

HOLY LAND:

BECOMING CHRIST'S HANDS AND FEET IN GAZA



The Catholic Parish of the Holy Family in Gaza was severely damaged in a raid

What happens when the final and only remaining Sanctuary in a war zone is no longer safe? On July 17th, the unthinkable happened as bombs struck Holy Family Church - Gaza's only Catholic parish and shelter to about 500 desperate souls.

The sacred space where families sought refuge with their children became a scene of horror and bloodshed. Several people were injured, including the Parish Priest, Father Gabriel Romanelli, who continued supporting and caring for his flock amid the chaos. Three Catholics, including the parish janitor, lost their lives that day.

The Church now bears the scars of war – shattered windows, crumbling walls, and broken spirits. Yet within these damaged walls, Faith endures. The Church, with support from Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), continues to care for families and children, including those with disabilities, embodying Christ's love in the darkest of circumstances.



SCAN
to watch video
youtu.be/T0dIXKAufc

This is not just a distant tragedy – it is happening to our brothers and sisters in Christ, in the very land where Jesus walked.

When you support our ACN appeal, you become a lifeline for Fr. Gabriel Romanelli and the hundreds of children, and their parents sheltering in Gaza's only Catholic Church.

"Another day of war continues to complicate the lives of tens of thousands of people," Fr. Romanelli shared from his hospital bed. But because of your compassion, he doesn't face this challenge alone.

When you donate today, you join Fr. Romanelli in his work of protecting the



Parish Priest of Holy Family Church in Gaza, Fr. Gabriel Romanelli was injured in the recent Israeli military attack on the only Catholic Church in Gaza

vulnerable. As he continues to care for his flock despite his own injuries, your support ensures he has the resources to provide shelter, comfort, and hope to those who have lost everything.

"Your support is essential", explains Fr. Romanelli, "it encourages us to continue; it reminds us that we are not alone even if the everyday pain is immense."

If you wish to receive this leaflet by post please send us your contact details via SMS on 7999 9969



Aid to the
Church in Need
ACN MALTA



SCAN
to watch video
youtu.be/B2IREU35bzs

CHILDREN OF WAR – GROWING UP UNDER SIEGE

Christian boy looking through the grating in the shape of a cross | Photo credit: Ilona Budzbon/Aid to the Church in Need

Fourteen-year-old Tarek's eyes have seen what no child should witness. For months, he has called a classroom in Holy Family Compound as his home. He shares this cramped space with his parents and two sisters.

"I spend my days like any other day during the war," Tarek says with resignation beyond his years. "Sometimes I wake up and things are calm, there is no shelling, so I go and help at the Latin Church next door."

Despite everything, Tarek still dreams of becoming a doctor. His parents give him a sense of safety in a world where safety is a luxury few can afford. But how can a child study medicine when schools lie in ruins and hospitals struggle without basic medical supplies?

Tarek is one of hundreds of children sheltering in the church compound. Their playground is a courtyard surrounded by bombed buildings. Their lullabies are the sounds of distant explosions.

Fr. Romanelli recently made an impassioned plea: "Recently the number



Archbishop Pizzaballa with children in the Holy Land during the celebration of Holy Mass (August 2023)

of children killed in this war surpassed 17,000. More than 17,000! It's terrible. Pray, pray to Our Lady, to whom we have a great devotion, and at whose request we pray the rosary every day with the children and the adults, before the Blessed Sacrament".

These children – the future of Christianity in its birthplace – desperately need our help.

Your donation can provide a family like Tarek's with essential food and medicine. Your generosity provides the blankets that keep families warm at night, the food that nourishes hungry children, and the medicine that heals the sick and injured. 🙏





A CHURCH THAT REFUSES TO ABANDON HOPE

On 2nd April 2023, the Christians of the Holy Land celebrated Palm Sunday with a Mass in the Holy Sepulchre, and a procession from Bethphage, on top of Mount of Olives, to Saint Anne Church, inside the Old City of Jerusalem

When bombs fell on Holy Family Church in Gaza, Fr. Gabriel Romanelli could have fled. Instead, despite his own injuries, he has stayed to serve and support his people.

"We ask you to continue helping us – to pray a lot, and to encourage others to pray," Fr. Romanelli implores. "To seek peace and justice by all means, and also to lend a hand to these poor people."

When the war began, Gaza's Christians fled to the Holy Family parish seeking safety. Because of your compassion through Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), they have found not just physical shelter, but spiritual comfort and the knowledge that fellow Christians around the world continue to stand with them.

Through ACN, the Catholic Church has become a lifeline for thousands. ACN has been channeling vital aid through the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem – blankets, food, medicine, mattresses, and essentials reaching those who have lost everything.



Fr. Romanelli giving Holy Communion to an elderly woman sheltering with other displaced Christians at the Holy Family Church

"Thanks to the Church we have been able to help thousands of families," Fr. Romanelli explains, "ensuring that aid reaches everyone in real need, because the situation in Gaza at the moment is one of extreme poverty."

"They have been and continue to be very hard days...but we pray that, through prayer and help, the Christian community may continue to be a witness of hope", says Fr. Romanelli from the rubble of Holy Family Church, where your compassion becomes the foundation for rebuilding both the Sanctuary and hope.

This is the miracle of the Church in the Holy Land – hope that refuses to die or to surrender, Faith that endures through bombardments, and love that reaches across divides. But they cannot continue without your support.

Your support today means that tomorrow, another child receives a meal, another elderly person receives their medication, and another family finds hope in the midst of despair. Your generosity truly brings Christ's love to those who need it most. ✝



HEAR THEIR CRY

acnmalta.org/hear-their-cry

“THE SITUATION CONTINUES TO DETERIORATE...”

Cardinal Pizzaballa with displaced Christians sheltering at the Holy Family Church in Gaza

What would you do if everything you built over a lifetime disappeared overnight? Right now, this is the reality facing thousands of Christians in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. As you read this appeal, families who have maintained the Christian presence in the birthplace of our Faith for generations are wondering how they will feed their children tomorrow.

“The situation continues to deteriorate in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, triggering the highest unemployment rate of all time among the Christian community,” Bishop William Shomali recently told ACN, his voice heavy with concern for his community.

Since the beginning of the war, the tourism industry—the economic backbone for Christians in the Holy Land—has completely collapsed. Imagine Bethlehem’s Manger Square, once filled

with pilgrims, now standing empty.

The city loses \$2.5 million in tourism revenue every single day. With 72% of Christian tourism workers now unemployed and 180,000 work permits revoked, families who welcomed pilgrims for generations face an impossible choice: leave their ancestral homeland or go hungry. Your gift today can change their story.

In partnership with the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Aid to the

Church in Need (ACN), through the generosity of our benefactors, has already helped us reach over 12,000 people affected by this crisis.

As Sami El-Yousef from the Patriarchate shares: “ACN enabled us to offer basic lifeline food supplies, hygiene kits, lifesaving medications and cover critical medical operations”.

But thousands more are still waiting for help. Will you stand with the Christians of the Holy Land today? ✚



Cardinal Pizzaballa during his visit to the Holy Family Church in Gaza after the attack



ACN www.acnmalta.org

Aid to the
Church in Need

Aid to the Church in Need (Malta), 35/3, Mdina Road, Attard, ATD 9038

Aid to the Church in Need is a Pontifical Foundation of the Catholic Church and registered in Malta Reg. No. LPF-212, as a Foundation regulated by the second schedule of the Civil Code Chapter (16) of the Laws of Malta. VO/2227

**SCAN
to donate**

