

# CATHOLICS MAKING A **DIFFERENCE**



## **Needs of the Church in the Holy Land Solidarity with the first Christian church in the world**

As we celebrate the liturgies of Palm Sunday and Holy Week, the Word of God brings us right back to the places where Jesus Christ lived, prayed and preached — what we Christians know as the Holy Land.

For those who make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, the words of the gospels come vividly to life. In 2019, nearly half a million Catholics made such pilgrimages, visiting some 50 different shrines and sacred sites from Bethlehem to Nazareth to Galilee and Jerusalem. These sites have been maintained by Franciscan custodians since the days of St. Francis of Assisi. Next to each one, there is always a small Christian community whose life of faith needs support.

Each year, parishes around the world are called by the Holy Father to support these Christian sisters and brothers through a special collection. In the Archdiocese of Edmonton, we contribute through our gifts to the *Together We Serve* appeal.

Continuing political tensions mean that Christians in the Holy Land face a number of hardships, and many depend on these collections for their lives. The funds help not only to maintain the Holy Places but also to support the pastoral, welfare, educational and social works that the Church carries out to the benefit of the local Christians. Whether we have the opportunity to visit the Holy Land personally or just offer a gift of support, we are showing our solidarity with them.

When Pope Francis made his own Holy Land pilgrimage in 2014, he addressed the priests and religious who serve there. "It is a gift and also a responsibility" he told them. "Your présence here is extremely important; the whole Church is grateful to you and she sustains you by her prayers. From this holy place, I wish to extend my heartfelt greetings



*Pilgrims flock to Church of the Holy Sepulchre, site of Jesus' tomb*

to all Christians in Jerusalem: I would like to assure them that I remember them affectionately and that I pray for them, being well aware of the difficulties they experience in this city. I urge them to be courageous witnesses of the passion of the Lord but also of his resurrection, with joy and hope."

### **About the Commissariat of the Holy Land in Canada:**

The Commissariat's mission is to make known the places where Christ lived and announced the Gospel, and to develop a permanent and effective solidarity between our parishes and the religious communities with the faithful of the first Christian church in the world: the Church of Jerusalem. Funds directed to the Needs of the Church in the Holy Land are used for the protection and upkeep of shrines, basilicas and churches, and to support pastoral work, Catholic schools, convents, and social assistance to Christians, who today make up less than 2% of the population.

**Thank you for your generous support of  
*Together We Serve* !**

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## **St. Joseph's College Campus Ministry** Growing in a Community of Faith

When Rielle moved away from a small town to study at the University of Alberta, she didn't know a soul on campus, but she found a welcoming community at St. Joseph's College.

"I was assigned an upper-year mentor who took me under her wing and who was a driving factor in the spiritual growth I experienced in my first year of university," recalls Rielle, who lived in residence for four years.

"Although it can be easy to feel lost on a campus as large as the U of A, St. Joseph's College provided me with a community that made me feel safe, supported, and at home."

Rielle has since graduated but remains grateful for her experience at St. Joe's and expects the friendships she made there will last a lifetime.

She is one of many students who have benefited from the college's Campus Ministry program, which offers students, faculty and staff a variety of ways to be involved in the St. Joseph's community and to grow in their faith. Two campus ministers provide non-judgmental listening ears, and a Registered Provisional Psychologist can provide counselling. A trained and experienced spiritual director also offers spiritual guidance.

The Catholic Students' Association runs a number of student and social events that promote reflection and discussion, ecumenical interactions, volunteer service and overall community. Every Sunday evening, alongside the college chaplain, students play a major role in the Student Mass, participating in music ministry, proclamation of the Word, Eucharistic ministry and hospitality.

Student retreats are held each term for spiritual enrichment. As one participant said, "It was a great weekend getaway which helped me strengthen my faith



and made me realize that God is always right beside me and all I have to do is open my heart to him. I can definitely say this retreat helped me feel less lost than I was before!"

Through the generosity of those who give to *Together We Serve*, St. Joseph's College will continue to bear witness to the Gospel by meeting the spiritual, emotional, intellectual and practical needs of students on the University of Alberta campus.

"St. Joseph's College has changed my life," says Rielle, "and I look forward to watching it change the lives of thousands of future residents, students, and community members that will walk through its doors in the years to come."

### **About St. Joseph's College**

St. Joseph's College is an affiliated Catholic college on the campus of the University of Alberta. It provides courses that currently have over 2,600 enrollments per year. The college's Campus Ministry program offers support, comfort, community, and faith formation through a variety of initiatives and events.

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