



Pax Christi International, Nakba Day Webinar Reflection

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Fr Bashar on behalf of all of us, our grateful thanks for sharing the life of your community with us.

We have heard of the fear in which people live as a result of land confiscation, the destruction of precious olive trees and other crops, movement restrictions, economic hardship, settlement violence and the growing threat to the continuity of Palestinian, Christian life in Palestine. Taybeh, a Christian village, mirrors, the suffering of all the Palestinian people.

The work you do as Parish Priest, Pastor, Youth Chaplain, educator and advocate for Justice and Peace, alongside the others who work with you, strengthens the Christian Community in your village and in the whole Christian Community and empowers the community to remain deeply rooted in faith, hope and identity in the land of Jesus. The projects undertaken to provide housing and employment, and so much else, are a practical outcome of that faith and hope.

It takes courage to continue the constant calls for justice, peace, human dignity and reconciliation. We thank you and your community for having that courage – which teaches us that we too must speak out and act courageously and persistently, in our local areas, in

our parishes and by challenging our country representatives to work for justice. We support you in your work with the EU Missions, the diplomats and politicians who visit you and see the reality of daily life in Palestine.

In the reading from John's Gospel, for the Ascension yesterday, we hear Jesus preparing the community of his disciples for their on-going life in the world after he has been taken from them, he promises them that the Father will give them the Paraclete to be with them for ever. The sending of the Spirit would not only strengthen and deepen their faith, but it would enable them to be instruments of his healing and loving presence in the world.

The peace of the risen Christ is a "peace that the world cannot give". It is the peace that brings a world in which all good is restored. A peace, which is stronger than death itself ... a peace that is born of love.

We know that peace is not merely the absence of war, but a proactive work of justice, love, and order. Jesus taught that two significant fruits of being his disciples are peace and courage.

We have heard, in Fr Bashar's testimony, of the courage, the commitment to gospel peace and the steadfastness of the people of Christ the Redeemer Parish and of the people of Palestine.

We have all, like the disciples, received the commission to share the peace of Christ and so we walk alongside those whose stories we have heard, accompanying all those facing war and conflict.

We are sent out to embody love, to carry peace and to witness with our lives.

Community is something we build up in a million small acts of kindness alongside the bigger acts that are required in times like these.

Jim Wallis, the American Peacemaker, said yesterday, 'In a time like this, when authoritarian power uses violence against those who oppose them, it requires courage from all of us. The cloud of God's presence protects and guides us. Remember that he said, 'I am with you always, to the end of the age.' 'From this we can gain courage to follow Jesus in the face of authoritarian power and injustice.'

Let's take a few moments to be quiet..... and now consider.....

– *having heard Fr Bashar, what is staying with us*

- *what do we want to do*

- *Where will we speak/act/walk now – having heard the stories – knowing of our commission to be peacemakers ..*

- *Quietly ask for the courage needed to speak and to act as we accompany those whose stories we have heard.*

Let us Pray

We reflect on the image of the Ascension by Filipino Artist, Ed de Guzman

FOR PEACE by John O'Donohue Irish, Celtic, Poet, Philosopher and Theologian

As the fever of day calms towards twilight
May all that is strained in us come to ease.

We pray for all who suffered violence today,
May an unexpected serenity surprise them.

For those who risk their lives each day for peace,
May their hearts glimpse providence at the heart of history.

That those who make riches from violence and war
Might hear in their dreams the cries of the lost.

That we might see through our fear of each other
A new vision to heal our fatal attraction to aggression.

That those who enjoy the privilege of peace
Might not forget their tormented brothers and sisters.

That the wolf might lie down with the lamb,
That our swords be beaten into ploughshares

And no hurt or harm be done
Anywhere along the holy mountain.

From a Prayer by Pax Christi England and Wales

Loving God,

Teach me
share the gifts you have given me

To



To speak out for the victims of injustice who have no voice
To reject the violence which runs through much of our world today.

Holy Spirit of God,

Renew my hope for a world free from the cruelty and evil of war, so that we may all come to share in God's peace and justice. Amen

All of us in Pax Christi International would like to thank everyone who has been with us on this very special webinar.

Father Bashar, Abouna, thank you for so generously sharing your time and your experience with us. You will remain in our prayers as we hope, speak out and act for justice peace and freedom for you, your community and everyone in the Holy Land. We are called to Come and See and our hope is that we will be able to come and visit you all in Taybeh, to stay in your guest houses and to experience the wonderful hospitality you have described.

Thank you.