

## **A Reading of Mahmoud Darwish, Rev. Fahed AbuAkel**

Before I pray, I would like to recite a short poem by our Palestine poet, by the name of Mahmoud Darwish. His village, called al-Birwa, was destroyed. So, he came to a place called Deir al-Asad. And, every day from the 9th grade to the 12th grade he would walk one mile and a half to come to high school in my village, Kafr Yasif. The title of his poem is:

“Think of Others”

*As you prepare your breakfast, think of others*

*(do not forget the pigeon’s food).*

*As you conduct your wars, think of others*

*(do not forget those who seek peace).*

*As you pay your water bill, think of others*

*(those who are nursed by clouds).*

*As you return home, to your home, think of others*

*(do not forget the people of the camps).*

*As you sleep and count the stars, think of others*

*(those who have nowhere to sleep).*

*As you liberate yourself in metaphor, think of others*

*(those who have lost the right to speak).*

*As you think of others far away, think of yourself*

*(say: “If only I were a candle in the dark”).*

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## **Invocation, Rev. Fahed AbuAkel**

God of Justice, God of Peace. God of Reconciliation, and God of Love: Thank you for the leadership of Rev. Munther Isaac in Bethlehem, Palestine and Brother Shane Claiborne in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and for our moderator, Karlene Griffiths Sekou; and, for each one of us to listen to the message and the challenge of the message.

When we leave this webinar, help us to put on some shoes and begin walking, speaking, praying and learning how to be advocates for justice and peace in Gaza and the Holy Land and the whole world.

Help each one of us realize the U.S.A. is in the middle of all of this oppression and injustice in Palestine. Help us to connect with our two Senators, with our Representative, with our President, and the Secretary of State, that our continuous support of Israel's ethnic lensing and genocide is wrong and must stop, because our government is using our tax dollars to help Israel murder and injure Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

God of Justice: Help us to learn that your ways are not our ways. In the Hebrew Scriptures, we learn about the brothers of Joseph and how they put their younger brother in the well to get rid of him. We read of how you sent the Egyptian caravan who saved him and took him to Egypt and that Joseph became an official in the government of Egypt. And when his brothers came from Palestine seeking food, they discovered that their brother Joseph is alive, and he is in charge. As Joseph discovered that they were afraid, he said to them, "You meant it for evil but God turned it around for good."

God of Mercy: Help us to imagine how small Gaza is, at 25 miles long and 7 to 12 miles in width. That means it is smaller than Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The small Palestinian town of 2.3 million Palestinians, who came from 63 villages in 1948, when they experienced that First Nakba, that pain and suffering, and now they experience the second Nakba. But now, we, the whole world, see through the television screens and social media, we can see their suffering and pain and destruction. Open our eyes, oh God, and forgive us because we are still silent about the Palestinian people's pain, suffering, debt, hunger and starvation. In the last 6 months the whole world began to witness what has been happening for the last 100 years, showing the brutality of the Israeli military occupation and our US support for the ethno-zionist settler-colonial state.

God of Mercy and Love: We pray for the Palestinian people who are suffering, but we never see their pain.

God of Love: We pray for the relatives of the more than 40,000 murdered in Gaza by the Israeli military, the majority being children and women.

God of Forgiveness: Forgive us and forgive our churches for our silence.

God of Love: We pray for more than 80,000 Palestinians in Gaza who are injured, the majority being children and women. But there are no hospitals to take care of them.

God of Love: Forgive our silence when we witness the removal by force of 1,700,000 Palestinians from the north to the south, now taking refuge in Rafa. And we are still silent as a church and a world community.

God of Justice and Mercy: We are asking tough questions about the Israeli military's brutality and actions in Gaza and the West Bank. Why destroy most of the Palestinian hospitals? Why destroy most of the homes of Gaza? Why destroy most of the medical clinics? Why murder more than 250 medical doctors, nurses and health professionals. Why murder more than 140 journalists, who report the truth about that reality?

God of Miracles: We pray for Israel and the US. They meant it for evil. But some way and somehow, through their war and the killing and injuring Palestinians, you opened our eyes in six months to more than 75 years of suffering.

So, Loving God: We thank you for our American young women and men in our colleges. Help us to pray for them daily, and help us to support them daily.

God of Truth: Help us to remember the importance of the prophetic message of these beloved young college students, that they already have been on record, saying they "I am in!" Amen.

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### **Benediction, by Rev. Alex Awad**

Mighty God, mighty God, we come to you with humility. We come to you with repentance.

God, forgive us for our shortcomings. Forgive us, forgive the Church in the United States and around the world for not standing with the oppressed in Gaza. Forgive us for steering away from the teachings of our Master, Jesus Christ.

And Lord, help all of us who have listened to our distinguished guests. Help us to take the prophetic message into our hearts. And may we double and double our efforts to stand with peace and with justice. In the name of Christ I pray. Amen.