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Pray with Israel/Palestine on Sunday, March 25, 2018

BY [VICTOR MAKARI](#) ON MARCH 19, 2018

Lectionary Selection: Mark 11:1-11 or John 12:12-16

Prayers for Israel/Palestine:

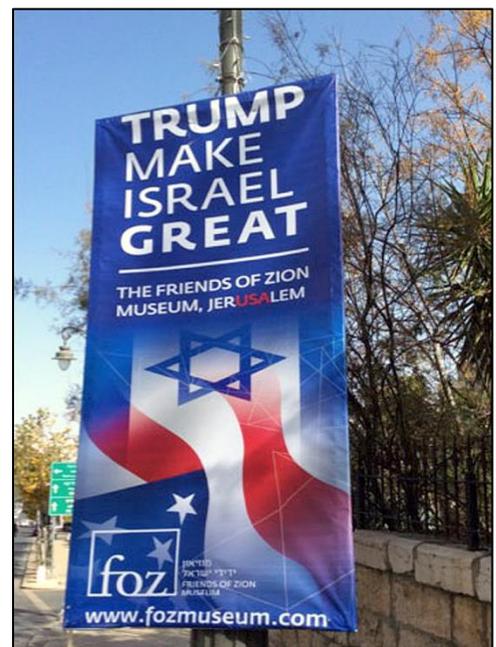
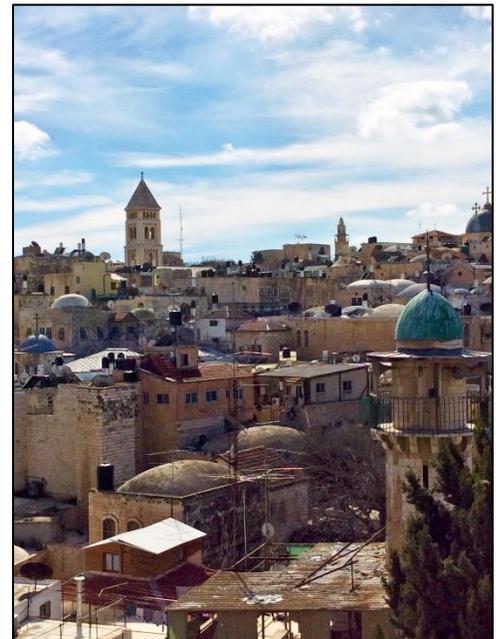
O Lord, we often do not understand why injustice continues to prevail in our world, or why your Divine purpose remains hidden from our eyes while we witness political oppression and hear the human cry for freedom. We witness your mighty acts in history: You look with favor on the lowly, and your mercy is for those who fear you from generation to generation; you show strength with your arm and scatter the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; you bring down the powerful from their thrones and lift up the lowly. We bear witness to your love for the world you created and, with those who await your mercy and justice, we pray: “hosanna,” “save us.” Amen.

Mission Stewardship Moment from Israel/Palestine:

“[Jesus’] disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered...” (John 12: 16)

On December 6, 2017, President Trump issued an imperial decree declaring Jerusalem the capital of Israel, and promising to move the United States Embassy to it from Tel Aviv. A subsequent announcement reveals the plan to open the new embassy in May, to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. That implies a set date of May 15, on which, it is rumored, President Trump will personally be present for the occasion. Already, all measures of security are being taken for the “great procession” of the head of the world’s greatest empire!

One reads these events against the background of the humble procession of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, and



the vision that it bears for the salvation of all humankind, as the crowds on that day shouted with deep longing, “hosanna;” “save us!”

Donald Trump may be viewed, by himself or others, as the savior of Israel, bringing about messianic hopes of its future; but for the Palestinian natives of this land from time immemorial his gestures are nothing less than acts of political violence, more slaps in their face. Seventy years ago they experienced the catastrophe [the “nakba”] of the destruction of more than 450 Palestinian villages and the displacement of 5 million refugees and their descendants. Fifty-one years ago they experienced the military occupation of East Jerusalem and the West Bank. All the while, through successive US vetoes of UN resolutions, America denied them their vindication.

Today’s disciples are bewildered by these events, and cannot quite fully understand the Divine purpose in them or in all similar manifestations of injustice. Yet, we know that the Savior is glorified and will continue to be glorified, despite all the self-seeking interests of the governments of this world.

(Prayer and Mission Moment by Victor Makari)

Global Ministries Mission Coworker in Israel/Palestine:

Rev. Victor Makari and his wife Sara are jointly appointed by the Common Global Ministries Board and the Presbyterian Church (USA). They serve with the Diyar Consortium, a Lutheran-based ecumenical organization in Israel and Palestine: Victor in the capacity of international consultant for Diyar’s “Religion and State - Middle East” program as well as liaison for ecumenical partnership for the PC(USA), and Sara as editor of English-language publications of Diyar. Their appointment is made possible by your gifts to Disciples’ Mission Fund, Our Churches Wider Mission, and your special gifts.

More information on Israel/Palestine:

http://www.globalministries.org/israel_palestine



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ISRAEL/PALESTINE

Israel/Palestine

Israel is located in the Middle East, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Egypt and Lebanon. East Jerusalem, Gaza and the West Bank are regarded as militarily-occupied territories controlled by Israel since the 1967 war. Since the 1993 Oslo peace process a Palestinian Authority (PA) has had administrative responsibility in most Palestinian towns and cities, yet these pockets of Palestinian control are non-contiguous and remain under the broader political, commercial, and military control of Israeli occupation.

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, struggles for land and property rights have characterized this Biblical land. Wars fought in 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973 caused a significant number of Palestinians to be displaced from their homes. In some cases, people were displaced more than once. Despite peace agreements between Israel and Egypt, and Israel and Jordan, Israeli-Palestinian efforts to solve this long-standing conflict have thus far not achieved a lasting resolution of the major issues of Jerusalem's status, Jewish settlements, sovereignty, and refugees, all of which remain divisive. Local and international, including U.S. and church supported, efforts to end Israeli occupation and create a just two-state solution remain key to future peace and development throughout the region, yet continue to suffer political obstacles and tragic violence.

Population (2014 est) – 7,821,850

Area – 8,019 sq. mi

Capital – Jerusalem

Ethnic Background (2012 est.)

Jewish – 75.1%

(Israel-born 73.6%, Europe/America/Oceania-born 17.9%, Africa-born 5.2%, Asia-born 3.2%)

non-Jewish – 24.9% (mostly Arab)

Exports – machinery and equipment, software, cut diamonds, agricultural products, chemicals, textiles and apparel

Imports – raw materials, military equipment, investment goods, rough diamonds, fuels, grain, consumer goods

Life Expectancy (2014 est) – M 79 years F 84 years

Infant Mortality (2014 est) – 3.98 deaths/1,000 live births

Adult Illiteracy Rate – 2.9%

(Source: www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/is.html)