

Contemporary Way of the Cross

LITURGY



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STATION ONE -1948

LOCATION: LIFTA

Lifta is an ethnically cleansed and destroyed village 5 km west of Jerusalem. In 1945, the population of Lifta consisted of 2,530 Christians and 20 Muslims. As early as December 1947, the Stern Gang, led by Jewish terrorists, cornered six people in a coffee house and gunned them down. Palestinian residents, terror stricken, were then systematically trucked to Jerusalem and left to fend for themselves. The village was destroyed in 1948. The settlements of Mey Niftoach, Giv'at Sha'ul, and Giv'at Sah'ul Bet were subsequently built on village lands. Israel announced in 1987 that Lifta would be turned into an open-air natural history and study center that would "stress the Jewish roots of the site."

STATION I: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Jesus, innocent, without sin, is unjustly accused of a crime punishable by death. To retain the friendship and good will of mortal men, his accusers cry out, "Crucify him!" and condemn the man who has performed miracles and preached love of enemies, to the most ignominious death on the cross.



OPENING MEDITATION

Just as Jesus is condemned to die by the authorities to protect their own power, status and ideals so the Palestinians suffer as the result of the fear and ideology of the founders of the State of Israel.

Just as Jesus is condemned to die so the actions of 1948 passed a death sentence on historic Palestine and 418 villages that were completely destroyed across the country. On this Palm Sunday we remember that pain of losing community, family networks and a sense of place. We open our eyes to the initial devastation caused by the founding of Israel that has never received acknowledgement and we hold these people and their memories in our thoughts.

SILENCE

POEM *Fadwa Tuqan*

The heart said:

*What have the troubles done to you, homes,
And where are your inhabitants-
Have you received news of them?
Here where they used to be, and dream,
And draw their plans for the morrow-
Where's the dream and the future now?
And where have they gone?
The rubble stayed silent.
Nothing spoke but the absence.*

SCRIPTURE Micah 2:2-3, Micah 3:9-11

They covet fields, and seize them; houses, and take them away.

They oppress householder and house, people and their inheritance.

Hear this, you rulers of the house of Jacob and chiefs of the house of Israel.

Who abhor justice and pervert all equity, who build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with wrong!

PRAYER

On this sweet-sour occasion of Palm Sunday where the honoured King rides toward the suffering of the cross and joyful hosannas point to the hope of the resurrection.

We praise you, Holy God that you bring new life out of grief and loss.

In Your mercy,

Comfort all who have lost their homes

Through persecution, war, exile,

Or deliberate destruction.

Give them security, a place to live,

And neighbors they trust

To be, with them,

A new sign of peace to the world.

Amen

TAIZE SONG

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.
Ba ri kul ra ba , Wa sa bi hos ma hu.

Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.
Ba ri kul ra ba Yah di ni lil ha ya.



You will have a few moments here to think of the lives that were lived in this village. Please take some time for personal reflection. On your way back to the bus, please pick up a small remembrance - a stone or leaf - that you can carry with you through the rest of the Palm Sunday activities to remember the suffering of this community.

STATION TWO - 1967

LOCATION: TANTUR ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE FOR THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

The Institute is situated on the main road between Jerusalem and Bethlehem and has offered sanctuary to scores of Palestinians trying to find a way to bypass Israeli checkpoints.

After Pope Paul VI's historical visit to Jerusalem, the Vatican purchased Tantur (Arabic for "hilltop") in 1964. It then leased it to the University of Notre Dame (USA) for fifty years. The University built the Tantur Institute in 1971 in order to offer programs for Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican and Roman Catholic participants. The programs are primarily designed to search for Christian unity and inter-church harmony.

STATION II: JESUS CARRIES HIS CROSS

Jesus accepts his death sentence in silence. He does not proclaim his innocence. He embraces the cross and carries it voluntarily. And on the cross He carries the weight of our sins.



OPENING MEDITATION

As we stand together looking over the West Bank, we think of the second blow to the Palestinian community. To lose their homeland to others was a devastating loss. Their life under occupation is yet another cross to bear. It is a cross that has lasted thirty-seven years - no country to call their own, no passport, no place in the world of nations. We look across this landscape carved with barbed wire, checkpoints, settlements and walls and pray for understanding and determination to confront this illegal occupation and name its evils.

A NEW REALITY OVERNIGHT *Samia Khoury* **(TO BE READ IN SILENCE)**

The voice of my father sounded very serious as he spoke to me on that morning of June 6, 1967. "Bring the children and come and stay with us; it will probably be safer for all of you in Birzeit than where you are near the military camp." We had been living in our new home in Beit Hanina, a suburb of Jerusalem, since 1964, with a Jordanian military camp right behind our house. He was right, it was safer, but neither he nor the Israeli planes who were raiding the area realized that the camp had been evacuated before the war had even begun. One of the bombs fell directly on the strawberry bed in our garden, breaking our living room window. This gave access to the Israeli occupying forces to enter our house and steal the silver cutlery that was left on the table from my sister-in-law's wedding reception held

the previous evening.

The first thing that came to my mind after I put the telephone down: “Will this be another 1948 dispossession? What if I cannot come back like all the Palestinian refugees who were forced out of Palestine in 1948?” I had to think very quickly about what I needed to take. Immediately I came to the conclusion that the things I could not afford to lose were the family photo albums and the collection of slides my husband had taken of the children; all other material things could be replaced, but a childhood could not be relived. The experience of 1948 could not be easily forgotten when so many cherished memories and souvenirs of whole families were lost along with dear lives and the dispossession of land and identity. There was no time to lose before the children and I were on our way to Birzeit leaving my husband behind with the children’s canary, the dog, cat and a little lamb to keep him company. My husband refused to come along as he had been appointed a few days earlier as one of the civil guard group for the area. When I think that he could have been killed in a post unprotected by the military, I feel so angry. I continue to wonder how the Jordanian army was expecting the young men to carry out their job. It turned out that there was nothing to do, as the Israeli army captured the city within the first 24 hours of the war facing minimal resistance.

Almost overnight the whole population was facing a new reality. We were under military occupation. We had not been

prepared for the war, neither were we prepared for occupation. It was one of the most humiliating and traumatic experiences for all of us huddled in my parents home with my brother's and sister's families. My parents were living on the old campus of Birzeit University, which had been founded as a school by my late aunt Nabiha Nasir, and developed into a junior college by my father, Musa Nasir. We had to put up a white cloth as a sign of surrender to the Israeli forces as they took over the town of Birzeit. They occupied the men's dormitory and my mother was devastated as she took some of the staff to help her clear the place and hand it over.

In the beginning nobody envisioned how serious this situation would become. We all were sure that the international community would not allow the seizure of land by force, that no occupation would be viable this century. How naive we were, as we refused to think otherwise in spite of our frustrating experience with United Nations resolutions regarding Palestine since 1948. The reality began to sink in, as Israel kept boasting of "the benevolent occupation". The Palestinians who had stayed in the Galilee after 1948, and were Israeli citizens by then, assured us that we were still in the "honeymoon period" as they had gone through all that before us. How right they were. There is nothing like benevolent occupation, occupation is occupation. It is a process of dehumanization and deprivation of freedom and all other basic rights. We became

an identity card number with a bundle of documents and permits for moving, traveling, and family reunification.

The so-called “honeymoon” for the Palestinians was truly over as the violations of human rights started to touch every town, every family and every organization. The euphoria of victory for Israel was over as well, as the Palestinian population refused to make it easy for Israel to continue occupying the area. It is very ironic that occupation is just as demoralizing for the occupier as it is for the occupied, even more so because the occupied already know that the worst is there and there is nothing more to lose.

In an occupation the authorities are experts at justifying any action. Even the language of the occupation is twisted to suit the purposes of the authorities. The invaders and the aggressors are referred to as “Defense Forces”, while the resistance movements are labeled “terrorists”, and violations of human rights are “security measures”. Under occupation, logic and values get turned upside down. The people become almost schizophrenic trying to live by and teach the values that are basic to any society.

I remember one morning we got up to the noise of workers closing the front entrance of our house. Upon inquiring, we were told it was for security reasons; a gimmick which Israel has been using since the creation of the state. Under the pretext of “security”, Israel has been able to get away with all its illegal acts and violations against the Palestinian

people. In our case that morning, it was the security needed to protect the Israeli Military Central Command which had been built on top of the mountain right behind our house. We had a heated argument with the military, but we were eventually able to come to a compromise. We would be able to use the entrance of our house, but there would be no access beyond our house leading to the rest of the neighborhood. Barbed wire was put up at the end of the alley and our house became a dead end.

Ironically the workers who were doing this ugly job were Palestinians. One of them asked for a drink of water. I was so furious at the closure of the alley, that I snapped at him and told him to go and get a drink of water from his masters who were paying him to do this job. After I walked into the house I could not believe that this was me refusing a drink of water to anybody! As I was still shaking with anger about the whole incident, an aunt of mine came to visit me. "Is it true you refused a drink of water to the worker?" she asked. "What happened to you? What happened to all the values that you were brought up with as a human being and as a Christian? What about our Palestinian hospitality?" "All gone", I said, "they are making us like that; I am so angry at them for making me behave like this." Then we both looked at each other and started laughing, as I went to fetch a glass of water. I knew there and then that I should not let the occupation get to me if I wanted to maintain my sanity and humanity without hatred and bitterness. A good laugh was

the best therapy for dealing with the situation, but the problems during the long years of occupation have not been that simple.

