



MAR 19 2025



March 5, 2025

Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila
Archdiocese of Denver
1300 S Steele St
Denver, CO 80210-2599

Dear Most Reverend Aquila,
Excellency,

May the Lord give you his Peace.

I write to you with deep gratitude for the encouragement and support of last year's Pontifical Good Friday Collection. Your generous faithful allowed the Franciscan Friars in the Holy Land to continue their work of maintaining the sacred shrines and providing hope to Christians in very challenging times.

This Jubilee Year is designated as a Year of Hope. Indeed, hope is a necessary virtue in a land marked by cycles of violence and relative calm. Gaza itself has been reduced to rubble. Missiles have hit many other places as well. People across the region are tasked with rebuilding homes, schools, hospitals, and even churches. Many of our faithful earn their living from pilgrimages. Still repaying debts from the pandemic shutdown, they found themselves soon assaulted by war. Now, already in debt, many have again lost jobs. Fear and despair have driven many Christians to leave the Holy Land: over the past century, Christians have gone from 23% to less than 2% of the population. And more than 90 Christian families have already left Bethlehem since October 7, having lost hope in a good future for them in the land where Jesus and the Church were born.

Let us foster hope in our brothers and sisters who strive to remain in the land where the Son of God dwelled among us. How could we allow the land where Jesus Christ walked and called people to follow him become a place without a local Church?

As you know, each year the Holy Father asks every Catholic parish around the world to take up a Collection on Good Friday to keep a Christian presence in the Holy Land. This year, help is needed more than ever. The Collection supports the work of the Franciscans in the sacred shrines, ministers to the parishes, provides formation and education in communities and schools, and cares for the basic needs of people in the Holy Land. During such a difficult time, where we must rebuild not only buildings but so many broken lives, your promotion of this important collection is essential.

Once again, we ask for your prayers and encouragement for the Christians of the Holy Land and for the Holy Father's Good Friday Collection. Our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land are counting on you and your parishes for help.

Enclosed is information that further explains the good work of the Collection and how your diocese can participate. If you would like additional materials or more information, please email GoodFriday@myfranciscan.com. We also have digital resources on our website at www.myfranciscan.org/good-friday.

With your help, the Franciscans can continue to be a light of hope to those living in darkness in the Holy Land. Thank you for encouraging your parishes to be generous.

May Christ continue to bless you abundantly in all the holy work that you do.

Gratefully yours in Christ,

Fr. David Grenier, OFM, Commissary
Commissariat of the Holy Land, Washington, DC



PONTIFICAL GOOD FRIDAY COLLECTION

Friday, April 18, 2025

TALKING POINTS

1. During Holy Week, the Gospel readings come to life in a special way as we gather to celebrate the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The readings remind us of our special connection to the land where this great story unfolded.
2. Supporting the Church in the Holy Land is an historic mission. Since the time of St. Paul, Christians worldwide have understood the responsibility to support the land where Jesus walked and from where their faith originated. (cf. 2 Cor. 8-9)
3. Even if the situation is slightly improving since the agreement on a fragile ceasefire – that will hopefully continue to hold – Christians still face incredible hardships, relying on the Church for more than we do in our country, including basic things like food, medicine and school tuition to make sure their children can receive a Christian education. We have an opportunity to help them through the Pontifical Good Friday Collection.
4. Christians in the Holy Land face special challenges – many of which we hear about in the daily news. The war left deep wounds that will take time to heal. Many Christians (for example, 90% in Bethlehem) depend on the pilgrimage industry to live. They could not work during the pandemic, and the war again stopped pilgrims from coming. Even as some pilgrims start to come back to the Holy Land, it will take time before our Christians may make once again a living from it. Supporting the Collection offers hope to the Holy Land Christians.
5. Although often through adversities, a Christian presence always remained in the Holy Land since the beginning of the Church. It is important that Christians continue to live, work and pray in the Holy Land. The Christians are now less than 2% of the population, from 23% a century ago, and with the war, many more are thinking about leaving. In Bethlehem, more than 90 Christian families have left since October 7. The Holy Shrines must not become like museums, with many visitors, but without a local community, where the Church was born.
6. What has been accomplished? Last year's Pontifical Good Friday Collection: - Supported 23 parishes and three academic institutions - Provided a home in Bethlehem for 30 children from homes facing domestic violence - Offered more than 500 scholarships for university education - Helped keep schools open for over 10,000 pre-K through grade 12 students - Supported 53 friars preparing for the priesthood - Restored and maintained 640 houses/apartments for Christian families - Provided assistance to more than 9,000 families through weekly food baskets - Employed more than 1,000 workers in the Holy Land in a time where job opportunities are scarce - Preserved 80 shrines from the life of Jesus, the Apostles and the prophets - Continued the work of restoration of the floor at the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher, the holiest place on Earth.
7. Thank you for supporting the Pontifical Good Friday Collection, as encouraged by Pope Francis. Through the Pontifical Good Friday Collection, you join with Catholics around the world to stand in solidarity with the Church in the Holy Land, directly making a difference in the lives of those caught up in war, violence and instability in this region. You become an instrument of peace in a troubled land.

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT

Pope Francis has asked our parish to support the Pontifical Good Friday Collection, which helps Christians in the Holy Land, where they are now less than 2% of the population. Your support is essential to help the Church minister in parishes, provide Catholic schools, and offer religious education. The Pontifical Good Friday Collection also helps to preserve the sacred shrines of Christianity, including in Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Bethlehem, to name only a few.

The pandemic had hit Christians in the Holy Land particularly hard. Most of them depend on pilgrimages for work. The war made their situation even more dire. In these times of crisis, the Pontifical Good Friday Collection is necessary to meet the basic needs of the People of God still living in this Land and to maintain a Christian presence where the Church was born.

When you contribute to the Pontifical Good Friday Collection, you join with Catholics around the world in solidarity with the Church in the Holy Land. PLEASE BE GENEROUS!

For more information about Christians in the Holy Land, visit www.myfranciscan.org or www.custodia.org

PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENT

Pope Francis has asked our parish to support the Pontifical Good Friday Collection, which helps Christians in the Holy Land. Through the Pontifical Good Friday Collection, you stand in solidarity with the Church in the Holy Land as a witness of peace, supporting Catholics there in parishes and schools, and maintaining the Christian shrines, the places where Jesus accomplished our redemption. Please be generous!