

## **Even the stones cry out**

**Jesus answered, 'I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.'**

**As he came near and saw the city [of Jerusalem], he wept over it saying, 'If you, even you, had only recognised on this day the things that make for peace.**

**But now they are hidden from your eyes.'**

**(Luke 19:40-43, NRSVA)**

As Christians around the world celebrate Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit, we hear again the call to envisage a world that deeply honours every member of the human family and God's creation. The coming of the Holy Spirit proclaims a vision of unity that does not erase our differences or force uniformity. Instead, cultural and linguistic diversity is witnessed and affirmed, and we discover a family resemblance not based on colour, language, ethnicity or race.

In sharing this Pentecost dream of a renewed world, our hearts at this time are heavy as we name the tremendous suffering of our world that is caused when we fail to see the image of God in one another.

We restate our commitment to care for the most marginalised and vulnerable, working for a more just world, sharing resources as our Christian faith holds us to a vision of God's love that includes all people.

Where there are places of conflict and disaster, the [National Council of Churches in Australia \(NCCA\)](#) provides aid and support through our international aid agency, [Act for Peace](#).

In Gaza the situation is more desperate and dangerous by the day. Act for Peace is working with partners on the ground to provide primary health care for women and children, medical care for those injured from shrapnel and by sustained bombardment of schools and hospitals, endure lack of shelter, food, clean water and face infection and malnourishment as every day goes by without humanitarian assistance.

### **Mr Archie Law AM, Interim CEO Act for Peace:**

*"The humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza demands immediate action from world leaders. There must be an immediate ceasefire and an end to the killing. Humanitarian agencies must be guaranteed full, safe, and unrestricted access to reach civilians who are in desperate need of food, water, shelter and medical assistance. "*

**Katie Roxburgh, Programme Officer, Israel & the occupied Palestinian territory at Christian Aid (CAID)**, about the humanitarian programme being run in Gaza with the support of Act for Peace and NCCA:

*"Christian Aid's local partners in Gaza are deeply rooted in their communities and have been the first responders to this humanitarian crisis and continue to provide lifesaving assistance to communities in need. Our partners have shown incredible strength in what is a horrendous*

*situation on the ground. They are using what is available to them, including local farmers producing fruit and vegetables to distribute to the most vulnerable, rehabilitating destroyed wells for water supply and setting up makeshift classrooms in shelters for children's education."*

**Rev John Gilmore, President of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA):**

*We support the statement of the World Council of Churches (WCC) executive committee on 15 May 2025 that condemns the atrocities being perpetrated in Gaza by the State of Israel, recognizing that the current government is pursuing policies that are not supported by many Israelis.*

*We cannot sit by any longer. Churches in Australia and the world cannot remain silent in the face of such appalling inhumanity. Together with the WCC executive committee, we call urgently for:*

- *An immediate and unconditional ceasefire;*
- *An end to the blockade of Gaza, and to all forms of collective punishment of the population of the territory;*
- *Immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access to all those in need in Gaza; and*
- *Coordinated international action to halt the destruction, to provide sufficient humanitarian assistance commensurate with the scale of the need as assessed by the United Nations and independent humanitarian agencies, and to bring perpetrators of crimes under international law to justice.*

*Beyond Gaza, we are concerned that the policies and actions of the Israeli authorities are posing increasingly grave threats to the Palestinian communities of East Jerusalem and the West Bank, including for the churches and Christian communities of the region. We appeal for equal justice and rights for all people, in Gaza, the West Bank, Jerusalem and throughout the region.*

*We thank our Australian Government for joining with Canada, New Zealand, Norway and the United Kingdom in committing to sanctions against Israeli Government Ministers.*

*With the Patriarchs and heads of churches of the Holy Land we are compelled to speak out against the grave threat of mass displacement. Our hearts are heavy with sorrow over the suffering being endured in the land where Jesus walked.*

The Pentecost vision is of a world renewed where all of God's children are valued, protected, safe and given the opportunity to flourish.

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