My mother used to tell us that when we lived in Nablus in the early forties, the women used a curse, “May your chest be locked” (Yeqfil sidrek). It was only after the occupation that she was able to comprehend the real meaning of that curse. Not only were our chests locked, but so were our dreams, our hopes, our plans and our whole future. Both my parents died after the occupation without realizing any of their dreams to live in a secular Palestine again. Yet in spite of all that happened, my father never relinquished his principles in pursuit of a just solution. My mother never ceased to be grateful to God for His blessings. On her death bed, we would hear her thanking God, but there would always be a mutter at the end “if only ... if only ...” We understood that the only thing she was yearning for was to see my expelled brother, her only son. It was so sad that she was not around to rejoice with us in his homecoming at the time of the Oslo agreement.

The Palestinians and the Israelis are destined to live together in this land, the cradle of the three monotheistic faiths. Since the hope for the re-establishment of one secular democratic state was shattered when Israel chose to establish a state for Jews, there does not appear to be any other alternative than a two-state solution, both equally independent with full sovereignty. By splitting up the Palestinian territories into

enclaves separated by zones and bypass roads under Israeli control, Israel is putting obstacles in the way of peace and the establishment of a Palestinian state, which are provoking Palestinian anger. Israel has to realize that its security is linked to the rights of the Palestinians.

I can still hear my father telling me that I would be very fortunate if my grandchildren were to see a solution to the issue of Palestine. I have five grandchildren now, aged between two and nine, and it seems we still trying hard to make the best out of a bad situation. We are trying to think and work positively against all odds, so that our struggle for justice will bear fruit and give hope to our children and grandchildren. For justice and only justice is the key and prerequisite for security and peace for all the people of the region.

TAIZE SONG

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.
Ba ri kul ra ba , Wa sa bi hos ma hu.

Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.
Ba ri kul ra ba Yah di ni lil ha ya.

SCRIPTURE READING *Psalm 31:9-15*

Be gracious to me, O Lord for I am in distress;
My eye wastes away from grief, my soul and body also.
For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing;
my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste

away.

I am the scorn of all my adversaries, a horror to my neighbors,
an object of dread to my acquaintances
those who see me in the street flee from me.

I have passed out of mind like one who is dead;

I have become like the broken vessel.

For I hear the whispering of many - terror all around!

As they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life.

But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, "You are my God."

PRAYER FOR PEACE

For all those

who came before us,

for all those who gave

from their hearts,

who gave from their lives

that there might be a better world,

a safer world, a kinder world,

we pray for peace, in their name.

That all their dreams,

that all their struggles

would not end like this-

in this great sadness-

we pray for peace, in their name.

And for the children,

that the children may live,

that they may have children of their own

and that it will go on-
this great blossoming that is meant
to go on and on-
we pray for peace, in their name.
That they would have a world worth being born into,
a future worth dreaming about,
that they might become,
in their own time
all that our race might come to be-
that they might have that chance-
we pray for peace, in their name.

And for the simple peoples of this earth,
who have no voice in this,
and for the animals who have no voice
in this and for the plants, the trees,
the flowers who have no voice in this-
for all those who share this earth with us,
whose home this is, as much as our own-
we pray for peace in their name.

In this time,
when we hold it all in our hands,
for all those who came before us,
for all those who would follow,
and for all those who share life with us
on this tiny, fragile, miraculous globe,
we pray that we-

we who do have voice,
we who could speak out,
we who could make a difference,
we pray that we may prove worthy
of this great, great trust
that we hold now in our care.
Amen.



We will give you some time at this point to walk through the garden of Tantur and think about what it would feel to spend your life under occupation. If you would like, please find and carry an olive branch with you through the day to remember the attachment that Palestinians feel for a land where they live but where they are not free.

STATION THREE

REFUGEES

LOCATION: AIDA CAMP

Aida camp was established in 1950 on an area of 66 dunums between the towns of Bethlehem and Beit Jala. UNRWA's installations in the camp also provide services for the refugees in nearby Beit Jibrin camp. Health services are provided by the UNRWA health centre in the sub-area office in nearby Bethlehem. As with other camps in the West Bank, Aida camp faces severe overcrowding. There is no vacant space in the camp to build a badly needed community centre.

STATION III: JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

Jesus, weak from hunger, imprisonment and torture, falls under the weight of the cross. The people whose bodies and souls He nourished are now keeping silent, or joining in the jeering of the fallen Man.



INTRODUCTORY SENTENCE

Jesus stumbles under the weight of his cross. The weight of the cross borne by the Palestinians falls heaviest on the refugees.

WORDS OF INTRODUCTION *Naim Ateek*

From the perspective of a Palestinian, the beautiful Psalm 42 [which we will be reading shortly] can be used as the real cry of a refugee. The Psalmist apparently has been forced out of his homeland. Living as a refugee in Jordan or Lebanon, he remembers happier times, his friends and neighbors, the worshipping congregations-especially the great feasts, when people celebrated together with excitement, with songs and praises to God. He reminisces about his own participation in these joyous festivities.

As he recalls the past, the Psalmist is aware of his painful present expelled from his country, deprived of his own home, living with grief and despair, frustration and anguish...the turbulent waters and the stormy seas represent the troubles and disasters that he has experienced. His memories of Palestine are beautiful and exhilarating, but they make the present harder to bear. His only hope is in God. Trusting God is the only way to a better future; hope in God is the only medicine and cure for a depressed spirit. So he will not succumb to despair. God will vindicate his rights. God will come to his help and bring him salvation.

SCRIPTURE *Psalm 42*

As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God.

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

When shall I come and behold the face of God?

My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me continually,

“Where is your God?”

These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I went with the throng,

And led them in procession to the house of God,

With glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival.

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me?

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you

From the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

Deep calls to deep at the thunder of your cataracts; all your waves and your billows have gone over me.

By day the Lord commands his steadfast love,

And at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life.

I say to God, my rock, “Why have you forgotten me?

Why must I walk about mournfully because the enemy oppresses me?”

As with a deadly wound in my body, my adversaries taunt me,
While they say to me continually, "Where is your God?"
Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

WHEN WOULD I BECOME A BIRD? *Mona Zaaroura* (12 years),
Shatila Camp

When I was young, I used to imagine that I was a small bird flying from one place to the other and landing wherever I liked.

I used to stand in front of the mirror and sing like a bird would do.

I used to cut wings from paper, draw on my face to look like a bird, and stand on the bed attempting to fly to the ground.

My grandfather, who used to feel he was a tree planted in the land, always told me:

"Become a planted tree because the land is everything for the human being. The person who doesn't have land is not a human being .

If I were a tree, I would have stayed in Palestine." I used to tell him that I want to stay a bird and land on his shoulders. But he would yell at me saying:

"Go away, you will break my branches. You are not a bird."
My grandfather passed away but I still felt like a bird.

As I grew up, I started to realize that I could not be a bird because I am a Palestinian refugee.

This meant I could not fly whenever I felt like because I had no land and eventually, I had no identity. I began to realize how important it was for a person to have a land in which he is implanted. But my land is there and I want to return to my land there, in Palestine. I want to return so that I would have an identity like my grandfather had before leaving Palestine.

I want to return to be free to choose whether I want to be a bird-as I have always loved to be- or a tree as my grandfather had always wanted me to be.

PRAYER

Compassionate God, our refuge and defense, we remember before you those made refugee for so long in the camps of the West Bank and Gaza, of Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and those dispersed throughout the world. Strengthen the will of the international community to work for their repatriation and compensation , for the sake of the One who was made a refugee, and now lives and reigns forever. *Amen.*

TAIZE SONG

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.
Ba ri kul ra ba , Wa sa bi hos ma hu.

Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.
Ba ri kul ra ba Yah di ni lil ha ya.

STATION FOUR SIEGE & CURFEW

LOCATION: THE CHURCH OF NATIVITY

This church is built above a cave, which is believed to be the manger where Jesus was born. The cave includes two small rooms: one with a star to mark the place of Jesus' birth, and one to mark the place of the manger and the repose of the holy family. After the time of Jesus, Queen Helena constructed the first Church of Nativity. The church was dedicated in May of 399. Later the church was destroyed in the Samaritan revolt against the Byzantines in 522, but was built again in 527. The Crusaders also renovated the church and used it as a coronation place in the year of 1100. Today, the church is divided in three parts: one section under the Greek Orthodox, one section under the Armenians and one section under the Franciscans. Christians from around the world come to pray at this church, especially at Christmas. The Muslim population also considers it a holy site.

STATION IV: JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

As Jesus stumbles along the way to Calvary among a throng of onlookers, He meets His Mother. They cannot touch or embrace. Mary stands sorrowful, silent and impotent, watching her beloved son walk toward His death. He can do no more than look upon His mother and follow his mission.

**INTRODUCTORY SENTENCE**

Jesus' suffering, humiliation and crucifixion bring sorrow and humiliation to his mother Mary as she accompanies him in his last painful days. Curfew and siege are a part of the suffering of Palestinian life under occupation and they affect most painfully the families - particularly the children - who stay in confined quarters for days on end.

SCRIPTURE *John 19: 25-26*

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple standing beside her, he said to his mother "Woman here is your son."

READING *Leonardo Boff*

Everyone is shouting, making accusations,
hurling insults, and harassing the condemned man.

Only Mary

Silent and powerless to help,
offers comfort and support with her presence and her tears.

“Come, all you who pass by the way,
look and see whether there is any suffering like my suffering”

(Lam.1:12)

It is not enough that Jesus should suffer in body and soul.

