

A Prayer of Solidarity with the Dominican Family in Iraq

Call to Prayer: We remember our Iraqi Dominican Family and our wider Iraqi Family who were forcibly displaced by ISIS one year ago on August 6, 2014. Since that time the Sisters and Friars, even in their exile, are faithful to the Dominican Mission of preaching the Gospel of hope. They are present to the refugees, they are teaching in centers for study of theology, they are opening schools for refugee children and medical clinics. In so many ways they are present to all in need. Please pray with and for them, using the Psalms & scriptures they pray for their deliverance from this situation of injustice.

Opening Prayer (All):

O God, by your name save us, by your strength defend our cause.

O God hear our prayer and listen to the words of our mouths.

There are those who have risen against us and seek to take our lives.

We wonder if they keep You before them. Amen (based on Psalm 54: 3-5)

Moment of Silence.



Psalm 22: The Psalm of the Suffering Servant

My God, my God, why have you deserted me?
Why are you so far from delivering me and from
the words that I groan! I call all day, but You do
not answer. All night long I call and cannot rest.

*Yet, Holy One, in you our ancestors trusted;
They trusted you and you rescued them.
They called to you for help and they were saved.
They never trusted you in vain.*

We are reproached and despised by many
Who scorn us and laugh at us.
They sneer and shake their heads at us saying,
“Trust in the Lord. Let God who delights in
them, deliver them!”

*But you are the One who took me out of the
womb;
Placed me on your lap from my birth,
From my mother’s womb you have been my
God. Do not stand aside; trouble is near.
O God my help, hasten to my aid.*

O God our strength, come quickly to our help.
Save us from the lion’s mouth; our souls from
the horns of the wild bull. Then will we proclaim
your name to the assembly In the midst of
everyone, we will proclaim you.

*For you have not despised or disdained us in our
affliction You have not hidden your face from us.
When we cried out you heard us; you answered
when we called.*

Glory to you....

Reading: Ezekiel: 37: 1-4 *** Pause for a minute of silence.**

Reading: From Letter of Sr. Maria Hanna's, OP August, 8, 2014. (Assign voices to parts of the letter)

In between sections of reading, Refrain from Romans 8:35 & 37:

What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or the sword? No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through Christ who loved us.

Dear Sisters, Brothers and Friends,

You might be surprised that we are writing this letter so soon since you received the last one. But events are happening so quickly here, shocking everybody because of its brutality and cruelty.



On the seventh of August we gradually started to understand that the Peshmerga, who were supposed to protect Karakosh, were pulling out, leaving the town unprotected. At the same time, ISIS started to get closer to Karakosh and the residents started to leave the town. As a community, in no time we were to prepare to leave; we took the least with us unaware of what to take and unable to comprehend what was really happening. We were not alone in this, other towns shared the same horror. Christians from fifteen villages among them, Karamles, Bartela, Bashiqa, Telkaif, Baqofa, Batnaya, Telusquf were forced to leave their homes because ISIS was advancing. Our sisters also left their convents in these towns. In Telkaif, while a young man (Lugin) and a young priest were trying to help a lady who was not able to leave on her own, [the young man] was shot and killed by the ISIS.

Refrain from Romans- all

Our exodus started at 11:30 pm, and before that we decided to pray and have the Holy Communion so that if ISIS entered the house, it will not be defiled. But at the last minute, we decided to leave one piece in the tabernacle praying it will protect the house and the town.

When we arrived to the intersection of Mosul-Erbil, we were shocked to see a huge mess of cars driving very chaotically to Erbil. The view was beyond describing, as words cannot fully capture it. Men, pregnant women, children, handicap[ed] people and elderly were moving toward Erbil. There were Christians, Muslims Shiites, Yazidis and Shabak; some people were on foot, some were riding [pick up trucks] lorry trucks, and motorcycles. What we saw was unbearable; people were suffering for no reason but because of their sect, religion and race. We felt like we were in a nightmare wishing that someone would waken us up or that when the sun comes out it will be all over. But it was not the case; we were actually living a hard reality. It usually takes an hour and 15 minutes to drive from Karakosh to Erbil, but the day before yesterday, it took us 10 hours.

Upon arriving in Erbil, we saw a big number of people from doomed towns that we mentioned above; there were a lot of people in the streets in the heat of summer sun, with temperature rising over 45 degrees Celsius (113 Fahrenheit), waiting to find a place to stay. Many famil[ies] welcomed people in their homes and churches but still so many people are staying in parks even in streets and under every

tree for shading. These people are way more than Erbil can house, neither can the church meet their needs. We also learned that there were about a hundred people left in Karakosh who decided not to leave and we learned from them that the ISIS entered and took some houses as a center for them. They also walked in the street saying Muslim prayer “Allahu Akbar.”

Refrain from Romans-all

We cannot [know] what will happen, or until when people will stay like this, nor what the ISIS will do to our towns, nor if we will ever be able to get back home. Everything is so unclear. The situation is extremely difficult. For the time being people have some money to support themselves, but no one knows how long they will endure with the little they have.

As for the safety, Erbil is a Kurdish city and most refugees are staying in Ankawa which is a Christian suburb and protected by Peshmerga. It is hard for people to believe that even this city is safe. That’s why they are thinking more and more to leave the whole country.

You may ask what the world can do for us. We would say, stop the blood, stop the oppression, and stop the violence. We are human beings here; stop making us targets for your weapons. The world needs to stand as one to protect minorities against the evil and injustice. People want to live [a] normal life in peace and dignity. Please help us out to stop the evil.

--Dominican Sisters of Saint Catherine of Siena –Iraq

Refrain from Romans-all

Time of Contemplative Silence (5 to 15 minutes)

Sharing & Reflection - depending upon those gathered this may be in large or small groups

Petitions: Response from Maria’s letter

Action Step: Post card (take time to complete this action then conclude with closing prayer.)



Closing Prayer (all):

God, you are our helper and sustain all life. Turn around the actions of terror in Iraq and in all places. We offer you our lives, your most generous gift, and praise your name, for you rescue all of us from every trouble, so that those who seek to harm us may know you are the Holy One. Amen (based on Psalm 54: 6-9)