



Prayers4Peace: A Jerusalem Voice for Justice, An ecumenical witness for equality and a just peace in Palestine/Israel

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Palestine/Israel

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"Out of the depths I cry to you"
(Psalm 130:1)

We are living in a time of deep crisis. We are writing to you today because we believe that our faith is meant to shine out in times like these.

As the war in Gaza continues, Israel has launched a war in the West Bank, hidden from the eyes of the world. The Israeli army is carrying out the largest displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank from their homes since 1967. According to OCHA, already over 40,000 Palestinians have been displaced, and are currently living without shelter, essential services, and healthcare.

In this context, we call to mind the parable Jesus told. It is one that unfolds in these very lands. A wounded man lay on the side of the road. Jesus describes those who passed him by without stopping. Rev. Martin Luther King proposed that they passed him by, fearing: what will happen to me if I stop? Rev. King wrote that the Good Samaritan instead asked the question: what will happen to him if I pass him by? Only the Good Samaritan acted in order to save the wounded man's life. Remembering this parable, we now wish to address three groups of people.

To our brothers and sisters in Gaza, Gaza City, Khan Younis and Rafah, and the West Bank, in Nablus, Jenin and Tulkarm:

We refuse to simply pass you by. We not only do not forget you, but commit ourselves to solidarity with you. We carry you in our prayers. We cry with you. We seek to make your cries heard in a world which needs to be shaken out of its complacency.

To those around the globe who see our wounds but do not speak out:

We recognize your fear and know that the stakes of speaking out now are high. Perhaps you still hope, in your silence, that someone else along the way will stop to help. It should be apparent by now that no one is stopping. Recently, the United States President, Donald Trump, has declared that in a few weeks he will make vital announcements about the future of our homeland. We fear that the annexation of Palestinian territories by Israel may be imminent. Increasing use of the names "Judea and Samaria" (instead of the occupied West Bank), exploiting Biblical terminology to confuse present political realities, manifests a desire to wipe Palestine and the Palestinians off the map, claiming we do not exist. Now is the time to insist that Palestinians have the right to live in their homeland, and to join with those calling all over the world for equality, justice and peace for Palestinians and Israeli alike.

Finally, to those Jews and Christians who have been led to believe that God wants Israel to annex our homeland:

We want to state clearly that you have been misguided. All, Palestinians and Israelis, are created in the image and likeness of God. They are all equal in dignity and rights. Furthermore, our God is a God of love who abhors violence and loves all God's children. The Palestinians are your "neighbor". The inviolable commandment in the word of God we share is this: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22:39, Mark 12:31, Luke 10:27, Roman 13:9). To expel the Palestinians from their homeland is not only an act of violence; it is sacrilege.

As we approach Easter, we affirm yet again that the light shines in the darkness and darkness does not overcome it. "What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (John 1:3-5)

A Jerusalem Voice for Justice

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