Even our most sacred and intimate affection,

the affection we feel for our mother,

is crushed under his cross.

He sees his mother humiliated and condemned too,

because every mother suffers doubly.

She suffers her own pain

and the pain of her child.

DIARY FROM A DAY UNDER SIEGE

(TO BE READ IN SILENCE)

April 20, 2002: This is day 23 of the Israeli invasion and curfew on the twin cities of Ramallah and Al Bireh. 120 thousand people have been confined to their homes for three weeks now.

The curfew is lifted for three hours every four days to allow us to buy basic foodstuffs, medicine and other vital commodities. Can you imagine what happens when this huge number of people try to do their shopping all at once

within three hours? Although about half of the Ramallah cars have been completely smashed like cardboard boxes by the Israeli tanks, the ones that still run can cause impossible traffic jams with many of the roads blocked or damaged by the Israeli war machine. Lines of people, or more precisely crowds, form outside every shop or market place. Many can only afford the cheapest products and in very small quantities. When people meet each other, they take a minute or two to exchange news about friends and family. Thousands have been arrested, many killed or made homeless. Nothing but suffering, and people trying to pick up the pieces of their broken lives.

At St. Andrew's we find ourselves luckier than others for more than one reason. There is an inner courtyard where the five children of three families living in the compound can play, though they keep their voices and laughter down so that the soldiers outside in the street wouldn't hear them. Another reason why we are lucky is that we have access to the church. Three Sundays have gone by while under curfew and St. Andrew's is the only church that has been able to hold a real Sunday morning service. The congregants, who enter the church through the back door, number about four or five adults and four or five youngsters including Kindy, a 14 year-old boy whose leg is healing from the gunshot wound he sustained. The reflections for the first Sunday under curfew centered on The Good Shepherd. The second Sunday it was about the real meaning of Freedom, and the

third about Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness.

We are all getting tired of our long confinement to which is added the constant sound of explosions as the Israeli army continues to explode its way into houses, shops, businesses, institutions, cultural centers, theaters, clubs and the different ministries as well as the municipality.

They continue to destroy everything in their way including valuable documents, archives, research work, medical and dental clinics ... etc ... etc. In short, they are destroying the Palestinian people - their identity, their culture and their memory.

To pass the time in a positive way, the pastor has organized a campaign of voluntary activity for the six teenagers and four children of the compound. They all set out energetically to do some spring-cleaning inside the church, the offices and adjacent youth club, compensating for the lack of exercise under curfew. The youngsters also used their muscles to unload a truck full of food supplies donated by the church and people of Shefa-Amr, a town in Galilee. They then divided them into portions that were distributed when the curfew was lifted for a three-hour break later in the week. The families gratefully received the food parcels, but many who crowded outside the gates were not as lucky. There wasn't enough for everybody. We can no longer repeat the words: "give us this day our daily bread" lightly. The prayer now takes on a more profound meaning and urgency.

Some parts of Ramallah are still without electricity, running water or telephones. One family called the pastor to ask for drinking water that he will only be able to deliver in the curfew break. Garbage is piling up in the streets of Ramallah, which is turning into an environmental hazard - especially with the temperatures rising. The damage is extensive and it will take a long time for Ramallah to get out of its state of shock and destruction and return to normal, if ever. The real tragedy is that of the families who have lost loved ones or whose sons were arrested and taken to an unknown destination. Ra'fat, a member of the youth group, is one of them, please pray for him. In other parts of the West Bank, especially in Jenin and Nablus, the situation is much worse. A real human tragedy is unfolding over there. The world cannot remain silent.

SHARING OF PERSONAL PRAYERS WITH SONG BETWEEN EACH PRAYER RAISED

O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer When I call, answer me
Is maa sa la ti, Is maa sa la ti Ad au fas, ta gib ni

O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer Come and listen to me.
Is maa sa la ti, Is maa sa la ti Ad au fas, ta gib ni

POEM : **FROM STATE OF SIEGE** *Mahmoud Darwish*

Here, at the slopes, before sunset and the gun-mouth of
time,

Near orchards deprived of their shadows

We do what prisoners do

What the unemployed do:

We nourish hope.

Under siege, life becomes the time

Between remembering its beginning

And forgetting its end.

Here, at the heights of smoke, on the steps of home,

There is no time for time.

We do what those ascending to God do:

We forget pain. [...]

Soldiers measure the distance between being and nothingness

With the telescope of a tank...

We measure the distance between our bodies and the shells

With a sixth sense. [...]

Siege is waiting

Waiting on a leaning ladder in the middle of a storm.[...]

Under siege, time becomes place

Fossilised in its eternity

Under siege, place becomes time

Lagging behind its yesterday and its tomorrow [...]

CLOSING REFLECTION *Naim Ateek*

In authentic worship, people articulate before God their grief, doubts, frustration in candor as they do their praise and thanksgiving. They are the prayers of people that arise out of the depths of the misery of life under occupation. Prayers that Palestinians lift up not only in the churches and mosques but on the impossible roads of the West Bank and Gaza, as they queue at checkpoints, or as they watch a home being demolished and a family become homeless, or as they, young or old, men or women, undergo humiliation by Israeli soldiers in so many situations of oppression. In such moments, God seems to be far away, absent, or unconcerned, and the political burden of tyranny is heavy and intolerable. Some curse and swear, others send out deep sighs of distress and anger, while others lift a silent plea to God to lift the massive load of injustice.

In David Pleins, *The Psalms: Songs of Tragedy, Hope, and Justice* he writes: “Words of anger at God are terribly uncomfortable, but the psalmists recognized that worship will remain a shallow affair if the worshiper’s rage is left outside the sanctuary. This willingness to give expression to the agony of the sufferer is, in biblical terms, an act of worship. To speak from one’s pain and oppression - to no longer hide one’s rage over injustice - is the essential first step in approaching the God who, in our suffering seems to be so aloof. Our liturgies cannot afford to remain numb to human suffering, especially if our hope is to construct a spirituality rooted in justice.”

The challenge for worship, whether ancient or modern, is to find a way to move on to praise and thanksgiving without negating the grief of abandonment. To offer praise when grieving is really needed only compounds the emptiness the worshiper feels and leads to a painful separation between worship and life. The worship that offers strength is a worship that is willing to follow the worshiper down to Sheol and the Pit, to the lowest levels of abandonment” (Pleins, p. 21). Palestinian Christians receive great solace in the experience of Jesus’ disciples on the boat on the Sea of Galilee. The raging sea with the high waves and heavy wind threatened their life as Jesus lay in the stern asleep. They woke him up saying, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” The wind ceased and there was calm. Then Jesus addressed them saying, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” (*Mark 4:35-41*).

Today, our experience is like that of the disciples. We are in the midst of a raging sea tossed about by the Israeli military that is slowly drowning us. The threats and dangers are immense. In our fear and agony, we boldly address God saying, “Do you not care that we are perishing?” The answer is clear, “Peace! Be still!” “Do not be afraid, I am with you”. This is the assurance that we cling to. We know that God is with us in the midst of our struggle against injustice. Let us continue our work together for a just peace.



Please take a few moments in the Church to remember those innocent families who have experienced the collective punishment of the violence of curfew, house arrest, and siege. Reflect on the role of this church and He for whom this church was built, why He came and the role His church has.

STATION FIVE

ISOLATED VILLAGES

LOCATION: NU'MAN

Nu'man has some two hundred residents, who live in twenty-five houses. The village is located on the southeastern border of the Jerusalem Municipality, a few hundred meters north of Beit Sahur, which lies adjacent to Bethlehem. For several months, the two hundred residents of the village have been living under Israel's threat to expel them from their homes. Palestinian settlement in Nu'man began during the 1930s. In the 1967 census, the residents of Nu'man were mistakenly recorded as residents of the West Bank and were given West Bank identity cards rather than the Israeli identity cards given to most Palestinians who lived in areas annexed by Israel. Over the years, village residents filed several requests with the Ministry of the Interior to arrange their status as residents of Jerusalem and to obtain Israeli identity cards. The Ministry has consistently denied these requests.

STATION V: SIMON CARRIES THE CROSS.

The guards see that Jesus is at the point of collapse. They see a strong man, coming from work in the fields, and they draft him into helping Jesus carry the cross. At least for a while. Simon is reluctant. Carrying a cross is not an honorable endeavor. Yet, he carries it, and his name is remembered for all times.

**WORDS OF INTRODUCTION**

The cross is a lonely burden to bear. It cannot be shared - it is suffering alone. Simon, though, carries the weight for a few steps along the way. As we bear witness to the suffering of this community and share these stories when we return home, our presence removes the isolation of the misery and makes it ours as well.

STORY: THE ISOLATION *Radi 'abd 'Ali 'Atiya, age 30, resident of Nu'man August 6, 2003*

My twelve-year-old brother Marwan has diabetes. He needs to go daily to the clinic in Beit Sahur to get insulin. The road via Hilwah Grave is blocked, so we arrange for the ambulance from the government hospital in Beit Jala to wait for us by the dirt roadblock at the end of the Hilwah Grave road. We have to go with my brother to the roadblock. The ambulance waits for us about thirty meters from the roadblock and then takes him to the clinic.

