



**Virtual Jerusalem Ecumenical Prayer Service  
Wednesday 12th August 2020  
6pm (Jerusalem Time)**

**In partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), and in cooperation with the various Jerusalem Churches. Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre welcomes you to this prayer service for those suffering from injustice and the pandemic.**

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION**  
*Bible passages taken from NRSV translation*

**Opening Hymn**  
**'Govea Yeroosaghem ezder'**  
*Choir of the Armenian Apostolic Church*

Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.  
Christ is risen from the dead, alleluia.  
Come people sing to the Lord, alleluia.  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
now and always and unto the ages of ages amen.  
To Him who has arisen from the dead, alleluia.  
To Him who is the light of the world, alleluia.

**Welcome**  
*Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabbah*

**In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God, Amen.**

We come together today to pray. We are all children of God, from all churches. All are children of God from our holy city and the whole world.

Our prayers are a confirmation of our faith. Our Lord Jesus Christ told us: *"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."* (Mathew 6:33). Seek God's kingdom and his righteousness, and peace and justice will be given to you.

Oh God, our Father in heaven, we seek your kingdom and righteousness. Yet, we cannot find peace nor justice.

Oh God, our Father, our prayer today is about our suffering, it is the Covid-19 pandemic that swept across the whole world and hit us, turning our lives upside down, threatening our lives, killing many, many people around the world, as well as here among us.

Our prayer today is an expression of our struggle for existence, the political struggle. Our prayer today is regarding the occupation, the intentions of annexation, and other injustices. We put before You the injustice of our oppressors, the confusion and division among our leaders, their righteousness and the absence of it. You know all of this, and continue to *"cause the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and send rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."* (Mathew 5:45).

Oh God, we are afraid of the pandemic.  
Confusion prevails in our homes.

The houses of many among us are at risk of demolition, they tell us: it is in the name of law. Your law is that anyone without shelter shall be given shelter, and that no one is deprived of their home.

This is your law, but the law of the occupation authorities is different.

Yet, those who are powerful and unjust, are also your children. Would you, dear Lord, talk to them, and inspire them to take the path of righteousness and justice to preserve our houses?  
“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” (John 6:69). “Whom have I in heaven but you?” (Psalm 73)

Our Father in heaven, we believe that you are looking down upon us and that “not even a hair of our heads will perish” without your permission (Luke 21:18).

You are our creator, our Father, the one who looks after us, and you see all the injustices against us. The hair on our heads is perishing, our blood is being shed. They are killing us, our homes are being demolished, our right to exist is being denied, the right of residency in the holy city is being revoked for many of us, many families are fragmented and not allowed to be reunited, in this holy city, residents are being replaced, all of Jerusalem has become the Via Dolorosa.

Oh Lord, do you want it to be and remain a Via Dolorosa?

God, thou art in heaven, our prayers today, our incense, our candles, are for the injustice that we suffer from. They are the suffering of the prisoners, the hatred in the hearts, yes, hatred. The prayers that we offer today before you, we want that You purify them and make us humans again just like you have created us; humans capable of love not hate or killing.

Oh God, cure us from this pandemic, and protect us against the injustice of man.

Dear Lord, “if you are willing, you can make us clean.” (Luke 5:12)

Oh Lord, we say yes, I am willing, to be clean.

Be clean from the pandemic.

Be clean from the war.

Be clean from the injustice of man.

Be clean from the injustice of hate.

Replace everything with love.

Make the holy land, a land of peace, justice, love, and equality.

### Hymn

‘The Spirit Unites Us’ (الروح يجمعنا)

*Pastor Fursan Zumot - Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land*

### Reading

1 Peter 4:12-16

*Father Amjad Sabbarah - Franciscan Order*

<sup>12</sup>Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup>But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ’s sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. <sup>14</sup>If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. <sup>15</sup>But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker. <sup>16</sup>Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this name.

