

# *New Hope for Palestine, the Middle East & the World*

## *An Advent Plea from our Sisters & Brothers in the Land of Jesus' birth*

[Excerpted from Kairos Palestine's *Christmas Alert*. For the full meditation: [kairospalestine.ps/images/kairos-palestine-christmas-alert-2018.pdf](http://kairospalestine.ps/images/kairos-palestine-christmas-alert-2018.pdf).]

The birth of every baby is a new beginning, the beginning of a new life. The birth of a baby is a sign from God that God has not yet tired of us, that God still believes in us, and in the good that God bestows upon us despite our sins and weaknesses. The birth of Jesus Christ is a new beginning and a new hope, not just for a family or a people but for all humanity.



In a world dominated by oppression and violence, we urgently look forward to the light to come, the light of justice and peace. In a world dominated by the powers of darkness, unseen powers control the destiny of nations by extracting money under the guise of an open

market economy. We need light to disburse the darkness and announce the coming of a new dawn.

In the context of the painful reality in our world today, we understand the meaning and power of the birth of Christ as a light for nations, a new dawn without sunset, a new hope that overcomes hopelessness and surrender.

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; for those living in the land of deep darkness, a light has dawned.” (Isaiah 9:2)

Fr. Jamal Khader is a priest at the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, a professor of theology, and one of the co-authors of the *Kairos Palestine Document*.

## *The Fourth Sunday of Advent*

### **A Light in the Darkness**

The birth of Jesus the Christ in an insignificant little town was a milestone for history, a special moment, a “Kairos” that would bring unimaginable changes into the world. For those first believers who accepted the Incarnation as the expression of God’s unlimited love for humanity, the babe born in a poor manger was good news of joy for all the people, to bring peace on earth among humanity and glory to God in the highest, as announced by the angels to the shepherds keeping watch over their flock (Luke 2:10, 12).

Because Jesus had experienced life under Roman occupation, indigenous Palestinian Christians can easily relate to that Savior, especially amidst our

growing despair because of the increasing inhuman measures imposed on us that not only deprive us of our basic human, national and social rights but also trample upon our dignity and deny our humanity.

When I read the Nazareth declaration of Jesus in Luke 4:18-19 about the way of life that brings good news to the poor, release to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and to let the oppressed go free, I see that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, upholding the same principles, could be the mechanism to defend and safeguard all oppressed people. A light in today’s darkness.

When individuals, communities and governments realize that we will not be pulled down by hatred and dehumanization of our brothers and sisters, we will provide a light in the darkness and the star of Bethlehem will keep shining.

Nora Arsenian Carmi, a Palestinian activist of Armenian descent, represents the State of Palestine in the World Day of Prayer Movement.

**Reflect:** What are “the things that make for peace”? In your life, in your community, in your nation, in the world?

**Pray:** God Who Hears the Cries of the Oppressed, I pray for all who suffer the ongoing, seemingly never-ending consequences of colonialization and occupation. Visit them this holy season with the light of your love. Move the faithful in churches, synagogues and mosques to be that light in practical and transforming ways. In the name of the One who kept faith under occupation, amen.

**Act:** Begin planning to participate in an alternative tour to Palestine and Israel, during which you’ll visit the holy sites and meet with Muslims, Jews and Christians who are working for a just and lasting peace.

“Hope within us means first and foremost our faith in God and secondly our expectation, despite everything, for a better future. Thirdly, it means not chasing after illusions. We realize that release is not close at hand. Hope is the capacity to see God in the midst of trouble, and to be co-workers with the Holy Spirit who is dwelling in us. From this vision derives the strength to be steadfast, remain firm and work to change the reality in which we find ourselves. Hope means not giving in to evil but rather standing up to it and continuing to resist it. We see nothing in the present or future except ruin and destruction. We see the upper hand of the strong, the growing orientation towards a racist separation and the imposition of laws that deny our existence and our dignity. We see confusion and division in the Palestinian position. If, despite all this, we do resist this reality today and work hard, perhaps the destruction that looms on the horizon may not come upon us.

Kairos Palestine Document: A Moment of Truth  
Chapter 3.2