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Pray with Israel/Palestine on Sunday May 20, 2018

BY [SARA MAKARI](#) ON MAY 14, 2018

Lectionary Selection: John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

Prayers for Israel/Palestine:

Come Comforter, Holy Spirit, Love Divine: descend upon your people – Israelis and Palestinians – in this land. Reveal to them a new vision of reconciliation amid conflict, and open before them new paths for peace. Uphold their pursuits of justice and righteousness in the face of violations against their humanity. Fortify their courage and tenacity for hope when despair assaults them and frustrates their quest for the promise of abundant life. Pour out your grace upon them to overcome evil with good. And, help us all – individually and collectively – as a Church, and as a nation – to be instruments of your grace and channels of your peace. Amen.



Mission Stewardship Moment from Israel/Palestine:

My father, the late Kenneth Bailey, who in his retirement dedicated his full time to writing, enjoyed building a good fire on cold, northwestern Pennsylvania evenings. Having had the privilege of editing his writings on New Testament studies, I often thought that, as he sat in front of the fireplace, getting up frequently to turn the wood or stoke the embers, his thought process was consciously or subliminally ignited by the Pentecost image of tongues of flame. He always said that his career of teaching and writing was for *the upbuilding* of the Church that was born of the fire of the Spirit.

Today, the Church worldwide celebrates Pentecost, the gift of the Holy Spirit that has given her birth, her existence, her life. And, that first happened here, in Jerusalem. Principally for that reason, Jerusalem has become a non-negotiable spiritual home for all of Christendom and a continually rightful abode for Christians. The Spirit also empowers and enables these to be peacemakers among all who dwell here.

How so?

1. The Day of Pentecost has been a flame in the living memory of successive generations of Jerusalemite and other Palestinian Christians. It was the fulfillment of the promise that has “fired up” the Church’s prophetic visions and inspired its dreams. This Spirit is the continuation of Christ’s

presence in the Church, empowering her – here and now – for witness and service. As the fire exists by burning, the Church exists by self-giving in mission.

2. The descent of the Holy Spirit continues to function as a source of solace, support and encouragement for the Church in the face of overwhelming challenges. The Spirit is named “the Comforter,” – “*com-*” meaning “with,” or “together with,” and “*fort*” meaning “strength.” Christ gives his people strength, accompanying them along their journey of faith.
3. The Comforter is also the “Spirit of Truth,” (John 15:26) – the One who points to, guides toward and reveals and teaches the “whole truth” (John 16:13), especially when the world opts for selective truth, manipulates truth, and twists truth to its advantage.
4. The ever-present Comforter – the Spirit of Truth – convicts the world of sin, *e.*, does not let the world get away with lies and with abandoning the ways of God (John 16:8). The Spirit witnesses to the justice/righteousness of Christ and condemns the principal of this world, liar and father of lies (vv. 10-11).
5. The Comforter glorifies Christ (v. 14). The Spirit thus upholds and uplifts His supreme commandment: *the law of love*, and the goals of his reign: *the standard of justice and the blessing of shalom/salaam/wholeness/ peace*.

(Prayer and Mission Moment by Sara Makari)

Global Ministries Mission Coworker in Israel/Palestine:

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More information on Israel/Palestine:

https://www.globalministries.org/israel_palestine



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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)