



Please Give Generously to the
Good Friday Holy Land Collection

Third Sunday of Lent: Are You Bearing Fruit This Lent?

The Gospel of Luke tells us of Jesus' ministry in Galilee, one of the loveliest regions in the Holy Land. Here is the agriculture that gives us the images in Scripture: the vine, the grain, the orchards. Galilee is the region of farmers and shepherds, the simple folk who were not sophisticated like the people in Jerusalem. In Galilee today the separation wall being built by the Israeli government is dividing farmers from their land, destroying the peace and beauty of this region.

The region of Galilee is where Jesus did much of his preaching and healing in such towns as Tiberias, Magdala, and his home base of Capernaum. The pilgrims that come to Galilee today are able to visit the places where Jesus performed such miracles as multiplying the loaves and fishes and where He preached the Sermon on the



Destroyed olive trees awaiting removal in the Cremisan Valley outside Bethlehem to allow for the building of Israel's separation wall.

Help For Holy Land Christians

Franciscan Good Friday Collection:

www.myfranciscan.org

Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem:

www.holysepulchre.net

Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem:

www.lpj.org

Mount. These Holy Sites are preserved and maintained by the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, who receives financial support from the Good Friday Collection taken up in parishes worldwide every Holy Week.

This Sunday's Gospel tells us about judgment. In Luke 13, Jesus declares that the Galileans murdered by Pilate are no more guilty than those killed in a tragic accident at the tower at Siloam or indeed than anyone else living in Jerusalem. They did not deserve their suffering and death because they were greater sinners than we are. Neither do the Christians in the Holy Land today deserve their suffering as they struggle to meet the challenges of everyday life.

Jesus called the people of his time to repentance as He is continuing to call each of

us to a conversion of heart this Lent. We are called to bear fruit demonstrated in the love of God and the love of our neighbor. Judgment is indeed coming; we do not know when. What we do know is how to prepare. We must begin by tearing down the separation walls we have built in our lives that divide us from our neighbors and from those who are different from us. Then we can perform works of mercy for our neighbors by letting the word of God fertilize our hearts so that we will all bear good fruit. A true work of mercy this Lenten season would be to make a generous contribution on Good Friday to the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land that will help preserve the Christian presence in the Holy Land and maintain the Holy Sites.