



Diocese of Worcester
Office of the Bishop
49 Elm Street
Worcester, Massachusetts 01609

April 11, 2025

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Each year, the Holy Father asks Catholic parishes around the world to take up a **Good Friday Collection** to support Christians in the Holy Land. Our brothers and sisters in the Lord who live in the Holy Land not only struggle to live their faith and worship in their parishes – they are also the stewards of the sacred places that are without pilgrims due to the continuing conflict in Gaza and Israel.

In this Jubilee Year of Hope, we must bear in mind that the Holy Land is an area desperately seeking hope. People across the area are tasked with rebuilding homes, schools, hospitals and even churches. Palestinian Christians, who trace their roots to the earliest converts to Christianity, earn their living from pilgrimages. Many have lost jobs. According to the Franciscans Friars who are in the Holy Land, fear and despair have driven many Christians to leave. In Bethlehem alone, more than 90 Christian families have left since October, having lost hope in a future for their families in the land where Jesus and the Church were born. In an area which was 23% Christian a century ago, fewer than 2% of the population are now Christian.

This annual collection supports the work of the Franciscans in the sacred shrines which are also communities of faith, not museums. It allows them to continue to minister to parishioners, provide formation and education in communities and schools, and care for the basic needs of the Christian faithful who continue to call the Holy Land their home. Your support is more essential than ever to their ministry.

Each Lent I invite parishioners to participate in the Way of the Cross in a local parish church. This is such a powerful way for us to recall the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christians in the Holy Land are faced with the particular challenge of bringing their own suffering to the cross every day as they witness to the faith. The Latin Patriarch of the Holy Land has been a voice for Christians living not just in Jerusalem, but also in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

Please be generous in this year's Good Friday collection in your parish. I invite you to visit www.myfranciscan.org to learn more about the good work made possible thanks to your response to this pontifical collection. With your help, the Franciscans can continue to be a light of hope to Christians who continue to struggle in the Holy Land.

With every prayerful best wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Robert J. McManus
Bishop of Worcester

Please share with your bulletin on Palm Sunday and take up the collection on Good Friday.