

# SOLIDARITY-PRAYER-BOOKLET



WITH PEOPLE OF **PALESTINE**

# FOREWORD

The strength of The East Jerusalem YMCA and YWCA of Palestine Joint Advocacy Initiative is its fellowship and communion with the world wide ecumenical movement. In our advocacy and communication work we also seek to find ways of engaging the wider society in which we find ourselves. There are many ways in which the struggle for peace with justice in Palestine can be accomplished. Our two organizations have tried many ways to present the message from the Occupied Palestine Territories.

Another call is for our partners and sister movements to take action in solidarity with the people of Palestine. One of the resolutions made by the United Nations with regards to the question of Palestine was to declare a Day of International Solidarity with the people of Palestine in November 29<sup>th</sup>. To this end we call our partners and sister movements in the world to pray for Palestine. We are inviting you to communicate to God our plight in prayer.

Our prayer booklet is our testimony to all our partners and sister movements that we take our spiritual resources granted to the Church by the Holy Spirit seriously. In the week preceding the International Day of Solidarity with people of Palestine the Catholic Church will be celebrating the Advent! The whole world was saved by the birth of the Prince of Peace in Bethlehem, Palestine. That saving message of grace to the world took shape here in Palestine.

Our prayer booklet focuses on five themes that we are asking our partners

and sister movements to pray for. Firstly, the inspirational creation stories which remind us that God had good intentions in creating humanity. Every creature was given a specific role on earth. We are praying that this may be the case in Palestine. Secondly, we are inspired by the Lords prayer that Jesus taught his disciples. Pray with us that the Kingdom of God may come in Palestine as it is in heaven. Thirdly, because so many olive trees have been uprooted in Palestine for the sake of Israeli 'security', we have focused on the fact that God instructed Adam to till the soil to earn his living. Palestinians find it difficult today to work on their land. Fourthly, the future is our youth.

Today, many young people are at risk of loosing their lives as they resist the occupation. Finally, Jesus came to us so that all humanity may have a better life. We are asking God to extend this privilege to the people of Palestine.

Our prayers in the booklet are suggestions. They are not prescriptive at all. Our wish is that you create space for these issues to be discussed in your organizations and raised with God in prayer. We hope the songs will generate the atmosphere of worship that our movements are known for.

God bless Palestine and all people.

**Issued by**  
**Joint Advocacy Initiative**  
**East Jerusalem YMCA and YWCA of Palestine.**

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 1947 the United Nations adopted resolution 181 which stated that the British mandate of Palestine was to be partitioned. The original idea was supposed to be a solution to the conflict which had arisen from several waves of Jewish immigration before, and after, the Second World War. In what had once been the large majority Arab territory, there were now to be two states, with 55% of the land given to the quickly expanding Jewish minority.

Angered what they saw as European colonialism, the surrounding Arab states invaded to try and restore the Arab Palestinian homeland. When the dust settled by 1948 the Jewish minority had seized 78% of the former Arab territory and the state of Israel was declared. What was left of Palestinian territory (22%) was occupied by Egypt and Jordan and the idea of an independent Palestine has not been realized to this day.

Also, in 1948, the new Israeli state ethnically cleansed its new territories, destroying 450 Palestinian villages and turning the Palestinian nation into a Diaspora people. This was followed by the seizure of the remaining Palestinian territories in the 1967 Arab Israeli conflict. Today the Palestinians number more than 8million and are scattered throughout world including Israel and the occupied territories, the surrounding Arab states and a host of other countries.

International solidarity day was declared to encourage Israel to honor resolution 181 and finally allow a Palestinian state to come

into existence. The need to show solidarity has never been greater. The remaining Palestinian territory (the 22%) is presently being heavily colonized by Israeli settlements and infrastructure, with mass land seizures and the construction of the Apartheid wall. When this process is complete the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to have their own nation, as laid out by numerous United Nations resolutions, will be lost forever.

Our partners in the YMCA, this is a plea for Palestine and the right to freedom. Stand with us on this day and help change world public opinion so that we together can achieve justice with peace for Palestine. By making a show of support and solidarity on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November *you can take a stand against* the idea that rule by military and economic weight alone is acceptable, that the Palestinians do not deserve their own state and that less developed nations should just accept however the larger powers choose to treat them.

Enclosed you will find several suggestions of how you can show solidarity with the oppressed Palestinian people on the 29<sup>th</sup> November and thus help raise public awareness of our plight. Please feel free to use any of these suggestions or even create your own ideas for solidarity.

