

DICASTERY FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES

2025 A.D.

Introduction

The Collection *Pro Terra Sancta* was established in response to the desire of the Popes to foster a strong bond between the faithful throughout the world and the Holy Places. It is the principal source of material support for Christian life in the Holy Land and a privileged means through which the universal Church expresses solidarity with the ecclesial communities of the Middle East. With the Apostolic Exhortation *Nobis in Animo* (25 March 1974), Pope Saint Paul VI gave renewed impetus to supporting the Holy Land, which he had visited during his historic pilgrimage in 1964.

Through the funds traditionally collected on Good Friday, the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land is able to fulfill its mission: preserving the Sacred Places - the stones of memory - and sustaining the Christian presence - the living stones - through numerous pastoral, educational, charitable, health-care, and social works. Ordinarily, the Custody receives 65% of the Collection, while the remaining 35% is entrusted to the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches for distribution. What follows is a report on the use and beneficiaries of the Collection.

Ordinary and Extraordinary Subsidies

The territories associated with salvation history and benefiting in various ways from the Collection include Jerusalem, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Greece, Turkey, Iran, and Iraq. These countries face serious challenges of different kinds, and the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches intervenes to sustain local communities, with particular attention to the life and activities of the Churches. An ordinary annual subsidy is provided to all Eastern and Latin eparchies in these regions, except in Ethiopia, where the Latin Church falls under the Dicastery for Evangelization.

This support enables ecclesial communities to remain alive through assistance to priests, religious, institutions, families, and pastoral initiatives. The Collection thus offers concrete aid for preserving the Christian presence in the Holy Land and throughout the Middle East, in societies marked by social, economic, and political hardship.

Subsidies for Educational Activities

The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Franciscan Custody, the Eastern Catholic Churches of the Holy Land, and Religious Institutes are deeply committed to the education of young people. Together with the Secretariat of Solidarity, they receive assistance from the proceeds of the Collection.

Ongoing conflict in Gaza, high unemployment, and reduced tourism have further strained the economic stability of schools in Palestine. The Dicastery pays close attention to such emergencies, ensuring that education continues without interruption and remains accessible to all.

A significant center of higher learning supported through the Collection is Bethlehem University, where nearly 3,300 Muslim and Christian students receive academic and human formation, preparing them to contribute to a society founded on mutual respect and human dignity. The dedicated service of the De La Salle Brothers in leading the University is especially worthy of praise.

Academic, Spiritual, and Human Formation

Thanks to the Collection, the Dicastery provides assistance to seminaries, religious formation houses, and cultural institutions within its jurisdiction, including support - through scholarships, university fees, and other forms of aid - for seminarians, priests, religious men and women, and, when possible, lay students, even for studies undertaken in Rome.

Conclusion

Through prayer and the generosity of people of goodwill, it is possible to offer tangible support to those in need: helping families in difficulty, accompanying children toward a hopeful future, providing aid to refugees and displaced persons, supporting the formation of priests and religious, and contributing to the preservation of the Holy Places.

May this year's Collection *Pro Terra Sancta* be for all an occasion of renewed solidarity, so that hope may shine especially in the hearts of those who need it most.