### Reading

Psalm 91:1-7 & 9-16

*Bishop Yaser Ayash - Melkite Church*

<sup>1</sup>You who live in the shelter of the Most High,  
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,  
<sup>2</sup>will say to the Lord,  
“My refuge and my fortress;  
my God, in whom I trust.”  
<sup>3</sup>For he will deliver you from the snare of the  
fowler  
and from the deadly pestilence;  
<sup>4</sup>he will cover you with his pinions,  
and under his wings you will find refuge;  
his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.  
<sup>5</sup>You will not fear the terror of the night,  
or the arrow that flies by day,  
<sup>6</sup>or the pestilence that stalks in darkness,  
or the destruction that wastes at noonday.  
<sup>7</sup>A thousand may fall at your side,  
ten thousand at your right hand,  
but it will not come near you.

<sup>9</sup>Because you have made the Lord your refuge,  
the Most High your dwelling place,  
<sup>10</sup>no evil shall befall you,  
no scourge come near your tent.  
<sup>11</sup>For he will command his angels concerning  
you  
to guard you in all your ways.  
<sup>12</sup>On their hands they will bear you up,  
so that you will not dash your foot against a  
stone.  
<sup>13</sup>You will tread on the lion and the adder,  
the young lion and the serpent you will  
trample under foot.  
<sup>14</sup>Those who love me, I will deliver;  
I will protect those who know my name.  
<sup>15</sup>When they call to me, I will answer them;  
I will be with them in trouble,  
I will rescue them and honor them.  
<sup>16</sup>With long life I will satisfy them,  
and show them my salvation.

### Reading

Matthew 11:25-30

*Bishop Atallah Hanna - Greek Orthodox Church*

<sup>25</sup>At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; <sup>26</sup>yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>27</sup>All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

<sup>28</sup>“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.  
<sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

### Hymn

‘Metsatsuste’

*Choir of the Armenian Apostolic Church*

My soul praises the greatness (magnifies) the lord and my spirit rejoices through God my savior.  
The mother of the ineffable light  
and dwelling place of the son without beginning,

we praise your greatness with blessings.  
The motherhood which is beyond understanding  
and the living temple of the Word of God,  
we praise your greatness with blessings.  
Glory to the father and to the son and to the holy spirit,  
now and always and unto the ages of ages amen. Mother of the salvation of all people,  
who brought forth from the womb the being whose birth is impossible.  
We glorify your greatness with blessings.

### Sermon

*Rev. Naim Ateek - Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre*

Due to the pandemic, Sabeel Jerusalem and the Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and with the cooperation with numerous churches in Jerusalem, decided to organize a virtual service of prayer for all those who have been affected by the Corona virus, for the families who have lost loved ones, and for all people including our families and friends, asking God to help us, save us, heal us, and be with us during these difficult times. So, please pray with us for all the people of the world who are suffering because of this pandemic.

As we all know, the pandemic affected the lives of millions of people around the world. It specially touched the lives of many vulnerable people, especially, the poor and marginalized in our societies.

The Psalmist asked, *“If the foundations are shaken, what can the righteous do?”* (Psalm 11:3). This virus has shaken the foundations of the lives of both the rich and poor, the strong and the weak, the old and young.

I would like to suggest two important responses to it:

**The first is to turn to God:** The pandemic affected people’s faith. It drove some away from God, on the other hand, it drew many closer to God. But all of us felt its weight, and we were shaken. With the words of the father who brought his son to Jesus for healing, we cry out, *“Lord, I believe, help my unbelief”* (Mark 9:24).

In spite of the hardships of the pandemic, we need to keep our faith and trust anchored in the love, goodness, and mercy of God.

Remember when Jesus and the disciples were on the boat in the Sea of Galilee and a violent storm raged. The disciples were frightened, while Jesus was calmly asleep. They woke him up saying, don’t you care we are perishing? Jesus got up and ordered the fierce wind to be quiet; and then looked at the disciples and said, *“why are you afraid, have you still no faith?”* (Mark 4:35-42).

