



Message from the Custos of the Holy Land regarding the Pontifical Holy Land Collection, September 13th 2020

This year, due to the pandemic caused by the Corona virus, it was not possible to take up the Good Friday Collection dedicated to supporting Christians living here in the Land of Jesus. This is why Pope Francis has accepted the request to move this gesture of sharing that concerns the whole Church to September 13th.

Why September 13th, you may ask? Because it is the Sunday closest to the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, which we celebrate here with particular solemnity in Jerusalem. On this feast we remember how far the love of the Son of God has come for us: giving His life on the Cross for our salvation and reconciling us to the Father and to each other. This gives birth to a new humanity founded on solidarity and love.

The Cross still characterizes and accompanies the journey of the small Christian community that lives in the Holy Land and throughout the Middle East. A small community that carries the Cross in the midst of situations of conflict on the one hand and indifference on the other. It is a small community that this year suffers even more because of this pandemic that has hit the whole world; for here now, there are no pilgrims or any of the work linked to their reception, which allows many Christians to work with dignity and feed their families. Yet despite this, our small Christian community continues to resist, continues to be evangelical salt, leaven and light in a context that absolutely needs it.

The collection in favour of the Holy Land is a small gesture of solidarity that the whole Church is called to make in order to support through the Custody of the Holy Land, the Christian communities that are in the Holy Land and feel the weight and also the glory of the Cross of Jesus on their shoulders.

It is thanks to you Christians throughout the whole world, who give so generously, that we will be able to continue taking care of the Holy Places of Christianity, from the Holy Sepulcher to the Basilica of the Nativity and to the lesser known sanctuaries. We will be able to support the pastoral action of the parishes entrusted to us. We will be able to guarantee quality education and learning to more than 10,000 students attending our schools. We can help young families find a home. We will be able to assist Christian migrant workers to feel welcomed even though they are far from their homeland. We will be able to stay close to the populations affected by the war in Syria and the refugees now scattered in the various countries in which we find ourselves living our mission.

This is what we have tried to do during an eight centuries long history in the Holy Land and this is thanks to the help of Christians from all over the world. This is what we hope to be able to continue to do thanks to the help of each of you on the 13th September.

Fr. Francesco Patton OFM
Custos of the Holy Land

LINKS:

<https://cmc-terrasanta.org/en/media/terra-santa-news/20756/to-revive-the-memory-of-our-christian-roots>

<https://youtu.be/4euHEsiXKf4>