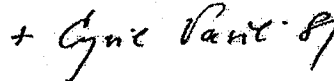
Pope Benedict invites us, however, to go beyond the gesture, although it is praiseworthy, of concrete help. The relationship must become more intense in order to attain a "true spirituality anchored to the Land of Jesus": *The more we appreciate the universality and the uniqueness of Christ's person, the more we look with gratitude to that land where Jesus was born, where he lived and where he gave his life for us. The stones on which our Redeemer walked are still charged with his memory and continue to 'cry out' the Good News..... Christians who dwell in the land of Jesus and bear witness to their faith in the Risen One... are called to serve not only as 'a beacon of faith for the universal Church, but also as a leaven of harmony, wisdom, and equilibrium in the life of a society which traditionally has been, and continues to be, pluralistic, multi-ethnic and multi-religious' "* (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Verbum Domini*, 89).

On behalf of the Holy Father I thank the pastors and the faithful of the whole Church, confident that they will confirm their generosity. My sincere gratitude is shared by the Latin Church, gathered in the Patriarchal Diocese of Jerusalem and in the Franciscan Custody, as well as by the Melkite, Maronite, Syrian, Armenian and Chaldean Churches which together make up the Catholic Church of the Holy Land.

With my most fraternal good wishes in Christ Jesus,



Leonardo Card. Sandri
Prefect



✠ Cyril Vasil', S.J.
Archbishop Secretary

CUSTODY OF THE HOLY LAND
Order of Friars Minor
Overview Report 2009/2010

The Custody of the Holy Land continues incessantly its path for the protection and preservation of the Holy Places in Jesus' Land. Its mission is to keep alive the liturgy in the places of worship, to take care of pilgrims, to enhance apostolic works, and support the Christian Community; for these reasons, in the years 2009/2010 the Custody gave special attention to the planning and the fulfillment of the following projects:

I. Holy Places – Pilgrims

1. Ain Karem – Sanctuary of St. John the Baptist.

The Sanctuary commemorates the birthplace of St. John Baptist.

- Construction of the surrounding wall, for an overall total of 340 meters, to limit the perimeter of the property of the Custody.

2. Bethany – The Sanctuary of Bethany.

The Sanctuary was built next to Tomb of Lazarus.

- Project divided into two parts: Renovation of the Sanctuary and Construction of the new garage.

3. Bethlehem – St. Catherine's Parish Church.

St. Catharine's Church, adjoining the Grotto of the Nativity.

- End of the project of renovation of the lighting system inside St. Catherine's Church.
- Perpetuation of the restoration works, in the rooms of Casa Nova Pilgrim House, due to the increasing number of pilgrims visiting Bethlehem.

4. Jerusalem

• **St. Saviour Monastery**

Where is located the Custody of the Holy Land See and the Seminar.

- The project includes the rehabilitation of the Theological Study, the restoration of some areas of the Convent.

• **Dominus Flevit Sanctuary**

- Final phase of the restructuring plan of the Convent of Dominus Flevit, of the Shrine, the gardens and the spaces dedicated to the reception of pilgrims

• **Sanctuary of the Flagellation**

Studium Biblico Franciscanum

- Restoration of the "Hall of the Crusaders", at the Sanctuary of the Flagellation.
- Enlargement of the Library of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum. The project includes also the installation of an elevator to facilitate the access to disabled people.

5. Magdala – Church of Mary Magdalene

Al-Majdal, identified with the site of the ancient town of Magdala, reputed to be the birthplace of Mary Magdalene.

- Perpetuation of the preservation works in the archeological site of Magdala, where important archeological remains have been found. It was necessary to remove the mosaic pavements, which from now on should be protected against the elements. Over the site is under construction visitor route, in order to make pilgrims understand the day life of the city in the time of Jesus.

6. Jaffa – St. Anthony’s Church

- Final phase of the restoration of the whole convent and of the rooms of the Latin Parish.

7. Mount Tabor – Sanctuary of the Transfiguration

Where took place the Transfiguration of Christ.

- Designing of the project of restoration of the Shrine of the Transfiguration at Mount Tabor.