We are still in the midst of the pandemic storm. Let us remember that so long as Jesus is with us in the storm, we should not be afraid. He is with us in the boat of life on the raging sea. We might think he is asleep, but our faith assures us that he is in full control. Christ is our savior, our healer, and our redeemer. We hear him calling us, *“Come to me, all you that are weary and are*

*carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).*

The Psalmist said, *“Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me.” (Psalm 23)*

Jesus said, *“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2Cor 12:9).*

**The second is to return to our humanity:** Before the Pandemic, it seemed that many people had become so comfortable materially they became oblivious to the warnings of the scientists concerning humans’ exploitations of nature and the environment — the depletion of natural resources, the negative effects of climate change and global warming, the dangers of fossil fuels, etc. Is it possible that the pandemic that hit us is nature’s rebellion against our mistreatment of it? Is it our earth’s intifada that is asking us to stop the exploitation of nature and environment, to stop the pollution, to stop our excessive selfishness and greed, and to begin thinking about our children and future generations?

The pandemic has forced us to seek the essentials of life. These are made up of: the indispensability of love, the importance of a simple lifestyle that includes nutritious and healthy food, with physical exercise, and helping and caring for others in need.

Return to our humanity means caring for nature and the environment. This includes the health of humans and animals and avoiding pollution.

Returning to our humanity means to take a stand for issues of justice and peace at home and abroad and to take a stand on behalf of the oppressed, placing the wellbeing of people above material things.

A return to our humanity means a return to kindness, humility, honesty, truthfulness, respect for the humanity and dignity of others.

May God help us to remember these two needed responses: Return to God in faith and trust; and a return to our humanity in love and compassion for the health and wellbeing of humans and nature.

### **Prayer**

*Bishop Coadjutor Hosam Naoum - Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem*

**Let us pray for the world and for ourselves, our needs and those of others.**

God of love and hope, You who created the world and care for every creature, this world is going through strange times.

The news is full of stories about Covid-19 virus, many people are anxious over that, anxious that they will be infected. Many are anxious for their families and friends, worried about their

parents, children, jobs, and their own security.

Lord be with us, through our difficult times, help us find some peace.

We pray for the doctors, the nurses, and scientists who are working on finding appropriate cures to give hope to the sick and the world as a whole.

Thank you, Lord, for being with us during these strange and anxious times. Lord, help us look for signs of your love for us and help us keep our hearts filled with Your love.

We pray dear Lord, creator and protector of all, we pray for all human beings, all nations, so that You bestow on them Your saving grace.

We pray particularly for the church so that it is able, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to guide anyone claiming to be Christian to find the path of righteousness, hold firm to the faith in the oneness of spirit, the strength of peace, and the goodness of life. We pray for all those who are anxious and worried, sick or in distress, for comfort and relief, for rewards for their patience and an end to their suffering. We pray for this in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen!

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forever. Amen.

### **Prayer Requests**

#### *The Young People of Jerusalem*

*In between each prayer request the following is sung*

*'Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison'*

*'Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy'*

*'Christe eleison, Christe eleison, Christe eleison'*

*'Christ have mercy, Christ have mercy, Christ have mercy'*

#### *Jeanne D'Arc Siniora*

#### *Overlooking Jerusalem - Mount of Olives*

As we stand before this holy city, the city of peace which has never enjoyed peace, we raise our prayers that God bestows mercy upon us, lift this painful pandemic, grant us peace and security,  
Lord, in your mercy.

#### *Farah Soudah*

#### *Dominus Flevit*

From the same place where You stood and looked at this sad city and cried and continue to cry for it and for its children, we ask You our Lord Jesus Christ, to grant us love and peace, lift the crown of thorns off this city in pain, so that the tears of pain become tears of hope and life.  
Lord, in your mercy.

*Amanda Ghattas*  
*St Peter in Gallicantu*

Dear Lord Jesus Christ, who was imprisoned in an underground crypt, we ask you Lord to look down upon all the prisoners, detainees, those who are expelled, and those who are pursued, those who sacrificed their lives and the innocent who were killed, show them Your mercy, grant their families patience and consolation. Lord, in your mercy.

*Salim Kassabreh*  
*Church of all Nations - Garden of Gethsemane*

Here at the Church of Gethsemane where Jesus Christ accepted the cup of agony for our sake My Lord, this pandemic had forced humankind into a state of fear and anxiety. We pray that decision-makers around the world work not only for the best interest of their countries, but rather consider the implications of their decisions for all human beings, particularly in poor countries, so that this pandemic becomes an opportunity for the people of the world to come closer together. Lord, in your mercy.