Many thanks from your partners in East Jerusalem YMCA

# INTRODUCTION

The JAI incorporating the YWCA of Palestine and The East Jerusalem YMCA recognizes that the week leading to the 29<sup>th</sup> of November is the first Advent Sunday in the Catholic Church. It is in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ that the universe is saved and reconciled to God. We who live and struggle in Palestine give praise to God for the saving act to all humankind. In the minds of all Christians it must be clear that this campaign is aimed strictly at all Palestinians. There are Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Israel, refugee camps and in the Diaspora. As you read this booklet, we urge you to use it as best as you can and to appropriate it as your local context allows in solidarity with people of Palestine to help alleviate their suffering.

*Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon earth."  
Genesis 1:26 (RSV)*

As we ponder and reflect upon the situation in Palestine and Israel it is appropriate for us to remember what the divine intention of God was in the beginning. When the Creator created the universe, there was a divine purpose behind the act of creation. After all in what God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit had created there was a void in the universe. Something was missing in the big picture. It was humankind both male and female.

Scripture records that both male and female were created in the divine image and likeness of the Creator. They were given a God-given mandate to rule over the creation in partnership with the Creator. Never in the beginning did God intend for humankind to dominate other human beings. In the Occupied Palestinian Territories everything we see goes against the divine purpose of creation. The Israeli Occupation Forces are acting in a very un-Godly fashion!

Let us all pray for humankind to return to God and the divine purpose of humankind.

### *Prayer*

*Our Creator, God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit we pray to*

*you this day for Palestinians in Palestine and Israel. We want to remember all those Palestinians who live in refugee camps. Not forgetting Palestinians in Disapora longing to return home.*

*In your word God it is recorded that you created humankind in your image and likeness. You gave humankind authority to have dominion and look after all the creation. It was your divine purpose that humankind may live in harmony as you show us through the trinity for your glory. This is how you planned the universe from time immemorial.*

*Today, life in Palestine is not carried out according to your statutes. Israeli occupation defies your word and the divine purpose of creation. People of faith all over the world are praying for your will to be done in Palestine. They are united together calling for your divine intervention. The dominion of your creation over others without your sanction, oh God, is evil. Let justice be done through your hand, our God.*

*Amen*

*Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Mathew 6:10 (RSV)*

Jesus taught His disciples the Lord's Prayer. Today, we ask our partners across the globe to pray to God this noble prayer. Let it be the petition submitted to God through Jesus and the Holy Spirit in solidarity with Palestinians. We ask nothing more or less from our God who is faithful to the scripture and the divine will.

All the things Jesus asked the disciples to pray for are not practiced in the Holy Land. When Palestinians pray the Lords prayer they are not understood by the unjust world. They are called names by those who hold earthly power. The code name has become terrorist for all those who fight a just cause. Yet those who fight and resist Israeli occupation non-violently are following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

God we ask for nothing more or less but your kingdom to come on earth as it is and shall be in your glory!

### *Prayer*

*Lord Jesus, you taught your disciples not to heap up empty phrases when they pray. You taught them to be specific and pray in a simple way because our Father in heaven knows all that we need before we even ask.*

*People of faith in the world pray that your will be done in Palestine. There is*

*no peace in the occupied territories where Palestinians live, oh God. Children are not safe. They are not treated as other children in the world. All children belong to you God. It is our prayer that you may protect them against the evil imposed upon them by the Israeli occupation forces.*

*There is too much hate in the Holy Land. Teach your children in the Holy Land to forgive one another so that their transgressions can be forgiven too. Let all those who are fighting the innocent and killing defenseless people repent from their sins. Forgive those who resort to taking their lives along with the perceived enemy. Restore, oh God, the sanctity of life in their hearts. Let them realize that it is you alone God who gave life and no one else should take it without your blessing.*

*Palestinians struggle every day to get their daily bread. The Israeli occupation makes it impossible for them to sustain themselves and their families. God of mercy, we ask you to soften their hearts so that people of Palestine can have bread on the table as well. Create our Lord the conditions for transformation to take place in the lives of all those involved in bringing about a peaceful and just solution in the Holy Land.*

*Let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Lord we pray!*

# LET PALESTINIANS TILL THE SOIL!

*In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Genesis 3:19 (RSV)*

After the fall of humankind in the Garden of Eden, our God, read the riot act to Adam and Eve for disobeying the divine command not to eat the fruit of life. Scripture records that from this day onwards it is God who commanded Adam out of the garden, and told him it was time he started working for his survival. As the word teaches us above all of us we must work for our livelihood. It is therefore a God-given right to till the soil for the sustainability of our mortal bodies.

Christians of the world, join the Palestinians, in their fight for the right to earn a living in their homeland. Let us all pray for the conditions prevailing against the divine command of our true God to disappear. Let no man or woman be prevented from work by the Apartheid Wall in the Holy Land!

