



## Music in the heart of Jerusalem

- a project of the Custody of the Holy Land

*"May the harmony of song and music, which knows no social or religious barriers, be of good will to an invitation to the faithful and all people together to find the universal language of love. Through them, people shall be capable of building a world of justice, solidarity, hope and peace".*

*Pope Benedict XVI*

**The "Magnificat", a music school and oasis of peace right in the heart of Jerusalem.**





## Music in the heart of Jerusalem

The "Magnificat" was established by the Custody of the Holy Land as the first and only music school in Jerusalem's Old Town. It allows people in a difficult environment to access music, and has thereby awakened and developed a range of talents. This helps the "Magnificat" to fulfil a vital social role and make a valuable contribution to achieving peace.



*The "Magnificat": Palestinian and Israeli children making music in early music classes*

The "Magnificat" is open to children, young people and adults, irrespective of their ethnicity or religion. The school currently has around 200 students, Palestinians, Israelis, Christians, Muslims and Jews.

Qualified teachers offer a wide range of lessons, including piano, cello, violin, flute, organ, solo singing, choral singing, composition, music theory and early music classes for children from three years of age. Close cooperation with the "Arrigo Pedrollo" Conservatory in Vicenza, Italy allows advanced students to pursue recognised postgraduate studies in Europe.

In addition to musical education, the "Magnificat" organises a wide range of performances, concerts and music competitions. It attaches particular importance to mediating local music and songs and through its work, aims to promote musical quality in schools and parishes. The "Magnificat" Choir accompanies worship in Holy Places.

### The valuable social function of the "Magnificat"

The environment of the old city of Jerusalem is anything but simple: the political conflict in the Holy Land has a real impact on society and family. The Arab quarter of the Old Town in particular is home to people on low incomes, many of whose lives are marked by poverty, unemployment, housing shortages and a sense of hopelessness. Children and young people spend most of their free time in front of the television or outside in the street. Delinquency, crime and drugs are often a consequence.

The "Magnificat" offers music as a leisure activity. The low fees and other assistance provided allow children

from poorer families to visit the music school too. Free concerts provide cultural events for the old town's inhabitants.

In addition to being a music school, the "Magnificat" is also a small oasis of beauty and has become a place of encounter for healing and confidence.

### The "Magnificat" - a contribution to peace

The years of conflict in the Middle East weigh heavily on people of the Holy Land. Extreme positions on both sides have gathered increasing support and there appears to be no end in sight to the cycle of oppression and violence. In such an atmosphere, every chance encounter represents a small contribution to mutual understanding, and any form of "sharing" is a step towards peace.

In the "Magnificat", encounter and coexistence are both possible. During lessons and concerts, Palestinians, Israelis, Christians, Muslims and Jews come together, chat, share the joy of music and make music together.

The "Magnificat" is a place where "one of the others" can become an acquaintance, and where not only enthusiasm for music is conveyed, but also mutual respect and dialogue.

### The "Magnificat project"

Since its foundation in 1995, the "Magnificat" has experienced growing demand – to the great delight of its Director, Franciscan Father Armando Pierucci of the Custody of the Holy Land.



However, this joy is mixed with concern since only a fraction of the costs can be met by annual contributions from students. A large number do not have the financial means to pay a significant sum, let alone have their own instrument. The growing pupil numbers demand more teachers, practice rooms and instruments, which can be made available to students without their own, for lessons and practice,



Armando P. wishes to continue to make access to the school possible for as many students as possible – the enthusiastic musician and pianist is convinced that "music is an art that can bring people together, create unity, look beyond differences and touch the heart. If more people want to make use of the services provided by the "Magnificat", we must act on that interest in music and by doing so, contribute to peace".

In order to achieve this, the Custody of the Holy Land established the "Magnificat Project".

The "Magnificat project" sets out to support the school of music on two levels, both through financial contributions and through the promotion of exchange and encounter.

Since many students are only able to pay a small annual fee, the school's expenses must be largely borne by donations.

It is only with these donations that the school's running costs can be covered. With additional financial assistance, it would be possible to provide the desperately-needed teachers and to buy the instruments needed for teaching to allow the school to meet the needs of the increasing number of students.

The "Magnificat" is also located in the basement of the Franciscan Monastery, meaning that the school lacks the space it needs.