*Mariam Nazi*  
*Second Station of the Via Dolorosa*

Here at the second station, where Jesus Christ carried His cross for the first time, we pray for our Palestinian people who endure injustice, suffering, and pain. We pray that they do not lose their faith in Your mercy, that they do not despair, but rather look forward to a better future through the strength of Your hope. Lord, in your mercy.

*Jad Estephan*  
*Fourth Station of the Via Dolorosa*

Here from the fourth station, where Jesus, carrying His cross, met with Virgin Mary, we pray for all the Palestinian refugees in refugee camps in Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and in the Diaspora. We pray for all the refugees in the world. We pray that they do not lose hope in their right of return to their countries. We pray dear Lord that You look upon them with protection and mercy. Lord, in your mercy.

*Issa Lubbat*  
*Fifth Station of the Via Dolorosa*

Here from the fifth station, from the place where Simon of Cyrene helped Jesus carry His cross, we pray.

The Covid-19 pandemic has united the whole world. We pray dear Lord that You look upon all your children with love, tenderness, and mercy. We pray that You help our hearts grow to embrace the whole world, east and west, north and south, in our prayers, love, and solidarity



during these trying times, so that our solidarity offers solace to them, and tangible support.  
Lord, in your mercy.

*George Baddour*  
*Sixth Station of the Via Dolorosa*

From the sixth station, where St. Veronica wiped Your tired face, we pray to you Lord for the sake of medical teams, nurses, and volunteers around the world. We thank You for the spirit of sacrifice, dedication, and love that You granted them. We pray to you Lord to help and protect them to continue their mission despite the difficulties and risks. Lord, in your mercy.

*Jeanne D'Arc Siniora*  
*Eighth Station of the Via Dolorosa*

Here at the eighth station where You offered encouragement to the women of Jerusalem, we ask you dear Lord to support all those infected by Covid-19, especially the poor, the marginalized, the elderly, and the children. We pray that You help them remain hopeful and not to give in to despair. We pray that they will find in their families, relatives, neighbours, and the society as whole, a source of help and care that relieves some of their suffering. Lord, in your mercy.

*Jabra Baddour*  
*Golgotha*

At Golgotha, we kneel before You and cry for help.

Dear Lord, the pandemic has deprived many of their work and means of livelihood. We ask You to place a true spirit of solidarity in the hearts of people and officials so that they may rush to help the unemployed, relieve their suffering, and allow them to live with dignity. Lord, in your mercy.

*Rafi Ghattas*  
*The Holy Tomb*

Oh Lord Jesus Christ! We stand here at the entrance of your empty tomb filled with the light of Your resurrection after going through Your Via Dolorosa. Grant us, oh Lord, hope to be witnesses, in our lifetime, to Your glorious resurrection, and praise You always, chanting "Christ is risen! He is risen indeed." Lord, in your mercy.

## **Proclamation**

*Bishop Sani Ibrahim Azar - Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land*

O merciful God of whom we take from you patience and endurance, we proclaim together:

No to spite and yes to love  
No to death and yes to life  
No to injustice and to for truth  
No to oppression and yes to justice  
No to brutality and yes to mercy  
No to violence and yes to the olive branch  
No, to whatever it takes and yes to whatever it takes because you are love, life, truth,  
justice, mercy, and peace.

Amen

## **Lord's Prayer (Ecumenical Version)**

*Pastor Rodny Said and Ms Ranan Issa - ELCJHL*

Our Father who is in heaven,  
may your name be sanctified,  
let your kingdom come,  
so that your will be done, as in heaven so on earth.  
Give us today our bread that is essential for life.  
Forgive us our sins, just as we forgive our sinners and do not enter us into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one.  
Because yours is the kingdom, power, and glory, forever.  
Amen.

## **Syriac Lord's Prayer**

*Father Boulus Khano - Syriac Orthodox Church*

## **Hymn**

**'O Lord of Peace'** (يا رب السلام)

*Pastor Fursan Zumot and Ms Maram Said - ELCJHL*

## **Closing Prayer**

*Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabah*

## **Benediction and Blessing**

In the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all, ever more.

Amen.