## *Prayer*

*Yesterday, we prayed to you our heavenly God to give the Palestinians their daily bread. As people of faith we remember oh God that you instructed Adam to sweat for his living. On that day, our heavenly God, you ordained work.*

*There are so many conditions that make it difficult for the people of Palestine to sweat for their living. They are prevented from accessing the greater land you created our God. Their movement is restricted unjustly by the Israeli occupation forces.*

*These occupation forces are committing a sin. It is through your mercy our heavenly God that they can be forgiven and granted their salvation.*

*We pray oh God that you intervene in the conflict that makes it difficult for the occupied to feed their children and their families. Restore the dignity of Palestinians by enabling them to work their fields that are rendered ineffective by the uprooting of olive trees unlawful building of colonies. Their land is shrunk unjustly by the apartheid wall dividing families from each other.*

*This is our prayer God.*

*Amen*

*When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone, and slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground. 1 Samuel 17:48-49 (RSV)*

In Palestine, our children, our youth, have taken upon themselves to join their parents in the intifada. It is the unjust situation that leads to our young ones to revolting and rebelling against the Israeli Occupation Forces. It is a force that knows no limits in destroying the livelihoods of Palestinians. They seem to not have any ethics of combat and warfare. Anything that comes near them they destroy including children and women.

Our children, the youth of Palestine can be equated to the story of David and Goliath! Maybe they have been told about the story of the slain young boy at a tender age of 13 years in South Africa. Hector Peterson was gunned down by the South African apartheid security forces. The only reason he died was because he was rebelling against an unjust system imposed upon Black (South) Africans education system. Through his death the world knew the brutality of the evil system of apartheid. His blood too nourished the tree of freedom. A similar event occurred in Nablus, West Bank in April 1976. Local residents in Nablus remember a young woman known as Lina Nabulsi. At the age of 16 the Israeli Occupation Forces shot her down in April 5<sup>th</sup>, 1976. Lina was an activist who was brutally murdered for a just cause. On that fateful day she was wearing her school uniform. Her blood too nourishes the tree of freedom to come in Palestine.

A similar situation plays itself over and over again in the Holy Land. Young children throw stones against military tanks. They take upon a fight that is beyond their control and might. Is this not what David did by tackling a giant of Goliath's caliber? It is recorded that David challenged this mighty man in the name of the Lord of Hosts. What drove him was the faith in the living God. May we pray that our children and youth in Palestine be protected as they join the intifada a people's movement! Let the Lord of Hosts who protected and guided David be with our youth in Palestine.

The world must understand the plight of the Palestinian children and youth. Like any other children in the world they too must be accorded the same internationally recognized human rights. If they do not fight in the only way known to them then they will be giving in to the evil Goliath the Israeli occupation forces who come with military might void of the Living God. These children are non-violent! If we allow these evil forces to silence them then the world will be blessing an evil system.

### *Prayer*

*Our heavenly God! You told John the Baptist that you were very pleased with your chosen Son, Jesus Christ on the day of His baptism! Jesus Christ, your Son, oh God, said one day in the synagogue, "Let the children come to me".*

*Children in Palestine are arrested and receive bad treatment in the Israeli prisons. They are treated worse than animals. Their sin is to resist an unjust and evil Israeli occupation. David did not bow to Goliath, oh God! He threw the stone in your name so that your chosen people could survive. Through him you built a strong nation to serve you.*

*We ask you God to defend our children and youth who are engaged in the resistance movement of Palestinians. Let all evil forces who seek to abuse them in Palestine and Israel be punished. We ask all this in your precious name.*

*Amen*

*I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. John 10:10b (RSV)*

Palestinians too deserve to live their lives as intended by our God. Much as the Israelis deserve to live life abundantly so do the people of Palestine and everywhere in the world. As we approach the first Sunday of Advent on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November we urge all our partners to pray that Palestinians may experience this life Jesus promises us in the scriptures. It is a simple request to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit!

Let this advent bring forth the fall of the Israeli occupation in Palestine. The Palestinians in diaspora long to come back home. Those who live in Israel and hold Israeli citizenship also want to lead normal lives. The apartheid wall is separating families from each other. It directly affects the livelihoods and basic human rights of Palestinians. The JAI believe that Jesus wants all humankind to have this life He laid His life for.

