



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



## Fifth Sunday of Lent: Are You Bearing Fruit for Jesus?

The Gospel for the Fifth Sunday of Lent takes place in Jerusalem, right after Jesus' triumphal entry into this holy city. While speaking to his disciples, Jesus proclaims that His time has come to be glorified. He proceeds to describe his crucifixion and death by stating that "unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (Jn 12:24). These words of Christ speak to our own spiritual journey. All Christians are asked to die to self and to rise with Christ so their lives will bear fruit, both for their own sake and for the lives of those around them. Jesus is the fulfillment of the new covenant that God promised to the prophet Jeremiah where God's law would be written on the hearts of his people (cf. Jer 31:33).



*Grape vines ripening in the Israeli sunshine*

God's law of love has been written on the hearts of the Christians in the Holy Land for two thousand years. The Christian population in Israel has diminished in the past several decades from 20% to below 2%. Life is a challenge for these Christians, most of whom are Palestinian. They are caught in the cruel reality of cultural, economic and political strife that makes daily life a constant struggle. Poverty caused by lack of opportunities for education and employment result in difficulties feeding, sheltering and clothing their families. The shifting political powers of this region lend a constant aura of unrest and uncertainty and the real threat of violence on a daily basis. The humiliation that must be endured by these hardships is always a temptation to despair. Their lives seem to echo Jesus' words in today's Gospel when He says: "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life" (Jn 12:25).

Jesus promised his disciples that He would overcome the evil forces of the world and would "draw all men to myself" (Jn 12:32). Our lives can often be hard, but Jesus promises that He will always be with us and His Father will honor those who follow His Son (cf. Jn 12:26). Being a member of the Body of Christ calls us to honor God and our fellow man. We can imitate Christ by honoring our struggling brothers and sisters in Christ in the Holy Land, by giving generously to the Pontifical Good Friday Collection this Lent. These monies that are collected all over the world are given to the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land that maintain the Holy Sites and support the Christians through various apostolates and works of corporal and spiritual mercy.

## Help For Holy Land Christians

**North Central  
Lieutenancy**  
[www.eohsjnorthcentral.org](http://www.eohsjnorthcentral.org)

**Franciscan  
Good Friday Collection**  
[www.myfranciscan.org](http://www.myfranciscan.org)

**Order of the Holy  
Sepulchre of Jerusalem**  
[www.holysepulchre.net](http://www.holysepulchre.net)

**Latin Patriarchate  
of Jerusalem**  
[www.lpj.org](http://www.lpj.org)