



## TERRA SANCTA MUSEUM

Press Release, 22 May 2013

On *Tuesday 21 May* in Milan the first official presentation was held of the project for the TERRA SANCTA MUSEUM which will open in Jerusalem in 2015, the only museum in the world on the roots of Christianity and the preservation of the Holy Places. Over the coming months presentations will continue in numerous Italian and foreign cities.

A long-standing goal of the Custody of the Holy Land, the Museum will feature an exhibition area of 2,573 m<sup>2</sup> consisting of three sections, devoted to Archaeology, Multimedia and History, divided between two existing sites (the Monastery of the Flagellation and St. Saviour's Monastery) close to one another and near the principal pilgrimage and tourist destinations in Jerusalem (the Temple Mount, the Wailing Wall, the starting point for the Way of the Cross, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre).

The session was marked by interventions by *Fra Renato Beretta*, General Visitor of the Custody of the Holy Land, the museologist *Gabriele Allevi*, the architect *Giovanni Tortelli* from the Studio GTRF Tortelli Frassoni Architetti Associati, *Massimo Capuani* from Deloitte Financial Advisory Services, *Tommaso Saltini*, Director of ATS pro Terra Sancta and *Guendalina Sassoli* who, along with *Barbara Galateri*, is in charge of fundraising activities. The moderator of the event was *Elena Croci*, who is responsible for cultural communications for the Museum.

Among the guests was *Francesco Cappelli*, Councillor for Education in the Commune of Milan, who has secured the support of the Commune in, at a minimum, making the Museum project known to the citizens of Milan on all possible occasions.

**Fra Renato Beretta** explained the numerous and profound reasons that have spurred the friars of the Custody to support and promote the project to create a major Museum of Christianity, despite the very difficult economic context. "The moment has arrived for us as friars of the Custody to share the great heritage of archaeological discoveries and works of arts that we have collected over the centuries. The poverty of Francis is that of one who has nothing for himself but shares what he has with others. The objects we have collected speak of the History that has to do with Jesus Christ: through the new Museum our objective is to share this heritage with everyone. We are confident that it will be appreciated not only by pilgrims but also by Jewish and Muslim resident of the region.

In a land where life is difficult and there are many obstacles, our dream is that even today the method of St. Francis will once again prevail. It is to him that we look to carry forward this project, to his humility that was more useful than many Crusades. This humility was able to build, and to heal the wounds that a centuries-long history had left us."

**Gabriele Allevi** illustrated some of the most important and valuable works preserved by the Custody that have been studied and catalogued in recent years, including the extraordinary "Treasure of Bethlehem", discovered by accident in 1863, which includes a *Pastoral* in embossed and gilded copper from the 13<sup>th</sup> century from Limoges as well as candlesticks, organ pipes, bells, etc.

Another important focal point is represented by the extraordinary and rare collections of sculptures, paintings, goldsmith's work, illuminated manuscripts, liturgical vestments and precious archival documents donated over the centuries by the European royal houses (Spain, England, Portugal, the France of Louis XIII and XIV, the Habsburg Empire), the Italian republics (Kingdom of Naples, Duchy of Milan, Republics of Venice, Genoa and Tuscany) and the Papal States in order to show their devotion to the Holy Places and their support of the Custody. A room will be dedicated to the Treasures of Louis XIII and XIV, offering a unique example of the celebrated French Baroque and Rococo goldsmith's work that was destroyed during the French Revolution, in the form of a one-of-its-kind complete set of sacred vessels. All of these works (only a portion of which are currently on display in the exhibition "The Treasure of the Holy Sepulchre" at Versailles) are used only infrequently in liturgical functions, and hence can only be seen on rare occasions by the public.

