

Sabeel Easter Message



30 March 2010

According to the Gospel of John, Jesus witnessed to the truth before religious and political leaders prior to his crucifixion and death. Two statements stand out from that encounter: To the guard that struck Jesus on the face before the high priest Annas, Jesus replied, “If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?” (18:23); and to the Roman Governor Pilate, Jesus said, “...For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice” (18:37).

In the history of the Israel/Palestine conflict, the Israeli establishment has successfully manipulated the truth, distorted the facts, and fabricated myths about the origins of the conflict and the reality of life under occupation. Israel then fed this propaganda to people around the world. Falsehood has been sold as truth.

Recently, some world leaders have been discovering the extent of Israeli manipulation. Could we be approaching a decisive time in the conflict when the truth, the reality, and the facts are becoming so transparent they cannot be ignored anymore? The foundations of injustice and oppression are shaking. It is time for all of us to stand up and be courageous witnesses to truth and justice which can be the bases for a genuine peace.

In the Passion narrative, Jesus challenges those who would ignore or suppress the truth and stands firm in his witness and commitment to the truth. It is an important lesson for our political and religious leaders. It is equally a message for all of us who continue to witness and to confront the reality of the injustice and oppression of the Israeli occupation. To speak truth to power is the heritage of all faithful believers.

At this Easter season, inspired by our risen and living Christ, let us pray for courage: courage to witness to truth and courage to work for its vindication in the ending of the occupation and the establishment of a just peace that will embrace all the people of our land.

The truth will set us free.

Happy Easter to all

Naim Ateek
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