### *Prayer*

*Oh, thou great God, we ask that you may grant Palestinians the life Jesus died for at Golgotha. He died for all our sins including Palestinians all over the world. All those who believe in Him should not perish. They deserve eternal life by your grace.*

*Lord of mercy and justice grant people of Palestine abundant life on earth as it is in heaven. Let them taste what it means to live in your mercy. People of faith all over the world prayed for South Africa and you answered their prayer. Today, South Africa is in the process of tasting a better life for all. In the same way God we pray that you make it possible also for Palestine to live in a new way.*

*Let Palestine also be one of the examples the world can look up to for your healing power.*

*Lord, grant us our wishes in your mercy.*

*Amen*

## LEAN ON ME LYRICS

*Sometimes in our lives we all have pain  
We all have sorrow  
But if we are wise  
We know that there's always tomorrow*

*Lean on me, when you're not strong  
And I'll be your friend  
I'll help you carry on  
For it won't be long  
'Til I'm gonna need  
Somebody to lean on*

*Please swallow your pride  
If I have things you need to borrow  
For no one can fill those of your needs  
That you don't let show*

*Lean on me, when you're not strong  
And I'll be your friend  
I'll help you carry on  
For it won't be long  
'Til I'm gonna need  
Somebody to lean on*

*If there is a load you have to bear  
That you can't carry  
I'm right up the road  
I'll share your load  
If you just call me*

*So just call on me brother, when you need a  
hand  
We all need somebody to lean on  
I just might have a problem that you'd  
understand  
We all need somebody to lean on*

*Lean on me when you're not strong  
And I'll be your friend  
I'll help you carry on  
For it won't be long  
Till I'm gonna need  
Somebody to lean on*  
**Bill Withers**

**Sunday, November 28th**

**First Advent Sunday**

**The JAI calls the ecumenical movement  
to dedicate the Sunday service to Palestine.**

# IMAGINE

*Imagine there's no heaven,  
It's easy if you try,  
No hell below us,  
Above us only sky,  
Imagine all the people  
living for today...*

*Imagine there's no countries,  
It isn't hard to do,  
Nothing to kill or die for,  
No religion too,  
Imagine all the people living life in peace...*

*Imagine no possessions,  
I wonder if you can,  
No need for greed or hunger,  
A brotherhood of man,  
Imagine all the people  
Sharing all the world...*

*You may say I'm a dreamer,  
but I'm not the only one,  
I hope some day you'll join us,  
And the world will live as one.*

**John Lennon**

## *Prayer*

*Oh, Lord!*

*You taught us to carry each other's loads!  
You taught us to bring our heavy loads to you!*

*On this day, we want to bring Palestine to you.  
Palestinians are living under Israeli occupation in your name.*

*We know God that this is not your will.  
It is the will of the evil one who seeks to devour the righteous.*

*It is the devil that divides your creation.  
Jesus, you taught us to love one another!  
You taught us to do unto others as we would like them to do unto us.  
Today, we pray that you may rekindle the faith of Palestinians.  
We pray that they may not lose hope for their freedom.*

*You are our freedom and justice in the world.  
We remember the children of Israel who live in fear!  
They are separated by unjust means from their neighbors!*

*Let your justice reign in Israel, Oh God!  
Grant Palestinians your peace with justice,  
Oh God! Grant the world stability!*

*Let your Kingdom come on earth!  
Lord we pray! Hear our prayer.*

## *Amen*

## SUGGESTIONS FOR SOLIDARITY

ON THE 29TH  
OF NOVEMBER

YOU COULD,

- Create a collage wallpaper of the suffering of the conflict, display it publicly or take a photograph for us to use on our web site.
- Help with the Keep hope alive campaign by fundraising to buy an olive tree. This could be in the form of a dinner on the 29<sup>th</sup> with a small charge to raise the money. (or any other ideas you can think of to raise money)
- Help with the good earth campaign and support Palestinian farmers by buying and selling our campaign bags to your church and community.
- Arrange a debate, workshop or public talk making Palestine the issue. We can supply information sources for this including the web address' for Palestinian and Israeli peace sights.

- Challenge prominent people or celebrities to sponsor an olive tree and get your local newspaper to cover the story. This could also be sent to the EJ-YMCA for our web site.
- Contact women's groups in your area and organize a talk/workshop to raise awareness of how the occupation affects women.
- Hold a candlelight vigil in the evening of the 29<sup>th</sup> and advertise the event in your local area.
- Organize a demonstration march in your local town or city to raise public awareness. These are important so that people can see the support for Palestine.
- Organize a sponsored activity to raise money and awareness of our campaigns. This could be in the form of a sponsored hike, swim, mountain bike ramble or anything else you can think of.

- Use our prayer booklet (or parts of it) in your meetings or church to raise awareness of the Palestinian situation.
- Contact solidarity groups in your area (they exist in most countries) and join with them for their show of solidarity. If they are less organized, encourage them to join with you in solidarity.
- Ecumenical Movement- Create a conducive environment for inter-faith dialogue targeting the Islam and Judaism religious groups in particular as strategic partners in the Israeli and Palestine conflict- Put the Middle East on the agenda
- Contextual Bible Studies- Re-reading of contested texts in the Old Testament fuelling Fundamental Zionism in Israel- Reclaiming and appropriating the text for the Liberation of Palestinians

