



CUSTODIA TERRÆ SANCTÆ

Jerusalem, 10 October 2023

Dear Friends of the Holy Land,

On Saturday 7 October we woke up to the sound of the sirens and we suddenly found ourselves in a state of war. All of you are probably apprehensively following this situation through the various media.

What we want to share with you, now, is the need to pray and fast for peace, according to what Pope Francis asked us at the end of the Angelus on Sunday 8 October: "I am following apprehensively and sorrowfully what is happening in Israel where the violence has exploded even more ferociously, causing hundreds of deaths and casualties. I express my closeness to the families and victims. I am praying for them and for all who are living hours of terror and anguish. May the attacks and weaponry cease. Please! And let it be understood that terrorism and war do not lead to any resolutions, but only to the death and suffering of so many innocent people. War is a defeat! Every war is a defeat! Let us pray that there be peace in Israel and in Palestine." (Angelus, 8/10/2023).

In the sanctuaries in our care, which remind us how much Jesus said and did for our reconciliation, our fraternities are praying for all the victims, especially the civilians and the hostages. And for their families. Let us pray so that the hatred, anger and fear that generate violence go out in hearts. Let us pray so that the international community fosters initiatives of mediation and peace, especially in protecting civilians.

In this situation, although with prudence, our fraternities are continuing to take care of the local faithful and the groups of pilgrims blocked in the country. For the time being, it is opportune to suspend pilgrimages and wait for the situation to be safe again.

We continue to trust in the Lord, knowing well that our life is in his care. May the Lord bless you, may the Virgin Mary Queen of the Rosary protect you and may our patron saints Francis and Anthony intercede with the Almighty and obtain a rapid end to this conflict.