Matthew 5:9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

Resource Bulletin August 1, 2025: **A Franciscan Voice in the Israeli-Palestinian Crisis**

**Listen, Discern, and Go Forth**

Listen to Church Leaders:



The Latin Patriarch of Jeruselem, Cardinal Pizzaballa, OFM, gave a statement on 07/17/2025, the date of the recent attacks on the Holy Family catholic church in Gaza. Along with his Greek orthodox counterpart, he visited the church on 7/20. *Franciscan Media* has a detailed story of that visit at this link. For more background on the Church’s presence in Gaza, Cardinal Pizzaballa has a video here.



After his Angelus address on 7/20/2025, Pope Leo XIV decried “the continuous military attacks against the civilian population and places of worship in Gaza.” He praised the Catholic Action Forum, for promoting a “prayer marathon… asking the Lord to enlighten our leaders and inspire in them projects for peace.”[1]

Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, representing the Holy See, issued a new statement at a United Nations conference on Wednesday, supporting a framework for peace in Palestine, referencing Pope Leo’s address on 7/20, and calling as always for *cease fire*. Link to the full statement: https://holyseemission.org/contents//statements/688a41b5f34c3.php

Discern:

What is ours to do? A friend said to me, “the media these days is like a crown of thorns, and each new item is another thorn.” Staying aware of the peoples’ suffering is a way of staying close to Christ. Our tears have an intrinsic value, and also can inspire action, or as Pope Leo said, “projects for peace.” There is more we can do, individually and collectively. We need to use that “apostolic effectiveness and creativity” called for in paragraph 6 of our Rule. Discernment starts with prayer and contemplation. When we get to a place of love for all, that is the time to initiate a “project for peace.”

Go forth:

Action can take many forms. A simple fundraiser or donation for *Catholic Relief Services* or *Caritas Jerusalem* can go a long way. Many OFS are participating in advocacy at the policy level. I’ve been very busy messaging my delegation this year, and I learned better ways to do that from the USCCB’s action page. Working publicly for peace and human dignity (as in a march or protest) should begin with a grounding in *active non-violence.* Pace e Bene, co-founded by Louie Vitale, OFM, offers training and resources in this through the Franciscan Action Network. I was at a demonstration recently, and noticed, as usual, a few people with angry, confrontational signs I thought were counterproductive. As one preacher put it, we need “less calling *out*, [accusation] and more calling *in* [to dialogue.]” We need to bring a Franciscan temperament.

*Love, Pardon, Joy, Hope, and Serenity.*[2] These are our rule. These are the fruit of our contemplative practice. These are the Christ-centered gifts we are supposed to bring. Some members have said we should avoid public protest. My feeling is… whenever there is an injustice that brings people into the street, Franciscan voices of solidarity should be there, courageous, peaceful, and prophetic. JM

[1] https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/angelus/2025/documents/20250720-angelus.html

[2] OFS Rule, P. 19



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