

Message of the Minister General for Good Friday 2026



ORDO FRATRUM
MINORUM

**DAY OF PRAYER AND PENANCE
FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION**

To all the Friars Minor, the Poor Clare Sisters,
the Conceptionist Sisters, the Franciscan Sisters,
and the Franciscan Laity throughout the world

Rome, 30 March 2026
Holy Monday

Dear brothers and sisters,

May the Lord give you peace!

Holy Week calls us to stand at the foot of the Cross as disciples who recognize in the Crucified the face of every suffering man and woman, the cry of every people longing for justice, and the silence of God who takes upon Himself the evil of the world in order to transform it from within.

In this year in which we celebrate the Franciscan Centenary — eight hundred years since the Transitus of Francis, that poor and joyful death in Assisi which was his final word to the world — I feel the need to address our entire family, asking you to live this Good Friday with renewed intensity and love as a common day of prayer, fasting and penance — in communion with the whole Church — to implore peace, reconciliation and justice.

In communion with Jerusalem and the Holy Land

There is a place that weighs heavily on the hearts of many: Jerusalem, the city of peace — Ir Shalom — which for too long has borne within itself the opposite of its name. The entire Holy Land and the Middle East are living a situation that deeply concerns us, not only because of its immediate consequences, but also because of what it foreshadows for the future of humanity.

By explicit will of the Apostolic See, we have been present as Custodians of the Holy Places for seven centuries, and we remain there in a spirit of service in her name.



I can testify that our friars in the Custody of the Holy Land live this reality each day with fidelity and discretion, remaining steadfast: they do not wish to present themselves as victims, nor to raise further voices already too loud. They desire to be — and indeed are — persistent seekers of reconciliation, dialogue and human wisdom. This is our vocation in that land: to serve and to guard, in the name of the whole Church.

We do not take sides against anyone. We take sides for peace and for the smallest and most vulnerable, those most exposed to the logic of the powerful of this world. And we do so steadfastly, persistently, and in an evangelical spirit. For peace is not a political position: it is the name of God waiting to resound in the streets of every wounded city, in the heart of every person who desires to live and not to die.

Our unarmed weapon

Francis of Assisi went to meet the Sultan without weapons, without armies, with no other wealth than the Gospel and fraternity. He did not obtain immediate peace. Yet he opened a gateway that time has not closed. That gateway we are called to keep open today, eight hundred years later.

Our unarmed weapon is prayer. To this we add fasting — a free choice of deprivation that makes us one with those who have lost everything — and conversion: to words of peace where division is sown, to gestures of reconciliation where walls are built, to courageous choices where it would be easier to remain silent.

A cry on behalf of many

I ask you, brothers and sisters: let us live this Holy Week, and especially Good Friday, as a day of offering and of a cry raised to God. On behalf of those who have no voice. On behalf of children who have not chosen war, of the elderly who remember when there was peace, of those — Christians, Jews, Muslims — who still believe that God desires something different for this land than what our eyes now see.

Let us think in a particular way of the Holy Land, but let our gaze embrace all situations of conflict throughout the world — in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe — where we too, as Franciscan men and women, are present as witnesses of hope. Wherever there is a Franciscan fraternity, it is called to be a leaven of peace.



The Crucified does not ask us to resolve what we cannot resolve. He asks us not to turn away. To remain beneath the Cross — like Mary, like John, like the women of the Gospel — and never to cease believing that the final word is not death, but life.

Peace is possible. We believe in it. And we proclaim it through our poor lives, through our prayer, through our presence.

I embrace you all with fraternal affection.



Fr. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM

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Minister General

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