



# IMMACULATE HEART<sup>OF</sup> MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

## A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR DECEMBER 8, 2019

Dear friends in the Coming Lord,

Every week the Gospel proclaimed at Mass is situated in a particular location in the Holy Land, a place with its own unique history and meaning. Those who have made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land never again hear or read a passage from the Gospels without recalling that sacred terrain. I look forward to leading a parish pilgrimage there next month, and I thank you in advance for your prayers for the pilgrims who will accompany me.

But the Holy Land is not just a collection of sites and shrines; it is home to a living Catholic community with ancient roots. And it is a community under tremendous duress.

I have invited my friend Rami Qumsieh to visit us this weekend to speak during Mass about the situation of our brothers and sisters in the Catholic Church in the Holy Land. I believe you will learn a great deal from him about the needs of the Palestinian Christian Arab people, so often overlooked when we speak about the problems of the Holy Land.

While the main focus of Rami's visit is an educational and pastoral presentation during Mass, he will also make available handcrafted olivewood religious articles, the sale of which provides steady employment to Catholic families in the Bethlehem area and supports Al-Mahed Television, operated by his uncle—the only Christian television station in the Holy Land.

Please give Rami a warm welcome and join me in praying throughout Advent for a just peace in the land of Christ's birth, death and resurrection.

Your brother in Christ's word and work,