



# CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

## ENGLAND & WALES

SUNDAY, 25 MAY 2014, 3-4PM

### **PRAYER FOR THE CHRISTIANS OF THE HOLY LAND**

The Bishops of England and Wales are encouraging Catholics to unite in prayer at the very hour that Pope Francis will visit the Christians of Bethlehem on Sunday 25 May between 3pm - 4pm (UK time).

Here is a prayer adapted from a special prayer written by Fr Rifat Bader - Director of the Catholic Center for Studies and Media in Amman, Jordan.

#### **Heavenly Father,**

You never tire of being compassionate and loving.

The successor of St Peter, His Holiness Pope Francis, plans to visit the Holy Land sanctified by your Son's birth, baptism, teaching, death and resurrection.

Be with him, sanctify and bless him, spread the mantle of your kindness over every stage of his pilgrimage among us, that we may see in him a believing pilgrim, a wise teacher, and a humble leader.

#### **Lord Jesus Christ,**

As you prayed for the unity of your Church, saying, "may they all be one", make the meeting in Jerusalem between the Holy Father and the Ecumenical Patriarch an incentive to increase our efforts for the unity of your children.

Make the encounter of the Pope with the political authorities fruitful for justice and peace.

Protect all the residents of this land and the adherents of the religions of the Middle East, so that they may be in harmony, dialogue and cooperation for the achievement of full citizenship.

#### **Good Shepherd,**

Whose image Pope Francis carries on his pectoral cross, walking in the spirit of humility with which you have graced him:

Deepen within us the awareness of our Christian identity, that as true disciples, we may bear witness to your Good News and your resurrection in our churches, our society, and all the world, especially by serving the sick, the poor and the refugees.

#### **Bless, Lord Most Holy, this fourth papal visit to our Holy Land,**

Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, all the saints of the Holy Land, and the two new saints, John Paul II and John XXIII.

*Amen.*