



Please Give Generously to the
**Pontifical Good Friday
Holy Land Collection**



Fourth Sunday of Lent: Do You See the Handiwork of Christ?

Many of the pilgrims who visit the Holy Land cannot help but be moved by the experience of visiting the sites where Jesus was born and suffered for us. Some have waited their entire lives to travel to the exact locations to experience the very real physical links to the life of Christ. Though the COVID pandemic prevents us from traveling to the Holy Land today, it becomes evident that Jesus is still very much present and alive there. In the second reading from this week, St. Paul tells us that “we are his handiwork” (Eph 2:10). Christ has not separated himself from those He created, but it is in our Christian brothers and sisters that we can still encounter Him.

In the Holy Land, where the economic lifeblood of thousands of Christian families relies on religious pilgrimages and tourism, lives have been altered by COVID. In the U.S., we all know how our own lives were changed by it. In the Holy Land, many Christian families were thrown out of work, schools, churches and businesses were closed, and despite government assistance, many still have trouble making ends meet. A year later, Holy Land Christians ask the same questions we ask ourselves: How did it get out of control? What went wrong? What must we do or not do? How many

will die? When will it end? Their suffering, fear and pain are expressed in prayers and rituals. But hope is beginning to return, however slowly. In May 2020, churches and businesses reopened on a limited basis. Holy Land schools reopened with certain social distancing rules in place, including staggered recesses and maintaining 2 meters distance between pupils during breaks. Children arriving at school are required to present a health statement signed by their parents. Then, a number of schools were shut down again permanently due to cases among staff members and students. It is a common experience we both continue to share, an ongoing frustration, and it is in this experience we can know their suffering.

It is in such times that we need to respond to our other brothers and sisters living in the Holy Land. Whether we refer to them as “Christians of the Holy Land” or “the Living Stones,” most are ethnically Palestinian Arabs. They trace their roots back over 2000 years, being named in Acts 2:11 as one of the ethnic groups present at the first Pentecost. Today, there are many church and relief organizations, activists and lay people who are reaching out their hands to help ensure that the poor, marginalized and suffering in the Holy Land are not forgotten, especially during the scourge of this pandemic. One way we can reach out to our suffering Palestinian brothers and sisters is to make a generous contribution to the Pontifical Good Friday Collection. When we reach out in compassion to them, we grasp the hand of the living Christ in the land where he was born and experience “his handiwork.”



Christian school children wear masks and social distance at one of the schools in the West Bank.

Help For Holy Land Christians

North Central
Lieutenancy
www.eohsjnorthcentral.org

Franciscan
Good Friday Collection
www.myfranciscan.org

Order of the Holy
Sepulchre of Jerusalem
www.holysepulchre.net

Latin Patriarchate
of Jerusalem
www.lpj.org