Plans to move the music school to another building are in the pipeline, but renovation work needs to be carried out to allow this to happen. This move also requires the support of donations.

Exchanges and encounters between his students and other musicians are a key aim of Director P. Armando, and consequently, the project also promotes choir and musician's excursions within the Holy Land and Europe.

For some children, these excursions are the only opportunity to leave Jerusalem, or even to go abroad. Joint concerts with local or foreign choirs, musicians and orchestras have also proven their worth.

Music teachers who would like to experience living in Jerusalem for a year teaching music voluntarily, in return for board and lodgings, would be of great assistance and provide enrichment for the school. The aim of the "Magnificat project" is to make music ring out in the heart of Jerusalem and to create moments of harmony amidst the discord of the



Middle East conflict.

In addition to contributing to culture, any assistance for the "Magnificat" is also an investment in the future of people and in peace.

If you would like to support the "**Magnificat Project**" so that the "Magnificat" can work as a music school and oasis of peace right in the heart of Jerusalem:

ATS – Holy Land Association  
Bank transfer – Ethic Bank  
IBAN: IT67 W050 1812 1010 0000 0122 691  
BIC: CCRTIT2T84A

**Donate online: [www.proterrasancta.org](http://www.proterrasancta.org)**

If you would like a **receipt**, please write your postal address in the note to payee field on the remittance slip. A **standing order** will help to support long-term projects in the Holy Land.

You can find out more about the work of the "Magnificat" and opportunities for project support at the following websites:

[www.magnificat.custodia.org](http://www.magnificat.custodia.org)

[www.proterrasancta.org](http://www.proterrasancta.org)

We would also be happy to hear from you. If you wish, we can put you in touch with P. Armando Pierucci, the Director of the "Magnificat", or his colleague, the German Franciscan brother Petrus Schöler.



## **ATS Pro Terra Sancta– Charity of the Custody of the Holy Land**

**ATS Pro Terra Sancta** is the not-for-profit non-governmental organisation (NGO) of the Custody of the Holy Land, the Franciscan province in the south-eastern Mediterranean.

**ATS Pro Terra Sancta** serves the tasks and projects of the Custody of the Holy Land. Its areas of activity include promotional initiatives, fundraising, public relations, project management, evaluation and accounting.

The charity is active in those countries where the Custody is represented, namely Israel, the Palestinian territories, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Cyprus and Rhodes.

**ATS Pro Terra Sancta** also gives you the opportunity to participate in this work. Donations to the charity of the Custody of the Holy Land are received directly by those projects that need them the most. Reliability and very low administrative costs are guaranteed.

**ATS Pro Terra Sancta** was originated by the Custody of the Holy Land. The charity's underlying values trace their roots to the spirituality of the Franciscan order and the history of the Custody.



## **The Custody of the Holy Land**

"Custody of the Holy Land" is the Franciscan province in the south-eastern Mediterranean, whose superior is the Custodian. The centre of the Custody is the Holy Land and Jerusalem.

The Franciscan order was founded by St. Francis of Assisi. The wish of the brothers is to live in the spirit of the Gospel, to proclaim the message of Jesus and

to serve their neighbours, especially the poor. In the early years of its existence, the order founded a province in the home of Jesus.



Following the retreat of the Crusaders, the Franciscans remained the only representatives of the Church in the Holy land for quite some time. In 1342, Pope Clement VI entrusted the Franciscans with the custody of the Holy sites of Christianity and in doing so established the Custody of the Holy Land.

As the centuries progressed, the brothers fulfilled the mission that the Church had entrusted to them despite the many difficulties that they encountered.

To date, the work of the order has been characterised by service to the Holy sites, to pilgrims as well as native Christians and to the needy - a task that involves great responsibility for many people, Church buildings, facilities and projects.

Finally, Pope Benedict XVI has given encouragement to the Franciscans of the Custody in their service to the Holy sites on behalf of all of Christianity and has called upon them to step up their work for the severely tested Christian minority in the Middle East.

In order to fulfil this important mission, the Custody of the Holy Land requires support.

For more information on **ATS Pro Terra Sancta**, the Custody of the Holy Land and their projects, please visit:

[www.proterrasancta.org](http://www.proterrasancta.org)

[www.custodia.org](http://www.custodia.org)