Marwan's condition worsened about a month ago, and we had to take him to al-Moqassad Hospital, in Jerusalem. My mother and I went with him. We left Nu'man for Jerusalem and passed the dirt piles at the edge of the village. We walked two kilometers to Tsur Baher, where we got on a bus that took us to Jabel Mukaber. Then we took a taxi to the Musrara neighborhood. Soldiers were stationed at a checkpoint there. They stopped the taxi. The soldiers checked our ID cards and my brother's medical documents. They delayed us for twenty minutes or so and then let us pass. Marwan was in very poor condition. He was unable to walk. We supported him the whole way, and had to carry him at times. When we reached the hospital, he was taken straight to intensive care. He was hospitalized for several days. Following his discharge, we traveled to Abu Dis, and then to Hilwah Grave via the Container roadblock, and then by foot to the village.

SCRIPTURE *Luke 23:25-26*

...Pilate handed Jesus over as they wished. As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDIATION *Naim Ateek*

Today, many of the people of Jerusalem have been condemned to death by the existing powers "who abhor justice and pervert all equity, who build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with wrong! (*Micah 3:9-10*); "who ... covet fields, and seize them; houses, and take them away; they

oppress householder and house, people and their inheritance” (*Micah 2:2*). Under the guise of security, many of Jerusalem’s Palestinian inhabitants are being condemned and forced to carry their cross and walk the long way of their *via dolorosa* to their death. When one looks more penetratingly at the Palestinians, it is possible to see the crosses many people are carrying - the cross of the loss of their right to live in the city of their birth; the cross of becoming homeless due to the demolition of their homes; the painful cross which people carry when their land is confiscated and their property taken; not to mention the crosses of humiliation and degradation which many people have to carry daily. There is a slow, creeping, pressure of the Wall leading to the suffocation of villages trapped inside. Many Palestinians have been continuously living through the events of Good Friday. Their way of the cross has been long and harsh. Their journey of suffering seems endless and full of despair.

As Palestinians carry their cross, many people watch and offer them what they have. Those in power offer greater accusations and condemnations including mockery and ridicule. Yes there are the chief priests, the Herods, the Pilates, and the soldiers. But there are also the Simons of Cyrene who help ease the carrying of the load, the men and women who offer their tears of solidarity. There are also those who get converted on the road. They witness the grave injustice and take a stand for what is right. Such shall we pray to become.

SCRIPTURE *Psalm 22: 1-2, 7-11*

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
 Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my
 groaning
 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;
 And by night, but find no rest.
 All who see me mock at me;
 They make mouths at me, they shake their heads;
 “Commit your cause to the LORD; let him deliver-
 Let him rescue the one in whom he delights!”

Yet it was you who took me from the womb;
 You kept me safe on my mother’s breast
 On you I was cast from my birth,
 And since my mother bore me you have been my God.
 Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no
 one to help.

SILENT PRAYER**READING** *Tulsidas*

This and this alone
 Is true religion-
 To serve thy kindred:

This is sin above all other sin,
 To harm thy kindred:

In such a faith is happiness,

In lack of it is misery and pain:
Blessed is the one who swerveth not aside
From this straight path:
Blessed is the one whose life is lived
Thus ceaselessly in serving God:
By bearing others' burdens,
And so alone,
Is life, true life to be attained:
Nothing is hard for those who, casting self aside.
Think only this -
How may I serve my fellow people.

TAIZE SONG

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.
Ba ri kul ra ba , Wa sa bi hos ma hu.

Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.
Ba ri kul ra ba Yah di ni lil ha ya.

STATION SIX

BUREAUCRATIC OPPRESSION

LOCATION: THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR

Located on Nablus Road in East Jerusalem, the Ministry of Interior serves a Jerusalem Palestinian population of around 250,000. Palestinians may not use any other office to obtain whatever official documents they may need. Whether they need a birth certificate, a marriage license, a death certificate, the ID card which every person over 16 is obliged to carry at all times, or a travel document which, unlike a passport, is valid only for one year, Palestinians must wait interminable hours in line before they can make their way inside the small office. They arrive before six a.m. just to have the chance to get an appointment and stand waiting in the crushing line in all types of weather. The office is woefully inadequate for such a large population, and does not always keep regular office hours. The Israeli Supreme Court has ruled that the office must improve services immediately but to date there have been no signs of improvement.

STATION VI: VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS.

Jesus is alone again under the weight of the cross. His face drips with sweat and blood, almost blinding him. No man comes to His help. But a woman, Veronica, takes pity on Him, and defying the guards, she wipes Jesus' face with her veil. The image of the suffering Savior is the only image left for us.

**SCRIPTURE** *Isaiah 42:1-3*

Here is my servant, whom I uphold
My chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon him;
He will bring forth justice to the nations.
He will not cry or lift up his voice,
Or make it heard in the street;
A bruised reed he will not break,
And a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
He will faithfully bring forth justice.

TESTIMONY *Jean Zaru*

(TO BE READ IN SILENCE)

I was born and lived all my life in Ramallah, Palestine - one of the beautiful summer resorts in the range of the Jerusalem mountains. It is only fifteen kilometers north of Jerusalem. From the roof of my home, I can look south and see Jerusalem glittering like a ball of crystal and agonize that I

am not allowed to go there. Jerusalem has always been for us the center, the heart that pumped life into all of Palestine. We traveled to Jerusalem to go to Bethlehem, Hebron, Jericho, and all of Palestine. Without Jerusalem, Palestine would be disjointed.

All my children and seven grandchildren were born in Jerusalem. We have been treated in its hospitals. We would go there for worship, cultural activities, visits to our family members, for work and for getting visas to travel. Jerusalem is in the heart of every Palestinian. You see it in pictures, carvings, paintings and posters in our homes, schools, public buildings, taxis and buses. You hear the beautiful songs about it. Jerusalem is called the flower of cities - the holy - the pure. As you walk in its Old City, you can smell the aroma of so many spices and incense. You see all kinds of candles and handicrafts. You are surrounded by a Christian heritage of artistic and architectural achievement that provides a testimony to the power of faith embodied in the history of Christian art. You hear the bells of churches joined by the muezzins' calls to prayer from minarets within the city.

For me, Jerusalem offers freedom of mind, diversity and universality. No one has an exclusive claim to God, but God is within the reach of every creature. Here I learned that the dignity of the individual is more important than all the protocols and rituals, and that our actions should be motivated by love rather than by the law. Prophets, mystics, and priests may point the ways to faith and we may choose

to follow whom we will. Many of the words of the prophets, although written thousands of years ago, seem to express the Palestinians' anguish and pain, now and today.

“I will punish this city because it is full of oppression. As a well keeps its water fresh, so Jerusalem keeps its evil fresh. I hear violence and destruction in the city. Sickness and wounds are all I see. Everyone great and small tries to make money dishonestly; even prophets and priests cheat people. They act as if my people's wounds are only scratches. All is well, they say, when all is not well. Were they ashamed because they did these disgusting things? No, they were not ashamed; and they do not even know how to blush.”
(Jeremiah 6:6-7, 13-15)

Then we hear the cry of Isaiah 5:8, “Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field till no space is left in the land.” And Isaiah 10: 1-2, “You make unjust laws that oppress my people. That is how you prevent the poor from having their rights and from getting justice. That is how you take the property that belongs to widows and orphans.”

Palestinians are crying for justice and for the removal of the closure of Jerusalem to the people of the West Bank and Gaza. They are calling for a halt to all confiscation of land and water resources, an end to the violations of internationally recognized human rights—the rights to self determination and statehood, the right of return to Palestinian refugees, the right of movement and access to

places of worship in Jerusalem and Israel, the right of adequate housing. Israel is doing all it can to dispossess the Palestinians. It considers Christians and Muslims who live in occupied Palestine as resident aliens. We are not recognized as native nor as indigenous people having the right to live where we were born.

Palestine is the homeland of Jesus. Most of the highlights of Jesus' life took place in Jerusalem, from preaching in the Temple to the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, along via Dolorosa to the crucifixion and finally the resurrection. For Palestinian Christians, the experience of Golgotha is not a distant past or a sad memory; it is part of everyday indignity and oppression. Our Via Dolorosa is not a mere ritualistic procession through the narrow streets of the old city of Jerusalem but the fate of being subjugated and humiliated in our own land. Yet from the Via Dolorosa comes the Resurrection and Easter. It gives a message of hope and unity, a message of life, and of confronting and overcoming death. This image has special meaning for people living under occupation.

TAIZE SONG

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.
Ba ri kul ra ba , Wa sa bi hos ma hu.

Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.
Ba ri kul ra ba Yah di ni lil ha ya.

READING *Creed written by young people from Peru*

I believe in the equality of all,
rich and poor.

I believe in liberty.

I believe in humanity through which we can create unity.

I believe in the love within each of us,
and in the home, happy and healthy.

I believe in the forgiveness of our sins.

I believe that with divine help

we will have the strength to establish equality in society.

I believe in unity, the only way to achieve peace,
and I believe that together we can obtain justice.

MEDITATION *Pope John Paul II*

Prayer for peace is not an afterthought to the work of peace. It is of the very essence of building the peace of order, justice, and freedom. To pray for peace is to open the human heart to the inroads of God's power to renew all things. With the life-giving force of his grace, God can create openings for peace where only obstacles and closures are apparent; he can strengthen and enlarge the solidarity of the human family in spite of our endless history of division and conflict. To pray for peace is to pray for justice, for a right-ordering of relations within and among nations and peoples. It is to pray for freedom, especially for the religious freedom that is a basic human and civil right of every individual. To pray for peace is to seek God's forgiveness, and to implore the courage to forgive those who have trespassed against us.

