



Sabeel Wave of Prayer

Dec 21st, 2023

This prayer ministry enables local and international friends of Sabeel to pray over regional concerns on a weekly basis. Sent to Sabeel's network of supporters, the prayer is used in services around the world and during Sabeel's Thursday Communion service; as each community in its respective time zone lifts these concerns in prayer at noon every Thursday, this "wave of prayer" washes over the world.

As the violence in Gaza continues to intensify, the colder weather and heavy rains have caused flooding, worsening the humanitarian crisis. UNRWA has stated that its shelters for internally displaced persons in the middle and southern areas of the Gaza strip are over nine times their capacity, hosting the 1.9 million internally displaced persons. Additionally, the spread of disease has increased, with health authorities documenting 360,000 cases of infectious diseases in shelters, including diarrhea, influenza, meningitis, hygiene related conditions such as lice, and 1,500 cases of intestinal disease are reported daily due to food shortages.

- **Almighty God, we call to you in anguish over the sickness and suffering your people in Gaza are experiencing. How long, O Lord? We remember that you were born in the likeness of humans, and you know what it is to experience pain and bodily suffering. Bring healing to all who are sick and bring protection to all who seek shelter. Ultimately, we pray for a ceasefire and for lasting healing that will come only through your complete justice. Lord, in your mercy... hear our prayer.**

On the 16th of December, two Christian women, Nahida Anton and her daughter Samar Anton, were shot and killed by Israeli military snipers as they walked within the grounds of the Holy Family Parish in Gaza. Seven others were shot and injured as they tried to protect those sheltering inside the church compound. Earlier the same morning, a rocket fired from an Israeli tank targeted the Convent of the Sisters of Mother Teresa, damaging the building and displacing the 54 disabled persons who live there.

- **Almighty God, we are distraught over the deaths of Nahida and Samar, and there are no words that can be said to express our grief and outrage. We trust that you are weeping now with the families of the martyrs, and we hold onto your words from Matthew, "blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Comfort the Christians in Gaza who continue to seek shelter in the Holy Family Parish and provide for all the disabled who were displaced by the attack on the Convent. Lord, in your mercy... hear our prayer.**

From the 11th-14th of December, the Israeli military conducted a raid in Jenin, leading to the reported deaths of 12 Palestinians, 34 injuries, and over one hundred arrests. Since the 7th of October, 271 Palestinians, including 69 children, have been killed in the West Bank, and more than 3,481 Palestinians have been injured by Israeli forces and settlers in the West Bank.

- **Sovereign God, we pray that your comfort for the families of those killed would come in the form of true and lasting justice. In your power, bring an end to all violence. We trust that you are the source of all justice and goodness. We long to see you, "judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in faithfulness" (Psalm 96:13). Lord, in your mercy... hear our prayer.**

On the 12th of December, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution calling for a ceasefire. 153 members voted for the resolution, 23 abstained, including the UK, and 10 voted against, including the U.S. Although the General Assembly resolution shows an increase of international pressure for a ceasefire, the resolution is non-binding. This comes after the U.S. vetoed a UN Security Council Resolution for a ceasefire on December 8th, which if it had passed, could have been binding.

- **God of all nations, as a majority of the international community are calling for an end to the violence, we lament that a few nations with a disproportionate amount of power are allowing the atrocities in Gaza to continue. May your Spirit guide these leaders to conviction and repentance and increase all global efforts to bring about a ceasefire. We pray with the prophet Isaiah, “Let the wicked forsake their ways, and the unrighteous their thoughts” (Isaiah 55:7). Lord, in your mercy... hear our prayer.**

Sunday, December 17th marked the third Sunday of Advent, when Christians light the third candle of “joy”. The winter solstice, the longest night of the year, also falls during this week. Many around the globe are using the holiday season to inspire creative activism in solidarity with Palestine, changing lyrics of popular Christmas songs to calls for a Ceasefire, but many others remain complicit or ignorant to the horrors that civilians in Gaza must endure this winter.

- **Lord Christ, when you walked on this earth you proclaimed, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). This Advent, when joy feels so distant, we ask that your light pierce through the darkness of our suffering. As we approach the longest night of the year, we remember the long nights of waiting and watching that Gazans have endured now for over two months. We pray for your light to come in the form of deliverance from all violence and injustice. May our firm hope in this coming deliverance be the source of our joy. Lord, in your mercy... hear our prayer**

Despite the cancellation of normal Christmas festivities in Palestine, this Saturday, December 23rd, Sabeel Jerusalem is holding a Christmas play for the local community. The play is entitled “Emmanuel” and is meant to reflect on the current situation while also focusing on the hope that “God is with us” in the birth of Christ.

- **Emmanuel, God with us, we thank you for how the arts can bring depth and beauty to our human experience, even into the somberness of this Christmas season. May this play provide a source of community and a sense of hope to all who will attend or take part in this event. Lord, in your mercy... hear our prayer**

On the 12th of December, the World Health Organization reiterated its call for the protection of health care and humanitarian assistance in Gaza. Overall, only 11 out of 36 hospitals in Gaza are partially functional, services and supplies are limited, and the two major hospitals in southern Gaza are operating at three times their bed capacity, while also sheltering thousands of internally displaced persons.

- **Lord, we pray for the healthcare workers who continue healing and saving lives in impossible conditions. Honor their courage with your strength and provision. May governments quickly act in the way of justice to allow all necessary aid, supplies, and fuel to reach the few hospitals that remain in Gaza, so that no more lives may be lost. Lord, in your mercy.... hear our prayer**
- **We join with the World Council of Churches in their prayer for the countries of Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and the Mainland of China. Lord, in your mercy... hear our prayer**