The section entitled "Treasures of Europe" includes the "Throne in Gold and Precious Gems" donated by Charles III of Spain and the beautiful Illuminated Manuscripts, among which are three antiphonaries from the Tuscan and Lombard schools, donated by Henry IV of England at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Also of great value is the archaeological section consisting of finds uncovered during the excavations carried out over the past 150 years in the Holy Places: the places of Jesus' earthly life from his birth in **Bethlehem**, to his hidden life in

**Nazareth** and his public one in **Capernaum** (with the house of Peter) and Galilee (**Tabgha** and **Cana**, where the first miracles took place), concluding with his Passion in **Jerusalem (Holy Sepulchre and Gethsemane)**. Featured are painting materials (frescoes), ceramics and sculptures, Byzantine mosaics, coins, fragments of plates, architectural materials (Crusader capitals), jars from Bronze Age tombs, sarcophagi, alabasters, jewels (scarabs, seals and cameos), lamps, inscribed ossuaries, etc., ranging chronologically from the Canaanite period (2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC) to the medieval Crusaders (11<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> centuries AD). There are also extraordinary special collections from Egypt and Mesopotamia.

The museologist made special note of the beautiful capitals depicting the history of the apostles discovered in 1906-1909 in a cave at the Convent of the Annunciation in Nazareth, examples of Burgundian sculpture that are among the best preserved in the world inasmuch as they were never actually put in place. He also made reference to the numerous ossuaries from the archaeological site at Dominus Flevit, which show that in all likelihood a Jewish Christian necropolis existed already in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

A large room with beautiful manufactured crosses will be dedicated to the Holy Sepulchre. After 2,000 years of earthquakes, destructions, fires and architectural restorations this Holy Place is difficult to comprehend. The new Museum will thus help to give meaning to this monument that is of such great importance and the destination each year for pilgrims from all over the world.

**Giovanni Tortelli** described the architectural sites where the Museums will be located and the criteria to be followed in carrying out the restructuring and fitting out of the areas involved which, he stressed, "will be essential and rigorous". The stage of analysis and study of the collections and design was concluded at the end of 2012.

Works will begin on 4 October 2013, the feast day of St. Francis.

Tortelli explained that the Museum will be divided between two sites within the Old City of Jerusalem: the *Monastery of the Flagellation* and *St. Saviour's Monastery*, two 18<sup>th</sup> century structures containing some very ancient parts from the Roman, Byzantine and medieval Crusader periods. The first of these, located at the beginning of the Via Dolorosa which leads to the Holy Sepulchre (a route known as the "Way of the Cross") will host the Archaeological Museum and the Multimedia Museum. It is currently the site of the Archaeological Museum of the *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum*, in operation since 1902 (making it the oldest museum in Israel), which will be restructured and significantly enlarged.

The Museum will be located in the area of the Antonia Fortress, according to tradition the place of Jesus' condemnation, of which remains of walls, pavements and cisterns can still be seen, all of which will be included in the tour of the museum.

Mainly known to researchers and for its important discoveries, the current museum area is the depository for unpublished materials not presently available to the public, which will be exhibited and enhanced in the new Museum. In order to increase the space available for exhibitions, several fascinating subterranean areas from the Crusader period having thick, exposed stone walls will be recovered and fitted out, and mezzanine areas will be created to hold the most important thematic archaeological collections from the *Studium Biblicum*.

St. Saviour's Monastery, the second site and the headquarters of the Custody of the Holy Land, is located near the New Gate, the entrance to the Christian Quarter, a place of passage for many pilgrims heading to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Here, beneath the groin vaults of the former library will be located the History Museum, rich in works of arts and rare documents. Adjoining this, the evocative wine cellar (at 800m<sup>2</sup>, the largest in all the Eastern world) will be recovered in order to create an area for rest and refreshment.

The selection criterion chosen by the Archaeological Museum is of the geographic-evangelical type, determined in part by the extraordinary discoveries from the archaeological excavations carried out in the places of Jesus' life, and also by the interests of the public, principally the pilgrims, for whom the Museum is intended. For the History Museum, the criterion employed has been a thematic one, highlighting the importance of the Franciscan mission in the Holy Land, the history of the Custody, and its relations with both the Middle Eastern world and the European States.

**Massimo Capuani** from Deloitte described the study carried out on the economic and financial aspects of the project. The feasibility study and business plan were prepared with the aim of providing a detailed and objective analysis of the its economic and financial viability.

