

Jerusalem rabbi opens a house of friendship in Assisi

Posted on October 26, 2026 by Giulia Alagna

ASSISI, Umbria — Across the square from the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli, where St Francis died 800 years ago this month, a landmark hotel has become a home for every faith. Rabbi Alon Goshen-Gottstein's Elijah Interfaith Institute bought the former Hotel Porziuncola in January, and Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa came for the opening.

Goshen-Gottstein opened the Global House of Friendship and Hope here earlier this year. That's as October 27 Assisi marks 40 years since John Paul II gathered world religious leaders here to pray for peace. *Italy Now* spoke to him.

Source: https://italynow.co.uk/jerusalem-rabbi-opens-a-house-of-friendship-in-assisi/



Global House of Friendship and Hope, Assisi (*Credits: Dario Helman*)

Q. What is the Global House of Friendship and Hope?

“It is an experience, a journey both interior and exterior. It builds on 30 years of work of a premier group of faith leaders and scholars who have developed friendship and the sharing of wisdom as a way of life, and opens it to the public.”

Q. Why did you choose Assisi?

“The figure of St Francis serves as a model for encounter and friendship. He held a dialogue with the Sultan el Malik at a time when people did not talk, they just fought. One could say the spirit of Assisi and the spirit of Elijah converge, to produce one of the world’s most original and meaningful experiences.”

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Rabbi Alon Goshen-Gottstein (*Credits: Sean Dimond*)

Q. You live in Jerusalem. Have the region's conflicts shaped your work?

"Not really. I come at this as a spiritual seeker and a scholar of religion, not to solve a problem such as a war. War and peace have been on the horizons of my work but have never defined it. People I have trained have at times channelled their efforts towards peace making."



An Instrument of Your Peace by Massimiliano Siccardi (*Credits: Dario Helman*)

Q. Why build a physical space?

“You can have meetings, dialogue and teachings anywhere. But to reach the broader public there must be a space dedicated to it. There must be an address where people can come to learn and be inspired.”

Q. Who should visit?

“Believers, who can open to the reality of other faiths, and the public at large, who often consider religion the source of discord. A vision of spirituality emerges that is larger than an individual’s religion and can serve as a resource for the spiritual lives of all people today.”

The Global House is open daily from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Its journey ends with *An Instrument of Your Peace*, an immersive work by Massimiliano Siccardi.

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