CLOSING PRAYER *St. Francis of Assisi*

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace
Where there is hatred sown, let me sow your love
Where there is injury, pardon
Where there is doubt, faith
Where there is sadness, joy
Grant that I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
It is in dying that we are born again
To everlasting life.

Amen

STATION SEVEN

HOME DEMOLITIONS

LOCATION: THE JABARI'S HOME

Three generations of the Jabari family lived in a small East Jerusalem home until August 18, 2003 when the home was demolished along with many others in the neighborhood. Shortly thereafter, Khader Jabari began quietly rebuilding his home in the Beit Hanina district of Jerusalem; before he completed the shell, the Israeli authorities demolished again. Peace activists are working with the neighborhood to push the Municipality of Jerusalem to accept a fair housing plan.

STATION VII: JESUS FALLS FOR THE SECOND TIMEÆ

Humiliated, mocked and weakened in body, Jesus stumbles and falls a second time. There is no Simon to rescue Him now. He must gather all his forces, rise to his feet, take up His cross and move toward His inescapable death



INTRODUCTORY SENTENCE

Weak from the wounds of his torture, Jesus falls for a second time. Likewise home demolitions continue to wound the already weakened body and spirit of the Palestinian people.

SCRIPTURE *Isaiah 53: 8-9*

By a perversion of justice he was taken away.
Who could have imagined his future?
For he was cut off from the land of the living,
Stricken for the transgressions of my people.
They made his grave with the wicked
and his tomb with the rich
although he had done no violence
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

WORDS OF INTRODUCTION

The Word-made-flesh found his home among us. Now that home is crushed, his bones broken like the stones of this demolished house. It represents but one of many Palestinian homes bulldozed simply because they interfere with settlement expansion. For so-called Israeli “security,” a family’s secure foundation for the future is scattered over its own land. A body is more than flesh and bones, a home more than the stones which form its walls. These walls echo and absorb the throbbing life within: the old-new life of a family gathered about a table; a life flowing into new generations. To crush the home is to invite despair.

READING *Leonardo Boff*

Jesus finds himself naked, impotent, and totally empty before his Father,

Who now reveals himself in all his mysteriousness.

There is nothing for Jesus to lay hold of.

By human standards he has failed completely.

Even his own inner certainty has wilted away.

But even though the ground has given way beneath his feet,

Jesus continues to trust in his Father.

He cries out to him, surrendering himself to the Mystery

That ever remains nameless.

That Mystery is Jesus' only hope and security,

His only support...

Jesus was expelled from the solid ground of earth...

Human refusal could decree Jesus' crucifixion,

But it could not define the meaning

That the crucified Jesus would give to his crucifixion.

He would define it as love, self-sacrificing love

Designed to win pardon for those who crucified him

And for all human beings. He would define it as solidarity

With all those crucified in history as victims of human hardness of heart,

Rigidified social structures, and human rejection of the reality of God's Kingdom.

TESTIMONY - *Hussein Ziadeh Moussa*

Hussein Ziadeh Moussa and his family built their house in 1989, on Anata land that belonged to his parents. The Moussa family tried to get a building permit, but was denied. They received a demolition order on March 20, 1998 and spent \$10,000 on a lawyer in efforts to save his house. However, in May 1998, 30 cars of soldiers came to Anata and gave them one hour to get out of the house. Hussein seemed to not be surprised by this event, "If they destroy one house, they will destroy them all" he sighed. The soldiers shot two residents of Anata that day. Their cousin Raida Moussa explains that Hussein's children saw everything, and "Now 4 year old Mahmoud is afraid to come to this area by himself."

"They destroyed our chicken coop. You can still see the bones and feathers under the rubble." Hussein made his living by raising chickens, and the chicken coop was attached to the house. He takes us outside to look at the rubble, and the children show us the chicken bones and feathers buried underneath. It is hard to believe what has happened - the soldiers destroyed the house right on top of the chickens, and the family didn't have time to take their belongings or furniture out of the home. Now, Hussien farms tomatoes. The family lives with his brother-in-law and there are 19 people under one roof. In May 1999, he attempted to build a small 2 room structure for his family, but was ordered to stop. He will try for a permit again, but it seems doubtful that he will receive one.

**SHARING OF PERSONAL PRAYERS WITH SONG
BETWEEN EACH PRAYER RAISED**

O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer When I call, answer me
Is maa sa la ti, Is maa sa la ti Ad au fas, ta gib ni

O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer Come and listen to me.
Is maa sa la ti, Is maa sa la ti Ad au fas, ta gib ni

I AM FROM THERE *Mahmoud Darwish*

I come from there and I remember,
I was born like everyone is born, I have a mother
and a house with many windows,
I have brothers, friends, and a prison.
I have a wave that sea-gulls snatched away.
I have a view of my own and an extra blade of grass.
I have a moon past the peak of words.
I have the godsent food of birds and an olive tree beyond
the ken of time.
I have traversed the land before swords turned bodies into
banquets.
I come from there. I return the sky to its mother when for
its mother the
sky cries, and I weep for a returning cloud to know me.
I have learned the words of blood-stained courts in order to
break the rules.
I have learned and dismantled all the words to construct a
single one:
Home.

CLOSING READING *Leonard Boff*

...the risen Jesus

does not confine his activity to the Church

He penetrated the entire cosmos, pervades the whole world,

And makes his presence felt in every human being.

The resurrection is a process that began with Jesus

And that will go on until it embraces all creation.

Wherever an authentically human life is growing in the world,

Wherever justice is triumphing over the instincts of domination,

Wherever grace is winning out over the power of sin,

Wherever human beings are creating more fraternal mediations in the social life together,

Wherever love is getting the better of selfish interests,

Wherever hope is resisting the lure of cynicism or despair,

There the process of resurrection I being turned into a reality.

It will continue to operate everywhere until the total transfiguration of the world is achieved

In the definite parousia of the Lord.

PRAYER

O God, strengthen those whose spirits are crushed with their houses, whose hopes are dying like the neglected seeds buried in confiscated land. Empower us to resist the power of death and witness to life. O God, help us respond in whatever way we can, trusting in the love that empowers the weak, confounds the strong, and raises the dead to new life. In the name of the Resurrected One, Amen.

STATION EIGHT SETTLEMENTS

LOCATION: SETTLEMENTS AROUND JERUSALEM

Since 1967, each Israeli government has invested significant resources in establishing and expanding the settlements in the Occupied Territories, both in terms of the area of land they occupy and in terms of population. As a result of this policy, approximately 450,000 Israeli citizens now live on the settlements on the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza.

STATION VIII: JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM.

Women of Jerusalem stand along the way to Calvary. They see Jesus bleeding and crushed by the weight of the cross, and maybe thinking of His mother or of their own children, they weep for Him in sympathy and sorrow. But Jesus knows He is innocent. His soul is clear and pure, whereas the women's souls may be burdened by sin. "Weep for yourselves and your children" He urges them, calling them to repentance and salvation.



WORDS OF INTRODUCTION

Settlements are one of the major obstacles to peace in this land. They take away the hope for the future. But as Christians, we know our hope is deeper than “facts on the ground.” As Jesus urged the women of Jerusalem to search for repentance and salvation, we focus on our prayers towards them - the women of this land, and look to them for inspiration and hope.

SCRIPTURE *Luke 23:27-28*

A great number of people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

WORDS ON WOMEN *Najwa Farah*

Today there are many women, amongst the Palestinians, both Christian and Muslim, working for justice and peace. There are also Israeli women who want justice done for the Palestinians and seek peace. It is not only the professional but also the ordinary women in refugee camps. I remember meeting the Austrian Medical team who came to the refugee camps in Beirut, Lebanon, after the departure of Palestinian fighters in 1982. They expressed to me their admiration for the Herculean resilience of the Palestinian women in the refugee camps and how they were struck by it. After the massacres of Sabra and Shatila, and the departure of Palestinian fighters, the camps were devastated. It was the

women as mothers, grandmothers, aunts and older daughters, as well as sons, who took upon themselves the task of making life livable after all their men were killed or forced to leave. The women had to care for the maimed, the sick, the lonely, the babies; they had to earn their living - all of this in an atmosphere of fear, vulnerability and shock.

Mary the mother of Jesus is the one I like to think about. One verse seems to sum it all up, "And Mary kept all these things in her heart." The mother of Jesus, like every mother, had many, many recollections to ponder and think about, things she marveled at, others that gave her joy, but much that saddened her heart. The women of Palestine in the camps or their forced exile have much that is kept in their hearts. Their collective memory is the incentive behind their resilience in spite of their stolen lives and that of their children. It is true that "Those who suffer are those who dare."

REFLECTION *Leonardo Boff*

Christians do not believe that the creation of a completely just, reconciled world is within the possibilities of history and human willing alone. The various forms of oppression are not just external: they are deeply rooted in the human heart. All of us have personal experience of the fact that we cannot succeed in liberating ourselves. We need someone to free our captive liberty so that it will then be able to carry out its work: i.e., love and proper relationships with persons.

Experience also teaches us that the actual achievement of justice is meager and fragile, though human life would be ignoble and impossible if we did not keep trying to achieve it.

On the other hand justice alone is not enough to maintain peace.

There must also be a gratuitousness and a self giving that transcend the imperatives of duty.

We need love and a capacity for forgiveness that go beyond the limits of justice.

POEM *Hanan Ashrawi*

Women make things grow:
Sometimes like the crocus,
surprised by rain, emerging fully
grown from the belly of the earth;
Others like the palm tree with
its promise postponed,
rising in a slow
deliberate
spiral to the sky...

