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Patriarch Theophilos III and Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa in Gaza: The Church's Humanitarian Presence Amid Catastrophe Is a Sacred Duty



Jerusalem - July 18, 2025

His Beatitude Theophilos III, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and His Beatitude Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem, commenced this morning a pastoral and humanitarian visit to the Gaza Strip, accompanied by a high-ranking Christian delegation. The visit aims to closely follow the condition of their faithful, who have been enduring a relentless humanitarian catastrophe for over twenty-one months, and to directly oversee the relief efforts provided by the churches to support the steadfastness of those in Gaza who have lost their homes, safety, and access to medicine. This visit stands as a living embodiment of the unity of the Church in the face of the deepening human suffering in the Strip.

His Beatitude Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem, is likewise undertaking a visit to Gaza, joining his brother in Christ, Patriarch Theophilos III, in a powerful expression of ecclesial unity and fraternal solidarity in the face of the deepening human suffering in the Strip.

This visit comes in the wake of repeated assaults on Christian holy sites in Gaza: the bombing of the Baptist Hospital on October 17, 2023; the strike on Saint Porphyrius Church on October 19, 2023; the gunfire attack on worshippers at the Church of the Holy Family on December 16, 2023; and most recently, the Israeli bombing of the very same church on July 16, 2025, which claimed the lives of three people and wounded nine others, one critically and two seriously, alongside a minor injury to the parish priest, Father Gabriel Romanelli. The attack also caused significant destruction to the parish compound and deprived many persons with special needs of access to life-saving irreplaceable medical equipment.

It must be noted that this latest bombing occurred less than forty-eight hours after Their Beatitudes Patriarch Theophilos III and Patriarch Pierbattista Pizzaballa, together with the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Adolfo Tito Yllana, and accompanied by a high-level delegation of church leaders in Jerusalem, visited the Christian town of Taybeh in the West Bank, east of Ramallah. The visit was in response to a series of criminal attacks carried out by Israeli settler militias under the protection of the Israeli army, including the desecration of the town's Christian cemetery and historic church. The delegation was joined by diplomatic representatives from more than twenty nations, including Jordan, Russia, China, the European Union, Japan, and Canada.

In light of the ongoing humanitarian disaster in Gaza, His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III called for an immediate, comprehensive, and permanent ceasefire. He urged the international community to assume its ethical and humanitarian responsibilities toward innocent civilians who continue to pay an unbearable price

in a merciless war.

His Beatitude Theophilos III reaffirmed that the Orthodox Church, compelled by its unshakable faith, remains steadfast in its sacred mission to be present, spiritually and humanely, in times of war. Such presence, he said, is a religious and moral obligation that will not be abandoned. The Church's work among the wounded, the bereaved, and the displaced is a direct continuation of the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, who calls us to mercy, accompaniment, and service to all people without discrimination.

As His Beatitude declared: "Where suffering abounds, so too must our



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