



ASIA/HOLY LAND - Even at the Wall of Bethlehem, the Pope, Abbas and Peres join in prayer for peace

Beit Jala (Agenzia Fides) - The event is scheduled for this afternoon at 4.30p.m. in the Cremisan valley, the "green lung" of Bethlehem, which is on the planned route of the separation wall erected on the orders of the Israeli authorities. There, Abuna Mario Cornioli, a priest in Beit Jala, will celebrate Mass under the olive trees that risk being cut.

Every Friday Abuna Mario and the other priests of Bejt Jala celebrate liturgies and rites among the olive groves of the Cremisan valley. This time, the Mass will have a special intention: the present - where there will be two groups of foreign pilgrims - will pray so that the invocation for peace that Pope Francis, the Israeli President Shimon Peres and the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, finds an answer and will be shared during their meeting at the Vatican, on Sunday, June 8. "We have been celebrating Eucharistic liturgies, Rosaries and Stations of the Cross since October 2011 to ask to stop the construction of the Wall in the Valley" explains Abuna Mario to Fides Agency, "simply because we believe that prayer is also the most effective tool to ask for peace and an end to injustice. So when we heard the Pope who in Bethlehem, at Manger Square, offered 'his home in the Vatican' to host the meeting with the two Presidents and invoke the start of the gift of peace, it was a great joy full of emotion for us".

Meanwhile, the Assembly of Bishops of the Catholic Ordinaries in the Holy Land, with a letter published on June 5, has called on all Christians to pray for peace at the same time of the meeting scheduled at the Vatican, in particular observing two minutes of silence and prayer at 7 p.m. on Sunday, at the sound of the bells. (GV) (Agenzia Fides 06/06/2014)