Women make things smooth
to the touch,
like the kneading of
leavened bread at the dawn of hunger;
And coarse like the brush
of a homespun coat on
careworn shoulders and bare

arms barely touching on
the night of deportation.

Women make things cold
sharp and hard
like a legal argument thrust
before the threat
of search and detention;
Or warm
and gentle like
justice in a poem,
like the suggestion of
the image of freedom
as a warm bath,
and a long soak,
in an undemolished home.

Women make things -
And as we, in separate
worlds, braid
our daughters' hair
in the morning, you and†
I, each
humming to herself,
suddenly
stops
and hears the
tune of the other

TIME OF SILENCE**PRAYER**

God of all ages, Lord of all time,
you are the Alpha and the Omega,
the origin and goal of everything that lives,
yet you are ever close to those
who call on you in faith.

Teach us to share justly the good things
which come from your loving hand;
to bring peace and reconciliation
where strife and disorder reign;
to speak out as advocates
for those who have no voice;
and to rejoice in a bond of prayer and praise
with our sisters and brothers throughout the world.

When Christ comes again in glory
may he find us alive and active in faith,
and so call us to that Kingdom,
where, with you and the Holy Spirit,
he is God, to be praised, worshipped and glorified,
both now and for ages to come. Amen

TAIZE SONG

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.

Ba ri kul ra ba , Wa sa bi hos ma hu.

Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.

Ba ri kul ra ba Yah di ni lil ha ya.

STATION NINE CHECKPOINTS

LOCATION: QALANDIA CHECKPOINT

Qalandia checkpoint is one of the largest Israeli military checkpoints in the occupied West Bank. This checkpoint is not located on a border, but between the Palestinian town Ramallah, Qalandia refugee camp, and the Palestinian town of ar-Ram. It separates Ramallah residents from southern Palestinian towns and the northern Palestinian neighborhoods of Jerusalem. Israeli soldiers check identity cards. Clogged traffic languishes, and pedestrians have to walk 300 rubbish-strewn yards to get across.

STATION IX: JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME

Exhausted, within sight of the place of His execution, Jesus falls a third time. The fall opens wounds and sores on this body, as the betrayal of His friends and followers opens wounds in His spirit.



WORDS OF INTRODUCTION

Trapped in the vice of the closures and checkpoints, unable to move freely, the Palestinian nation is collapsing under the strain. The arbitrary nature of checkpoints wears on the soul as people are never certain, each time they cross, if they will be granted the chance to see family, a doctor or their office. The checkpoints are a visible scar of the Via Dolorosa of Palestinian life - dividing families and communities around the West Bank and Gaza.

SCRIPTURE *Psalm 142*

With my voice I cry to the LORD;
with my voice I make supplication to the LORD
I pour out my complaint before him;
I tell my trouble before him.
When my spirit is faint,
You know my way.

In the path where I walk
They have hidden a trap for me.
Look on my right hand and see-
There is no one who takes notice of me;
No refuge remains to me;
No one cares for me

I cry to you O LORD
I say "You are my refuge,
my portion in the land of the living."
Give heed to my cry,
for I am brought very low.

Save me from my persecutors,
for they are too strong for me.
Bring me out of prison,
so that I may give thanks to your name.
The righteous will surround me,
for you will deal bountifully with me.

SILENCE

THOUGHT FOR MEDIATION *Leonardo Boff*

God chose to concentrate his presence,
to privilege certain situations.
If we do not encounter him there,
where he chose to be,
then we simply do not encounter him at all
nor do we commune with the real God of Jesus Christ.
First of all,
God chose to be encountered in Jesus Christ.
In the world Jesus was a frail, powerless human being,
So much so that other human beings were scandalized by
him.
Yet in Jesus we find ourselves confronted with the eternal
Son of God,
With the divine nature itself, in this case living in the limited
and seemingly insignificant confines of humanity.
Second, we encounter God in the lives and faces
of the humiliated and the downtrodden.
God chooses to be recognized and served in them.
It is in the face of the afflicted and the oppressed

that God chooses to make clear
what he himself signifies.

First of all, the downtrodden raise a protest:
this situation contradicts the will of God,
and it is unacceptable to any human being
who has preserved the least trace of humaneness.
The situation must be repaired, or overcome.

In addition, the despised and oppressed
are the bearers of a great hope,
which manifests itself as a demand of justice.
They expect from heaven and earth,
from human beings and from God,
that they will be able to recover their trampled dignity.

God considered this hope and this demand of justice so
ineradicable

that he identified himself with the oppressed.

In their faces we find the face of God.

If we want to serve the true God, rather than some idol
-whether the idol be pleasure, wealth,

self assertion, religion,

or even our own version of ethical purity -

then we must do as Veronica did.

We must break out of the circle of self-absorption

And pay heed to the bloodied face of our fellow human
beings.

For they are the great sacrament of God,

The signs and instruments of authentic divine reality.

If we do not share life with the oppressed,
we do not share life with God.

PRAYER

Merciful Lord, we bring to you all those who are weary and heavy laden, in your great love take their burdens from them
And give them rest.

For those whose daily lives are encumbered with security checks and road blocks. Take their burden from them
And give them rest.

For those who are worn out by waiting in line in the heat and the dust.

Take their burden from them
And give them rest.

For those who cannot get to work, or to school and university,

Take their burden from them
And give them rest.

Where the sick are refused permission to pass and unable to reach treatment.

Take your burden from them
And give them rest.

For all who struggle under the weight of persecution and fear,

Take their burden from them and give them rest

For your yoke is easy and your burden is light. Amen

TAIZE SONG

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.
Ba ri kul ra ba , Wa sa bi hos ma hu.

Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.
Ba ri kul ra ba Yah di ni lil ha ya.

STATION TEN

STRESS & HUMILIATION

STATION X: JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS.

Jesus has arrived at Golgotha. Defenseless and powerless, He is now subjected to the ultimate humiliation inflicted on prisoners. He is stripped of His garments and left naked and vulnerable, exposed to the eyes of everyone. With his clothes, He has been stripped of the last shred of dignity a human being can have.

INTRODUCTORY SENTENCE

Just as Jesus is mocked and humiliated by the roman soldiers, today ordinary Palestinians are humiliated by systems and officials that revel in keeping them in their place and exercising power over them.

SCRIPTURE *Mathew 27:27-31*

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

SILENCE AND REFLECTION**THOUGHTS ON FORGIVENESS** *Pope John Paul II*

Forgiveness is in no way opposed to justice, as if to forgive meant to overlook the need to right the wrong done. It is rather the fullness of justice, leading to that tranquility of order which is much more than a fragile and temporary cessation of hostilities, involving as it does the deepest healing of the wounds which fester in human hearts. Justice and forgiveness are both essential to such healing.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you endured humiliations and indignities beyond compare, yet without complaint. You know what it is to be taunted and mocked by those in positions of power. Lift up those who are ground down by daily humiliation and give them your grace. Humble those who use their power to belittle others and open their eyes to see the God-given dignity of all people. Strengthen those who speak your truth and call for justice. Let their righteousness shine like the dawn and the integrity of their cause as the noonday sun.

Amen

CLOSING READING *Iona Community*

There's a voice in the street -
not singing but sobbing -
calling for help
for a child who is ill:
pleading with the powerful,
caring about the detail of human dignity,
hoping against reason -
calling out for healing.
Calling out for healing.

There's a voice in the street -
not sweetly reasonable
but shouting -
strident and resistant,
a voice not to be ignored,
calling out for justice, calling for change,

across a divide between two nations -
calling out for healing.

Calling out for healing.

There's a voice in the street -

that will not be silenced -

arguing with conviction:

a woman standing her ground

when a man does not listen

when he puts her down;

defying prejudice with courage,

defending the little ones with love,

restoring relationship with laughter -

calling out for healing.

Calling out for healing.

There are voices in the street -

not then and there

but here and now -

challenging the powers that be,

putting the case for the powerless,

in dialogue for reconciliation,

picking up the pieces, sharing the crumbs,

daring to speak

with courage, with laughter, with faith.

God hears those voices

and God is in those voices -

and there is healing.

And there is healing.

TAIZE SONG

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.

Ba ri kul ra ba , Wa sa bi hos ma hu.

Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.

Ba ri kul ra ba Yah di ni lil ha ya.

STATION ELEVEN DESTRUCTION

STATION XI: JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS.

The cross lies on the ground. Jesus is made to lie upon it and open his arms wide. His hands are pierced, nailing Him to the cross. Even in His terrible pain, Jesus begs God forgiveness for His tormentors. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

And as the ultimate loving gesture, He promises the repentant zealot to have him in paradise on that same day. He entrusts His sorrowful Mother to his apostle, John, reminding him that now she is his mother.



OPENING SCRIPTURE *Luke 23:33-34a*

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”

INTRODUCTORY SENTENCE

Jesus is nailed to the cross, the most physically grueling method of execution ever devised by man. His body, weak and bleeding from the preceding torture is broken and crushed by this final act of brutality.

The Palestinians also know physical and violent devastation. Already weakened and bruised, the destruction of infrastructure, water sources and agriculture pierces the very fabric of the community.

