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ACN AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND

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Seeking Peace and Aid in War-Torn Gaza

Sister Nabila calls for peace and aid in war-torn Gaza

Sister Nabila, a devout sister from the Holy Rosary, has sought refuge alongside 700 fellow Christians at the Holy Family Parish in Gaza amidst the ongoing conflict. She has issued a heartfelt plea for peace and immediate humanitarian aid in the war-torn region.

During a recent phone conversation with the international charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), Sister Nabila expressed profound concern for approximately 100 traumatized children sheltered within the parish complex. These children have tragically known nothing but the horrors of war throughout their lives. She lamented, "All we yearn for is peace, peace. Gaza has endured six wars, and these children have only known conflict." Despite the dire circumstances, Sister Nabila remains resolute in her belief that "staying active and extending a helping hand to others is the most effective way to cope with the devastation."

The Holy Family Parish has been tirelessly offering aid and shelter to wounded and displaced Christians affected by the ongoing violence over the past two weeks, many of whom have lost their homes. Sister Nabila, along with six other religious sisters and a Catholic priest, has been working relentlessly to support the community during these trying times.

The situation in Gaza remains deeply concerning. The Holy Family parish is currently without electricity or running water. They are now reliant on well water for drinking, although they fear it may run dry at any moment. The price of mineral water, which they purchase, has tripled due to the crisis.

The recent reopening of the border with Egypt has brought a glimmer of hope for aid, but Sister Nabila and the Christian community are uncertain if the much-needed assistance will reach the northern region where they are located.

According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, the recent aid deliveries, consisting of approximately 20 trucks per day, are but a drop in the ocean. This falls far short of the 500 trucks daily urgently needed to address the severe shortage of essential medical supplies.

The sisters and their dedicated staff are doing everything within their power to ensure that each individual receives the urgent assistance they require. However, resources are scarce, and the situation is deteriorating daily, particularly after refugees sought shelter in the parish following an explosion at the Greek Orthodox compound, resulting in the loss of 18 lives. At present, there are

nearly 700 faithful in the parish, including 100 children, 50 individuals with disabilities, and some who were injured in the Greek Orthodox compound and are receiving medical care.

Among the casualties of the Greek Orthodox compound bombing is a teacher from Sister Nabila's school, along with her entire family and other children who had been attending the parish's religious instruction.

The faithful gather for Holy Mass twice a day, continually reciting the Rosary, seeking solace and peace through the intercession of the Virgin Mary and the Almighty.

In a united statement, the Patriarchs and Church leaders in Jerusalem underscore the unwavering commitment of the churches "to fulfill our sacred and moral obligation of providing aid, support, and refuge to the civilians who turn to us in their dire need." Despite military pressures to evacuate charitable institutions and places of worship, the churches have remained steadfast: "We will not forsake this Christian mission, for there is truly no other safe haven for these innocents." They beseech the international community to "enforce safeguards in Gaza for sanctuaries of refuge, such as hospitals, schools, and places of worship," and urge an "immediate humanitarian ceasefire" to ensure the secure delivery of vital supplies to the displaced civilians.

Sister Nabila's words echo the sentiments of the local community, which yearns for an end to the cycle of violence and suffering after nearly two weeks spent within the parish complex. "Peace, peace, that is all we desire. There is so much darkness, so much agony. It is heart-wrenching. At this moment, our solace lies solely with God," she affirmed.

To donate to Christians in the Holy Land visit www.aidtochurch.org/holyland or call 1800 101 201.

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