



## Parents Circle – Families Forum

### Bereaved Families Supporting Peace, Reconciliation and Tolerance

April 2024

Dear Friends,

At the end of Passover, we are reflecting on the values we share with the message Pax Christi puts forth. The evolving and growing commitment to reconciliation and peace, for finding comfort amidst grieving, comes amidst tremendous sorrow and loss in Palestinian and Israeli societies in the past six and a half months.

Now, just a few weeks after Eid el-Fitr, concluding the month of Ramadan in which Muslims fast daily and engage in spiritual reflection and introspection, our Muslim members of the Parents Circle – Families Forum (PCFF) elevate their commitment to reconciliation and peace, and an end to the cycle of violence.

Easter which preceded the Muslim holiday, brought its message of renewal, of new life following resurrection. It suggests that after all the death during the ongoing war in Gaza since October 7, the past can – and must – be left behind to move on to a new day, to times of joy.

As Passover comes to an end, Jewish members of PCFF share holiday messages of Spring and freedom represented by the holiday, even as all of us at PCFF continue to await the release of hostages from the hands of Hamas, together with our concerns for the wellbeing of Gazans, hoping that food and humanitarian aid reaches everyone. During this holiday related to freedom, we all join with Palestinians awaiting a new freedom as PCFF members acknowledge the rights of Israelis and Palestinians to the freedoms that democracies offer and moving towards the Occupation becoming a part of the past.

A particular nuance of Passover involves asking questions. At the traditional seder meal on the first night of Passover, Jewish families read the *Hagadah*. Etymologically, the name, *Hagadah* relates to *telling*, telling a story – the story of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt after the plagues. The same story is told and retold every year, but an integral part of the process involves the participants at the dinner table asking questions, enabling discussion and interpretation. Thus, each year, new lessons can emerge from the same story. Children ask four questions regarding the distinguishing characteristics of the holiday. They ask why Jews traditionally eat only matza this night and refrain from eating bread.

At the end of this Passover, hopefully our Jewish members, and all Jews will have spent time asking questions, questions about the world we have created and how the ills of this world can be redressed. During this period of war and destruction, we hope bold questions are asked and new answers emerge, compelling people everywhere to demand peace.

May we all be privileged to play a role in demonstrating that Israelis and Palestinians, and all people throughout the world, can live in peace, refraining from succumbing to warfare, insisting on mutual respect and acknowledgement of differences. Differences may remain, enriching our lives, and contributing to the value of living in peace, with our differences.

In peace,

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