POEM *Jesus of the Scars, by Edward Shillito*

If we have never sought, we seek Thee now:
 Thine eyes burn through the dark, our only stars;
 We must have sight of thorn-pricks on Thy brow,
 We must have Thee, O Jesus of the Scars.
 The heavens frighten us; they are too calm;
 In all the universe we have no place.
 Our wounds are hurting us; where is the balm?
 Lord Jesus, by Thy Scars, we claim Thy grace.
 If, when the doors are shut, Thou drawest near,
 Only reveal those hands, that side of Thine;
 We know to-day what wounds are, have no fear,

Show us Thy Scars, we know the countersign.
The other gods were strong; but Thou wast weak;
They rode, but Thou didst stumble to a throne;
But to our wounds only God's wounds can speak,
And not a god has wounds, but thou alone.

MEDITATION *U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops*

God gives us his assurance today that "In the desert I will make a way, in the wasteland, rivers." Standing before the destruction of war and increasingly dire warnings of terrorism at home, we can be tempted to become paralyzed by our imaginings of all the horrors. The darkness of despair can make the future look like a vast wasteland and a parched desert. Yet even in the face of violence and conflict, God will not abandon us. Again and again he looks upon us in our misery and brings us the good news of salvation. We must never lose hope.

**SHARING OF PERSONAL PRAYERS WITH SONG
BETWEEN EACH PRAYER RAISED**

O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer When I call, answer me
Is maa sa la ti, Is maa sa la ti Ad au fas, ta gib ni

O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer Come and listen to me.
Is maa sa la ti, Is maa sa la ti Ad au fas, ta gib ni

CLOSING PRAYER *Anna Briggs*

We lay our broken world
In sorrow at your feet,
Haunted by hunger war and fear,
Oppressed by power and hate.

We bring our broken towns,
our neighbors hurt and bruised;
You show us how old pain and wounds
For new life can be used.

We bring our broken selves,
Confused, closed and tired;
Then through your gift of healing grace
New purpose is inspired.

Come fill us, fire of God
Our life and strength renew;
Find in us trust, and hope, and love
And lift us up to you.

Amen

STATION TWELVE

THE WALL

LOCATION: THE WALL OF SEPARATION

The separation barrier consists of either an eight meter high concrete wall or, in rural areas, an electronic fence and traverses the west side of the West Bank. The Wall does not follow the Green Line, the internationally recognized, though unofficial, border between the West Bank and Israel. In most places it runs several kilometers inside Occupied Territory, separating Palestinians from crucial aquifers and fertile land

STATION XII: JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS.

His hands and feet pierced by nails, Jesus is lifted up on the cross. On the verge of despair, His humanity cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" But He is immediately reconciled with His divine mission, and He whispers, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit. Now it is finished."



OPENING READING *From Mending Wall by Robert Frost*

...He only says, "Good fences make good neighbours."

Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder

If I could put a notion in his head:

"Why do they make good neighbours? Isn't it

Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.†

Before I built a wall I'd ask to know

What I was walling in or walling out,

And to whom I was like to give offence.

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,

That wants it down

SCRIPTURE *Matthew 27: 45-46, 50-51*

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lma sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks were split.

INTRODUCTORY SENTENCE

Jesus dies on the cross, surrendered to the overwhelming power of his captors, seemingly abandoned by God. Likewise the building of the Wall overpowers the Palestinians in the West Bank, feeling abandoned and forgotten by the international community. How long can they continue to fight for breath within its suffocating grip?

TESTIMONY - *Imm Amin*

February 4, 2004, PENGON

When the military came, my two sons, the sons of my brother-in-law, and Abu Nabil, who later died, went down to the land where they were working. It was only us — there is nothing left of my land only this minimal piece between us and the Wall. The first day, the military kept coming and going to our house. I told them this is my land. In the evening, the Occupation Forces came and tried to take my son and his cousin; but we managed to pull them from the hands of the soldiers. The second day, I tried with my two sons to go to the land, on that day they tried to handcuff my son and stop us from reaching the land, but my son managed to escape. Yet the soldiers hit many of the boys.

I tried to argue with the soldiers and told them, This is my land what you are doing is illegal. There are 40 people living in this house and on this land. The Occupation Forces then came and began bulldozing, here they work every day. I had land in the middle of this hill it was destroyed by the bulldozer. We sat on the land for three days, morning to evening, until the soldiers surrounded the whole neighborhood and we were no longer able to reach the land.

READING *Leunig*

There are only two feelings. Love and fear.
There are only two languages. Love and fear.
There are only two activities. Love and fear.
There are only two motives, two procedures,
two frameworks, two results. Love and fear.
Love and fear.

MOVING TOWARDS EASTER *Gerald Darring*

Lent and Easter provide us with the opportunity to go forth weeping so that we can come back rejoicing, so that we can turn to the Lord and live. The challenge is personal conversion.

The challenge is also social conversion, the transformation of the world. We are not to retreat from the world into a closet of private spirituality; rather, we ask God in this Lenten season to help us to embrace the world you have given us, that we may transform the darkness of its pain into the life and joy of Easter. It is easy for the Christian to take a self-righteous attitude toward the world; it is much more difficult to take Jesus' attitude: Neither do I condemn you: go and do not sin again. All of us have contributed to the darkness of the world; none of us can cast the first stone.

Easter is on its way. God is preparing a new world order for us: Remember not the events of the past, the things of long ago consider not; see, I am doing something new! Having done our part to bring the darkness, will we now participate in doing something new?

TAIZE SONG

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.
Ba ri kul ra ba , Wa sa bi hos ma hu.

Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.
Ba ri kul ra ba Yah di ni lil ha ya.

PRAYER

Lord, we confess that we are more easily led by fear than by love. We build walls both from concrete and in our hearts: walls to keep ourselves safe, to keep us in and the other out. Just as this physical wall separates neighbors, divides families and holds people captive, so our walls of pride, anger and fear separate us from those you have commanded us to love, holding them captive in our stereotypes and assumptions.

Lord Christ, whose death on the cross tore down the barrier between God and his people, in whom there are no distinctions of nationality, gender or status, break down these walls of hatred, both the physical and the emotional, in the power of your spirit and the furtherance of your kingdom.

Amen

STATION THIRTEEN

THE LOSS OF JERUSALEM

LOCATION: THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

In the center of Jerusalem stands the Old City. This is old Jerusalem, surrounded by high walls and seven gates. It is divided into four distinct areas: Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Armenian. Inside those walls are the most important religious sites in the city. For Muslims, the most important site is the Haram-ash Sharif - with the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque. For Jews, the most important site is the Kotel, or the Western Wall of the Second Temple. For Christians, the most important sites are the Via Dolorosa and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

STATION XIII: JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS AND GIVEN TO HIS MOTHER.

Mary is at the foot of the cross, watching her son suffer for three agonizing hours, bleeding from his hands, his feet and his side. She watches Him die. Then He is taken down from the cross and deposited in her loving and waiting arms.



OPENING MEDITATION

We stand together at the end of the Via Dolorosa with the pain of the crucifixion weighing us down. In this holiest of cities, we see with new eyes that God's kingdom is still distant. And yet, it is only through the cross that Easter comes. And so we summon our strength to remember Mary who stood by her son, watched him die and then held him in her arms. We commit ourselves again — not walk away from the suffering, but to shoulder the burden that we have been given as Christians — to stand with the those who have no voice. We call on our faith for strength and comfort, even in this darkest hour. We remember that Jesus' suffering is the beginning of the promise of Easter.

SCRIPTURE *John 17:17-19*

Father, sanctify them in truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

THE MEANING OF GOOD FRIDAY

How do we find eternal life? Through death. How do we find peace? Through justice. How do we find joy? Through mercy. The cross of Christ must be at the center of our lives and must govern our every thought, word, and deed. For it is only in the cross that we find salvation, only by the cross that we will be healed.

READING

Is this place holy
because you walked here,
died here,
were raised right here
to bring us life -
or because, in this time, in this world
of trouble and longing and hope
you are alive?

Is this a holy place
because several true churches
have come to fight and worship here,
each hanging separate lamps to burn
for your divided glory?
Or is this land, like all lands, holy,
where people pray, and work,
raise babies and seek justice,
and expect a future?

TESTIMONY *Jonathan Kuttab*

The Arabic word for Good Friday is jum'a al hazini which means "Sad Friday". Sad Friday denotes the situation of Christ and Christianity on that Friday two thousand years ago: Christ had been humiliated, condemned, and crucified as a criminal. His disciples were all disheartened, scattered to the four winds, and broken in spirit. They had abandoned their Lord and Master, who had apparently betrayed their hopes of a glorious kingdom which was heralded by his triumphant entry in Jerusalem. It represented the depth of

despair for the apparent victory of the forces of evil, oppression and hypocrisy. The Romans, the foreign occupiers, had collaborated with the local political and religious leadership to crush the fresh voice of the prophet from Nazareth. All hope seemed to have been abandoned.

Palestinians are living today in the “Sad Friday” period of their history. Never before did their situation seem as desperate as it is now. Indeed, the very promise of a new direction toward peace with the Road Map has contributed to the deepening sense of despair as that promise has been betrayed with new and more repressive measures of collective punishment. People correctly point out that their current situation is worse than it has ever been. Even the most optimistic Palestinian is now feeling a deep sense of depression and despair, as what looked like the beginnings of statehood, freedom, and self-determination, has being turned into an abysmal combination of Bantustans and a silent international community.

Yet precisely in this dark hour of despair, the message of Easter needs to be proclaimed again: Christ will not remain in the tomb nor will evil and oppression have the last word. Christ rose again on the third day with a glorious triumph over the forces of evil and darkness, and over death itself proclaiming to the whole world a new era and the victory of good over evil.