8. Nain – Nain’s Sanctuary

Jesus resurrected a young man

- Designing of the project of restoration of the Shrine that commemorates the Miracle of the resurrection of the widow’s son. Only recently the Custody has got back the full possession of the area.
- Demolition of the buildings surrounding the Church, to allow the startup of the project of reconstruction of the Convent for the Nuns.

9. Tabga – Sanctuary of the Primacy of St. Peter

- Construction of new sanitary facilities and other restoration works at the Shrine of the Primacy of St. Peter.

10. Mount Nebo (Jordan) – Moses Memorial Sanctuary

Memorial of Moses

- Second phase of the works of reconstruction and conservation of the mosaics at the Memorial Shrine of Moses the Prophet.
- Second phase of the construction of the new Basilica of the Memorial.

11. Gethsemane

- Final phase of the recreation of the Kidron Valley, for the reception of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI.

II. Holy Places - Local Community

1. Works in favor of youth

- Scholarships. Funding system for 360 University Scholarships, lasting for four years. The facilitations are divided between different universities: Bethlehem, Hebrew University in Jerusalem and Haifa, Bir Zeit, Amman and others.
- Craftsman’s laboratories. The project is made to support 10 small craft businesses by the purchase of spare parts, equipments, devices to improve the security measures.

2. Activities in favor of the families

Bethlehem

- Development of the Family Counseling Parish project that supports the main needs that families can have.
- Franciscan Children's House. Perpetuation of the project dedicated to more than 20 youth between 6 and 12 years old, coming from poor families or with different kind of troubles. A youth worker, a social worker and a psychologist are available to receive and assist them.
- Medical Assistance. Development of this project that aims to ensure medical assistance to families in financial straits, by providing a partial or total coverage of medical expenses.
- Housing project. Rehabilitation of the houses belonging to families in need. The restoration is done by unemployed workers. Besides helping the families, we guarantee periodically many working places.

3. Parish Communities

• Jerusalem

- Conclusion of the rebuilding of the Church of S. James in Beit Hanina, perpetuation of the works of construction of different areas dedicated to sport activities in the Parish center, such as: a soccer field, 2 basketball courts and a swimming pool.

• Nazareth

- Realization of football fields and playground areas, for the children of the Parish center in Nazareth.

• Cana

- Designing and preparation of a project for the construction of a Parish center and a school. Structures not available at the present, but deeply wished by the local community.

• Jericho

- Construction of the Parish Hall adjoining the Shrine of the Good Shepherd.

4. Schools

• Ramleh

- Expansion and rehabilitation of the existing spaces of the school

• Bethlehem

- Planning and development of the project of building a theatre at the Saint Joseph Terra Sancta Girls School.

• Jericho

- Second phase of the building of a new school, bigger than the former, to face the increasing number of requests.

• Jordan

- Project for the construction of a sport centre at the Terra Santa School of Amman.

5. Housing development for poor and for young couples

- Beit Fagi. Last phase of the housing development project S. Francis - Beit Fagi. Here and now have been assigned 69 apartments to the Christian families of Jerusalem.
- Jerusalem. Rehabilitation of about 70 houses located in the Old City of Jerusalem.
- Bethlehem. Perpetuation of the rehabilitation and maintenance of the houses for the poor owned by the Custody.

- Jaffa. *The Franciscan Neighborhood*. Housing development project, for 124 apartments for the Christian families of the Parish.
- Nazareth. *Housing Project in Nazareth*. Project for the construction of a residential complex. Besides the construction of a Chapel and different social areas, will be constructed about 80 apartments for young families.

6. Other Cultural Activities

- Every year the Custody of the Holy Land supports the Faculty of Biblical Science and Archeology of the Studium Biblicum Francescanum of Jerusalem. The Custody provides to 30 students coming from different Dioceses, scholarships for the duration of all the studies.
- *Franciscan Media Center*. A new way of communication through an updated web site that, with the support of television networks, aims to broadcasts all the events related to the Holy Places and the local community.
- *Magnificat*. In a few years of activity, the Magnificat has become a school of music that prepare youth coming from different cultures. Magnificat institute advance research activities and promote cultural events both at local and international level.

In addition to the works developed and planned for the Holy Land, must be mentioned also the other action taken in **Syria and Lebanon**. Such as:

- Completion of the restoration of the Parish Church at Saint Francis convent in Aleppo.
- Conclusion of the renovation works in Tripoli's Convent.