The analysis took into account various factors, the first of these being the pool of potential visitors to the Museum which will be made up not only of Christians but also of people from other religions; this was done on the basis of the proportion of the world tourist pool that each year comes to Israel, and specifically Jerusalem, and that could potentially be attracted, in a variable and quantifiable manner, by the three museums that are the subject of the project. Various hypotheses were used for entrance fees, both for the museums individually and for a combined ticket for all three, providing an estimation of ticket revenues along with those derived from the bookshop and the dining area. To complete the economic analysis, cost planning was also carried out, specifically costs attributable to personnel, utilities, the management and insurance of the collections, and services.

The total investment for the project, including the renovation of the buildings, equipment and fitting out, is estimated at €4.5 million. The Custody of the Holy Land, in addition to making available at no charge the areas for the museum, has allocated €1.1 million for the project. Donations required to meet the overall financial requirements will be approximately €3.5 million. After the initial period of investment and start-up, lasting approximately three years, the

project will be able to support itself, generating cash flow that can be used to support future museum initiatives to be promoted by the Custody of the Holy Land.

**Tommaso Saltini**, Director of ATS pro Terra Sancta, discussed the fundraising activities that have been organized and will be carried out beginning in Italy, where the Franciscans have their headquarters, and subsequently expanded to the rest of the world in order to raise the amount estimated to be necessary.

**Guendalina Sassoli** explained how supporters will be able to share in this project and link their own name (family, business, institution) to the Holy City of Jerusalem. Donors will be able to choose to support the creation of one of the three sections of the Museum, one of the principal and central areas or a room of the Museum. Their name will then be engraved on one of the typical local (Jerusalem) stones used for pavements and located at the entrance to the rooms. A copy will be delivered to the supporter. Finally, for smaller donations the name will be added to a special wall located at the museum's entrance.

**Guido Della Frera**, an entrepreneur from Milan and one of the first supporters of the project, participated in order to personally explain the reasons that led him to make a donation.

Tommaso Saltini concluded the session inviting everyone, in the name of **Fra Pierbattista Pizzaballa** Custos of the Holy Land, to visit Jerusalem, the current Archaeological Museum and the archaeological sites cited above. ATS pro Terra Sancta is able to organize short trips of 3/4 days with exceptional visits and encounters that are usually not included in normal tourist visits to Jerusalem.

### **YOUR NAME IN HISTORY The commitment of the supporters**

For further information please contact ATS pro Terra Sancta, the nonprofit NGO recognized by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs which has been given the responsibility for carrying out the project and coordinating fundraising activities: [info@proterrasancta.org](mailto:info@proterrasancta.org).

Bank Transfer: Banca Etica Intestazione; Account: Terra Sancta Museum  
IBAN IT35X 05018 01600 000000144474 BIC CCRTIT2T84A

## **TERRA SANCTA MUSEUM**

### **MONASTERY OF THE FLAGELLATION**

**Archaeological Museum. Gospel sites in Palestine**

**Multimedia Museum. Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre: from Herod to our days**

### **ST. SAVIOUR'S MONASTERY**

**History Museum. The Franciscan Custody in the Holy Land**

The founding institution is the **Custody of the Holy Land**, a brotherhood of religious (the Friars Minor), who for more than 800 years have safeguarded the places of the Redemption, in conjunction with the **Studium Biblicum Franciscanum**, an academic institution for research and teaching of the Holy Scriptures and the archaeology of the Bible Lands, based in Jerusalem.

The aim of the project promoters is to enhance the priceless historical, archaeological and artistic heritage and to make it accessible to everyone while at the same time avoiding its dispersion, encouraging restoration and preservation.

**The progress of the works on the Terra Sancta Museum can be followed on the site [www.terrasanctamuseum.org](http://www.terrasanctamuseum.org).**

Other useful sites: [www.custodia.org](http://www.custodia.org), [www.proterrasancta.org](http://www.proterrasancta.org), [www.fmc-terrasanta.org](http://www.fmc-terrasanta.org)

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#### *Images and video services*

- Franciscan Media Center (multimedia center of the Custody), [www.fmc-terrasanta.org](http://www.fmc-terrasanta.org) - Stefania Sboarina, [stefania.sboarina@fmc-terrasanta.org](mailto:stefania.sboarina@fmc-terrasanta.org).