

24 June 2025

FOUNDATION OF HOPE IN PRAYER FOR GAZA AND MIDDLE EAST REGION

***They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying,
“Peace, peace’, when there is no peace. (Jeremiah 6:14)***

***Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. [...]
Depart from evil, and do good;
seek peace, and pursue it. (Psalm 34: 11, 14)***

‘Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6a)

Christians believe that that Jesus’ words and teachings set down in the Gospels have universal application and transcend cultures, ethnicities, language groups and national borders. Jesus’ declaration that he is ‘*the Way, and the Truth, and the Life*’ in the Gospel of John chapter 14, reminds his followers and us today, that his gifts of hope, compassion and love are for everyone. All of us are children of God whose lives are united with all of God’s creation.

We cannot remain silent in the face of the developing war and conflict in the Middle East. The expansion of the conflict focused on Gaza by Israel to other countries is truly terrible. The fear that this conflict will continue to grow is real. Tomorrow is increasingly uncertain for many. Children, women and men going about their daily routines are being killed. This is happening with little regard for them being created in the image of God. This madness must end.

We take seriously the works of the Psalmist, ‘*seek peace, and pursue it*’, and so the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) cries out in hope to the leaders of the international community, our Australian Government and all people of goodwill, to act promptly and mercifully to ‘stop the tragedy of war’.

Pope Leo, addressing the crowds in St Peter’s square on 22 June, said people all over the world were praying and crying for peace. This was following the US bombings in Iran and 10 days after Israel began bombing Iran’s nuclear and military facilities and Iran retaliated with missile attacks at Israel.

“It is a cry that calls for responsibility and reason and must not be drowned out by the din of weapons,” Pope Leo said. *“There is no faraway conflict when human dignity is at stake.”*

“In addition,” the pope said, *“with the “dramatic scenario” of the US bombing of Iran, “the daily suffering of people, especially in Gaza and other territories, risks falling into oblivion as the attention of the world turns elsewhere.”*

“War does not solve problems, but rather it amplifies them and produces deep wounds in the history of people that take generations to heal,” he said. *“No armed victory can compensate for the pain of mothers, the fear of children, the stolen future.”*

Professor Michael Abs, Secretary General of Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) – [20 June 2025](#) said

“We, the children of the churches, believers in the message of the Incarnate Lord, who overcame the world through love and peace, He who said, “All who take the sword will perish by the sword”, say to all those holding the decisions of war and peace in this world: Generations you deprived of normal life, whose future you destroyed and whose lives you ended, will hold you to account...”

Father Gabriel Romanelli, Argentine pastor of Holy Family Church, the only Catholic parish in the Gaza Strip, warned in an interview on 16 June that the suffering of the Palestinians in the enclave is being forgotten. [Father Romanelli said the situation in the enclave is beyond desperate.](#) He said:

“Imagine a city like Rome (which has a population slightly larger than that of Gaza), whose inhabitants are forced to collect food in three or four distribution points located in different areas, with all that this entails in terms of hardship and danger. What we see today in Gaza is shameful,” Father Romanelli told SIR, the news agency of the Italian bishops’ conference.

The pastor of Holy Family said that the dire circumstances have led people in Gaza to *“no longer have hope for a future different from this one.”* Nevertheless, he added, as Christians, *“we try to find a foundation of hope in prayer.”*

“The war will end, we don’t know when, but it will end,” he said.

Let us pray with the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches gathered in Johannesburg, South Africa these days, in the words of Very Rev. Archimandrite Timothy Kapsalis of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa, during Morning Prayers on 20 June 2025:

“May God inspire us to work together with humility and purpose, so that our shared efforts will foster peace, justice, and sustainable development.

“May His divine guidance help us to forge lasting bonds of friendship and cooperation, and may our collective witness bring hope and blessing to the entire human family.

“As followers of the Apostolic faith, we are called to love one another deeply, build bridges of everlasting peace, and create a world where justice, mercy, and compassion reign.

“Let us continue to pray for divine guidance, for our nations [...]. May His divine light shine brightly through us, illuminating pathways toward a more just, peaceful, and sustainable future for all humanity.

“May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen”

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