The message of Easter, for Palestinians, as well as for the poor and oppressed everywhere, is that God is sovereign in

the affairs of this world. No matter how dark things appear to be on “Sad Friday”, Easter is coming and with it the promise, hope and certainty of resurrection, a new beginning, and the victory of life over death.

THOUGHT FOR MEDITATION *Leonardo Boff*

Everything grows quiet in the face of death.

Fighting and conflict cease.

A corpse, even when it is mangled and rejected,
imposes holy respect and reverent silence.

We are confronted with a mystery.

It is not within the power of human beings
to decide about the ultimate meaning of life.

That is up to the One who holds the key to all secrets
and the answers to all questions,
who know where every course will lead.

When we confront the inert corpses
of those who have fallen in the fight for a just cause,
we feel driven toward Someone greater
who will not allow the triumph of absurdity.

There must be some ultimate meaningfulness,
some definite, certain sense,

for those who died on behalf of others;
for those who chose the most difficult path for themselves
because they loved the poor
and sought justice for them;
for those who preferred a violent death
to a life without dignity.

Every death leaves behind an open question.
We wait and look for the glimmer of some light
that will dispel all the shadows surrounding the mystery of
life.

Death should not be the last word on life,
nor despair the final state of human beings.

History does not cherish the memory of those who killed.
Rather than holding despots up as an example,
it exalts the courage of those who endured death,
who shouldered the sufferings of the lowly,
and who undertook liberating revolutions.

Taken down lifeless from the cross,
Jesus paves the way for others
to pick up his banner and carry it forward.
They are the people who have come to understand
what God's project is|
the establishment of a world
where all will finally be brothers and sisters,
and children of the same Father,
in justice, liberty ad love.

A PRAYER FOR JERUSALEM

Our heavenly Creator God, who allowed us to live in this
city where your beloved son was crucified and raised from
the dead, make us worthy of its heavenly message. We pray
that the holy places will turn us to the things that deepen
our faith and renew in us the hope of everlasting life.

We beseech you Lord, who knows what the people of this holy city have suffered, and are suffering: up-rootedness, lostness, the pain of being torn apart in separation, the pain of unsettlement, the pain of death. We beseech you Lord, to give this holy city Peace.

We beseech you Lord, to give the people of this city calm in their souls, and courage in their hearts. Strengthen, O God, the hearts of those who work to bring Justice. Bless their efforts and make them succeed over the powers of evil, and support them with your holy spirit.

Inspire our leaders, O Lord, to achieve a just solution to all the problems of this city so that Jerusalem—the city of peace—will have everlasting peace for all its people.

Help us God, as we pass through such difficult trials, that we may grow to know your truth, that we may witness to you our savior, by our lives. May the way of the cross be the one we choose for ourselves, that each will carry their own cross to follow you, Shepherd of our souls, Teacher, crucified and raised from the dead.

Amen.

TAIZE SONG

Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.
Ba ri kul ra ba , Wa sa bi hos ma hu.

Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.
Ba ri kul ra ba Yah di ni lil ha ya.



We will now stand together for half an hour to share our witness to the thousands of Palestinian Christians who cannot come to Jerusalem and walk the Via Dolorosa because of the Occupation. As we stand, remember these Christians who are aching to touch these stones and light candles in their churches. Remember particularly the sick and elderly who think that this may be their last Easter and feel the loss most intensely.

STATION FOURTEEN

WHAT WILL THE FOURTEENTH STATION BE ?

LOCATION: EIN KAREM

Ein Karem is a beautiful village located about 4.8 miles (8 km) southwest of Jerusalem. Ein Karem, in Arabic, means “the spring of vineyard” and Ein Karem is green and lush due to the water found there. In the 1940s, there were about 2600 people living in the village of Ein Karem. One fourth of the families were Christian. They grew grapes and oranges. In 1948 the people of Ein Karem were forced out of their village by the Israeli Army. They first went to Beit Jala near Bethlehem and then to Jordan. Those who live in Ein Karem today are mostly Israeli families with one Christian family remaining. In the Bible, Ein Karem was the home of Elizabeth and Zachariah and the birthplace of their son John the Baptist. Mary, the mother of Jesus, visited Ein Karem on her way to Bethlehem and met Elizabeth and the two women spoke together of their hope and their joy in the children they were expecting.



STATION XIV: JESUS IS LAID IN THE SEPULCHER.

Joseph of Arimathea knows that Jesus does not have His own burial ground. He takes Jesus' body, anoints it and wraps it in a linen cloth before laying Him in his own new tomb. Jesus the Savior is buried like a pauper in someone else's grave. The Resurrection seems far away.

Our time in Ein Karem will begin with individual reflection in the garden. Please read the following liturgy at your own rate and in half an hour we will gather together for a time of sharing and meditation. The readings here are for your reflection.

**THEY HAVE THREATENED US WITH RESURRECTION**

Juila Esquivel

There is something here within us
which doesn't let us sleep, which doesn't let us rest,
which doesn't stop the pounding deep inside.
It is the silent, warm weeping of women without their
husbands
it is the sad gaze of the children fixed there beyond memory....

What keeps us from sleeping
is that they have threatened us with resurrection!

Because at each nightfall
though exhausted from the endless inventory
of killings for years,
we continue to love life,
and do not accept their death!
In this marathon of hope
there are always others to relieve us
in bearing the courage necessary...

Accompany us then on this vigil
and you will know what it is to dream!
You will then know how marvelous it is
to live threatened with resurrection!
To live while dying
and to already know oneself resurrected

REFLECTIONS *Samia Costandi*

My Easter reflections have much to do with loss. The loss of a sense of belonging, the fragmentation, the shattering pain of my fellow travelers, our Palestinian people everywhere. There is no better metaphor than the crucifixion of Christ to capture what is happening. The greatest loss is the loss of compassion in the land where Christ taught about compassion, where Christ died because of compassion. Christ resigned to compassion and not to oppression. Christ went into the temple and admonished strongly the perpetrators of evil. Christ did not die out of weakness, but out of strength. He chose to die in order to save humanity from engaging in needless wars, needless deaths. He could have kept walking into the desert and escaped the soldiers

who were coming to get him. His compassion for humanity made him stay. He made a conscious choice to take on the sins of the world and allow us to have freedom, that through his death we need not suffer anymore. Christ died because He did not want suffering to be incurred on anyone.

And the greatest hope He gave us is through His resurrection, which is all about hope. Without hope, there is chaos, there is no meaning, and there is no vision. Without hope, we would surrender to the vicious dictates of oppression and simply stop fighting. Without hope in resurrection, our struggle would be about revenge, vindication, and simply wiping out the “Other.” Our fight is instead about regaining the human, civil, democratic, legal rights in an authentically human fashion. Following the example of Christ, we are not afraid to die for those rights, because we know that He promised us, all Palestinians of whatever faith, resurrection. There is no discrimination in the eyes of God, either of suffering, or of salvation.

SCRIPTURE *Luke 3:4-6*

The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

Prepare the way of the Lord,

Make his paths straight.

Every valley shall be filled,

And every mountain and hill shall be brought low,

And the crooked shall be made straight,

And the rough ways shall be made smooth;

And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

THOUGHTS FOR MEDITATION

The Upside Down Kingdom by Donald Kraybill

John the Baptist shouted these words of Isaiah to announce the advent of Jesus. The dramatic pictures portray a revolutionary new kingdom. The Baptist describes four surprises of the coming kingdom: full valleys, flat mountains, straight curves, and level bumps. He expects radical shake-ups to accompany the kingdom. Old ways will alter beyond recognition. John warns us that the new order, the Upside-Down Kingdom, will revolutionize the prevailing social landscape. But in the painful ferment, all flesh will see the salvation of God.

Mary's Magnificat, her song of exaltation sung at the home of Zechariah and Elizabeth, clarifies her hope for the new kingdom. With John the Baptist, she expects the Messiah's arrival to initiate an upside-down kingdom filled with surprises for all.

For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and
Holy is his name.

And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to
generation.

He has shown strength with his arm

He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts,

He has put down the mighty from their thrones,

And exalted those of low degree;

He has filled the hungry with good things,

And the rich he has sent empty away.

-Luke 1:49-53

Five types of people are startled and surprised. In Mary's vision, those at the top of the social pyramid—the proud, the rich, and the mighty—topple. They are stripped of their prestigious seats, dethroned, scattered, and sent away empty. Meanwhile the poor and hungry, those at the bottom of the social hill, take a surprising ride to the top. Mary sings words of hope and judgment. Hope for those of low estate, as she describes herself (Luke 1:48); judgment for those at the top who trample the helpless.

CLOSING PRAYER

Let your kingdom come, Lord,
In the hearts and lives of women and men everywhere:
That all injustice may be set right,
The homeless find a welcome,
The unemployed work with dignity,
The poor receive a greater share of your world's resources,
And the rejected given a place within the community of
your people.

Let your kingdom come, Lord,
For the injured and for those who suffer because of war,
For all who live with hunger,
For your divided family who search for a lasting peace.
Let your kingdom come, Lord,
For all your children everywhere.



On the Road to Emmaus

(Luke 24:13-35)

13 Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles¹ from Jerusalem. 14 They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. 15 As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; 16 but they were kept from recognizing him. 17 He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?” 18 They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?” 19 “What things?” he asked. 20 “About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. 22 In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the

tomb early this morning 23 but didn't find his body.

They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24 Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." 25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Christ² have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. 29 But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. 32 They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

33 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34 and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." 35 Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

