

A Prayer for Peace in Israel and Palestine

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Commentary Global Nonviolence and Peace

By Rose Marie Berger



A rescuer reacts as he works with others to remove Palestinians from under the rubble of a house destroyed in Israeli strikes, in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on Oct. 9, 2023. REUTERS/Ibraheem Abu Mustafa

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*“They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain...” —Isaiah 11:9*

God of Comfort,

send your Spirit to encompass all those whose lives
are torn apart by violence and death in Israel and Palestine.

You are the Advocate of the oppressed
and the One whose eye is on the sparrow.

Let arms reach out in healing, rather than aggression.

Let hearts mourn rather than militarize.

God of Justice,

give strength to those whose long work for a just peace
might seem fruitless now. Strengthen their resolve.

Do not let them feel alone. Show us how to support their work
and bolster their courage. Guide religious leaders to model
unity and reconciliation across lines of division.

Guide political leaders to listen with their hearts as they seek peace and pursue it.

Help all people choose the rigorous path of just peace and disavow violence.

God of Love,

we lift up Palestine and Israel — its people, its land, its creatures.

War is a monster that consumes everything in its path.

Peace is a gift shared at meals of memory with Christians, Muslims, and Jews.

Let us burn incense, not children. Let us break bread, not bodies.

Let us plant olive groves, not cemeteries.

We beg for love and compassion to prevail

on all your holy mountains.

God of Hope,

we lift up the cities of the region: Gaza City and Tel Aviv,

Ramallah and Ashkelon, Deir El Balah and Sderot,

so long divided, yet so filled with life and creativity.

Come again to breathe peace on your peoples

that all may recognize you.

God of Mercy,

even now work on the hearts of combatants

to choose life over death, reconciliation over retaliation,

restoration over destruction. Help us resist antisemitism in all its forms,

especially in our own churches. All people, Israelis and Palestinians,

deserve to live in peace and unafraid, with a right to determine

their future together.

God of the Nations,

let not one more child or elder be sacrificed on altars of political expediency.

Keep safe all people from unjust leaders who would exploit

vulnerability for their own distorted ends.

Give wise discernment to those making decisions to pursue peace.

Provide them insight into fostering well-being, freedom, and thriving for all.

Teach all of us to resolve injustices with righteousness, not rockets.

Guard our hearts against retaliation, and give us hearts for love alone.

Strengthen our faith in you, O God of All Flesh,

even when we don't have clear answers,

so that we may still offer ourselves nonviolently

for the cause of peace.

Amen.

“God of Justice ... Help all people choose the rigorous path of just peace and disavow violence.”



Rose Marie Berger

Rose Marie Berger, author of *Bending the Arch: Poems*, is a senior editor of *Sojourners* magazine.

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