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## Gaza Strip. Jerusalem church leaders and Archbishop Welby (Anglicans): “The international community must ensure protection of hospitals, schools and places of worship”

"The whole area is in great turmoil. The clergy and lay members of our Holy Family parish, together with Catholic and Orthodox parishioners, are consoling those who mourn their dead, healing the wounds, helping everyone. Most of the nearly 700 people who were sheltering in the parish building overlooking the street, fearing that they might suffer a similar fate to that of the Orthodox Church, are sleeping inside the church."



[A parish priest at the Holy Family church, the only Catholic parish in Gaza, described to SIR the plight of his faithful. The death toll from the war continues to rise: in addition to the 1,400 Israelis killed, more than 3,000 wounded and over 200 held hostage, there are over 4,000 dead and more than 14,000 wounded in Gaza. Some 1,500 people are still under the rubble, including some 800 children. They are still enduring “heavy shelling throughout the night” into the early hours of the morning. “It is hard for everyone to rest”, especially for the men and women religious who, as soon as they wake up, “begin to prepare for Eucharistic adoration, the first recitation of the Rosary and Holy Mass.”](#)



[a missionary of the Institute of the Incarnate Word \(IVE\) in Gaza, described the gravity of the situation to SIR: “We have no electricity, no drinking water, we use water from the well, but we don't know how long it will last, and the same goes for mineral water, which we have had to buy at three times the normal price. With great charitable effort we are trying to ensure that everyone receives what they need in the best way possible.” The nun reported on the funeral of 18 Christians who died in the Israeli bombing of the Orthodox parish complex of St. Porphyrios: “It was very sad and painful to see the children saying goodbye to their parents, and even more painful to see the parents saying goodbye to their children. Some of them said goodbye to all their children. This scene is particularly painful since some of those children were involved in the activities of our parish. These families were well known and very close to us. We ask everyone to join us in our prayers, so that God, in his mercy, may bestow the gift of peace.” \*\*Terrible anguish.\*\* Yesterday, together with the Patroness of the religious family of the Incarnate Word \(IVE\), Our Lady of Lujan, to which Father Romanelli belongs, the liturgy celebrated the feast of St John Paul II, Patron Saint of the same religious order.](#)

“According to his teaching,” said the parish priest, who was born in Argentina and is stranded in Bethlehem because of the war, “in the parish we prayed for mercy and peace. Our faithful are all well. But there is great anxiety. We must work for peace. There have already been too many deaths and too many wounded in both Palestine and Israel,” Father Romanelli concluded, recalling the words of **Pope Francis** during the Angelus prayer yesterday: “Once again my thoughts turn to what is happening in Israel and Palestine. I am very concerned, grieved. I pray and I am close to all those who are suffering: the hostages, the wounded, the victims and their families. I think of the serious humanitarian situation in Gaza and I am saddened that the Anglican hospital and the Greek-Orthodox parish have also been hit in recent days. I renew my appeal for spaces to be opened, for humanitarian aid to continue to arrive, and for the hostages to be freed. War, any war that there is in the world – I also think of tormented Ukraine – is a defeat. War is always a defeat; it is a destruction of human fraternity. Brothers, stop! Stop!”

