

Sabeel's Litany for Gaza

In the early morning, on May 31, 2010, Israeli forces intercepted a flotilla of 6 ships bound for the Gaza Strip, carrying nearly 700 people and a cargo of medical supplies, pre-fabricated homes, building supplies, and educational materials. The ships were attempting to break the internationally condemned Israeli blockade that, since June 2007, has prevented virtually all people and goods from entering or exiting the Gaza Strip (with the exception of insufficient humanitarian supplies and some aid workers). As the Israeli forces boarded the ships, at least 9 flotilla participants were killed while nearly 60 participants and 10 soldiers were injured. Eventually, all the ships were rerouted and the flotilla participants were arrested or deported. The siege on Gaza continues.

Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem will hold a day of fasting and prayer on Monday, June 7, for the members of the flotilla, the people of Gaza, and for peace in Palestine and Israel. This litany is offered as a resource for individuals and congregations to use, in part or in whole. It can be adapted and read by 2 or 3 voices. We encourage pastors to use the litany in their Sunday services.

Thus says the Lord: Do not let the wise boast in their wisdom, do not let the mighty boast in their might, do not let the wealthy boast in their wealth; but let those who boast boast in this, that they understand and know me, that I am the Lord; I act with steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, says the Lord. [Jeremiah 9:23-24]

Eternal God, arbiter of justice and champion of peace, reach into the deep pit of violence, despair, and ruthlessness that shapes the lives of so many in Palestine and Israel. The nations are in an uproar, kingdoms totter, people cry out.

You, O God, are our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. [Matthew 5:9]

Grant, O God, healing to the men and women injured during the Israeli military assault. Bring grace and consolation to those who mourn the dead.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be filled.

Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. [Hebrews 13:3]

God who has proclaimed release to the captives and freedom to the oppressed, may all who have been taken prisoner for their involvement in the flotilla return safely home. We remember these and others who are unjustly detained.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, who has sent me to proclaim release to the captives...and to let the oppressed go free.

“Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.”
[Psalm 46:10]

Lord of all, make known to all in Palestine and Israel that your love extends to all people, that might is not right, that fear begets fear, that love conquers all. Give hope to the many who, in love, speak and act boldly for justice.

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.

From the least to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for unjust gain; and from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely. They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. [Jeremiah 6:13-14]

God of Justice, we pray that the nations of the world will no longer stand idly by, but uphold the rights of the oppressed in Gaza, the West Bank, and around the globe . We, the peoples of many lands, "reaffirm [our] faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small." [UN Charter: Preamble]

Your judgments are just, O Lord, you will hold all nations accountable for what they have done, and also for what they have left undone.

Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. The effect of justice will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places. [Isaiah 32:16-18]

God who offers life in abundance, break the chains of injustice that shackle the people of Gaza. May the blockade that limits food and medicine, toys and cement, culture and trade, friendships and families be swiftly ended. May the people of Gaza and of the West Bank be brought together in unity.

They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. For like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. [Isaiah 65]

"In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets." [Matthew 7:12]

God of equity, who knows no distinction between race or creed or color, help us to be ever impatient in our encounter with injustice and abuse. As ambassadors for Christ, do not allow our hearts to be hardened, but let us live your message of justice, peace and reconciliation.

God, in your grace, transform the world.