



March 28, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

During this Season of Lent, every Christian thinks of the Holy Land. All of us have a favorite Bible story that brings that ancient land to life. The reality of the Holy Land today, however, often does not match the scenes in our imagination.

We are called to support Christianity in the Holy Land. Today schools and parishes are signs of peace and hope. Shrines in Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem and many other locations welcome Christian pilgrims. The Church in the Holy Land provides housing and food for the poor.

At the recent Synod of Bishops on the Middle East, a special commitment was made to help keep Christianity alive in the Holy Land. Because of the special challenges that Christians face there, many families emigrate in search of a better life. All Christians are called to assist our brothers and sisters who now live in the land that was sanctified by the Lord's life, death and resurrection.

Each year all Catholics are invited to support Christianity in the Holy Land by making a donation to the Good Friday Collection; it is a Pontifical Collection requested by Pope Benedict XVI. Please be as generous as your abundance allows. Holy Land Christians, along with all the clergy and religious working there, deeply appreciate your help!

May God bless you and those you love during this most holy season.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton
Bishop of Belleville

This collection is to be taken up on Good Friday, April 22, 2011.

Envelopes for this collection should be in your parishioners' regular envelope packets. Please send the proceeds of this collection to the Chancery no later than Friday, June 10, 2011. Please make the check payable to "Catholic Diocese of Belleville" and indicate "Holy Land" in the lower left-hand corner of the check. Your cooperation in forwarding the check by the requested date is appreciated.

Thank you for your assistance.