

Catholic priest in Gaza City tells of danger and fear.

<https://www.rte.ie/news/middle-east/2025/0917/1533977-fr-carlos-ferrero-gaza/>

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The Holy Family Church in Gaza City was hit in an Israeli strike in July

Fr Carlos Ferrero of the Holy Family Catholic Church in Gaza City said the danger there has made it "very difficult" for anyone there to leave their compound, as the situation has worsened in recent days. He told RTÉ's News at One that 450 refugees are taking shelter inside the church and compound, including disabled children.

He said that approximately 250,000 people have left Gaza city under Israeli military orders but that that means up to one million people remain. Fr Ferrero said many say they do not want to go as nowhere is safe, and that everyone is experiencing some level of fear and concern. He added that stray bullets have been found nearby, including inside the school building

"Danger is there and on top of that the current situation, it adds a little more realism to the danger. People are scared. Everybody is scared; we are all scared. "The sisters' house has been bombed three times, the two ladies were killed last time, December 2023, by the sniper. "The church was bombed, three people died, there are still people wounded because of that attack. "When there is a bomb very near here, things are falling down in our compound, so we have to be careful from everywhere," he said.

Fr Carlos Ferrero said Pope Leo has been in touch and "he is very much concerned", and the papal nuncio in Israel and the patriarch are in communication with the church directly. He said the patriarch asked them what they would like to do, and Fr Ferrero said they intend to remain in Gaza city.

"There are disabled children, there are elderly people who have no idea...they know they're suffering, but they do not understand anything else. "Some of them have lost their mind, and some due to their age, are bedridden and others are sick. "There are also sick people who cannot move from the church freely".

Perseverance of faith.

Fr Ferrero said the remainder will have to decide for themselves what they would like to do, and he himself chose to stay "for those people". He added that the nuns and others have decided to do the same. When asked what keeps him and the other religious order members going, Fr Carlos Ferrero replied, "God of course, Jesus", and that through it all, he has not questioned his faith. "He [God] is patiently waiting for people to change their mind, to correct, there are millions of people who are praying for peace.

"That's kind of a moral miracle all over the world. "The people, they don't question God, they question the human beings, they don't get annoyed with God, how could he allow this to happen. That's amazing the faith they have. "Persevering and saying let God help us, but not going against God, but saying human beings can do bad things," he said.

In terms of services being provided to people by the church, Fr Ferrero said that spiritual services are being provided, such as the eucharist and the sacraments.

"We are assisting all these people who are not able to go nowhere now by themselves".