

# LENTENSTUDY

2012



These holding crosses are available from PalCraftaid [www.palcraftaid.org](http://www.palcraftaid.org)

## The Way of the Cross in Mark's Gospel

By Rev. Elizabeth B. Knott

# THE WAY OF THE CROSS IN MARK'S GOSPEL

‘Take up your cross and follow me.’ What does that mean for 21st century Christians? In this Lenten study we will listen to and reflect upon the directive from Jesus as recorded in the Gospel of Mark. We will seek to discover the environment of the time and the confrontations that led to Jesus’ crucifixion.

This journey through Lent with the Living Word, Jesus Christ, will be a spiritual adventure. We will learn what Jesus was very passionate about. Yes, so passionate that he was willing to be crucified. We will seek to know why Jesus was so willing to risk all.

## Suggestions for Study

First begin with some quiet time in getting centered. You may wish to get an olive wood holding cross as pictured on the cover from Pal Craftaid. Hold it between your hands and feel it. This cross was made by 4th generation Palestinian Christian artisans in Bethlehem. Say a prayer, such as: “Companion for my journey, help me to appreciate more deeply the way of your cross,” or “Jesus, give me your passion.” Make it your prayer - your desire! Spend time reading the selected passages. Make your own observations! Reflect on the suggested questions; add your own. Note that you have scripture passages and questions for an entire week during this seven-week study. It is critical for you to make contemporary comparisons and analysis both as a citizen of U.S.A. and citizen of the global community with a particular focus on Jesus’ land. Come with anticipation that the Spirit will move in and through you during this special Lenten time.

# THE WAY OF THE CROSS IN MARK'S GOSPEL

## THE ENVIRONMENT OF JESUS' TIME

The Jews were under Roman occupation. Caesar Augustus was not only Emperor but referred to and worshipped as son of God, the divine one, savior and lord by the populous. He ruled until 14 BCE.

Conditions prevalent in the first century:

- two-class agrarian society of a few rich who ruled and the majority poor who served the needs of the rich;
- the priests, rabbis and scribes collaborated with the Roman domination system by collecting the taxes for Rome in the temple from the peasant population.

The temple became the focal point of the domination system:

- rule by a few, economic exploitation and legitimization by the religious authorities;
- priests were also land owners and rich;
- wealth was gained by obtaining land and taxes.

### I. Galilean Ministry

Week One:	Mark 1-3	Conflict Stories & Parables
Week Two:	Mark 4-5	Parables & Miracles
Week Three:	Mark 6-8:21	Teaching, Miracles & Conflict

### II. Journey to Jerusalem from Galilee

Week Four	Mark 8:22-10:52	Healings & Teaching
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### III. The Last Week in Jerusalem

Week Five:	Mark 11-12	Sunday - Tuesday
Week Six:	Mark 13-14	Wednesday & Thursday
Week Seven:	Mark 15-16	Friday - Sunday

# THE WAY OF THE CROSS IN MARK'S GOSPEL

## WEEK 1:

### Conflict Stories and Parables

#### Mark 1-3

Mark begins with the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah that God would send one to prepare the way, and we are introduced immediately to John the Baptist. Jesus arrives on the scene from Nazareth and is baptized by John the Baptist. Jesus begins his ministry.

At the outset Jesus proclaims that "the Kingdom of God has arrived. You must change your hearts and minds and believe the good news." 1:15, This is The Message and The Purpose.

Query, Reflection and Add Your Questions:

1. Why do you think Jesus uses the terminology "Kingdom of God?"
2. If you were to try to change the world --change people's way of being and doing, how would you go about it? Would you choose cities or the countryside? Why?
3. Notice how various people and groups respond to Jesus' teaching. What do they say about him?
4. Do you think it is a wise strategy by Jesus to go to the synagogues to preach and teach? Why or why not?
5. If you wanted to cause a revolution - to change the world - what kind of people would you invite on your team? What do you think of the ones that Jesus chose?
6. Begin to track Mark's theme of The Way of the Lord. Where did it lead Jesus, and where does it lead the followers of Jesus today?

## WEEK 2:

### Parables and Miracles

#### Mark 4-5

Mark continues the Galilean journey of teaching and miracles. Mark gives insight into Jesus by telling us that he taught by parables, and this was his common approach. (4:1-2). Marcus Borg helps us understand parables when he says:

- parables are stories--narratives where something happens;
- they are made-up stories and not necessarily factual; at the time they are "meaningful and meaning-filled, truthful and truth-filled. Their truth does not depend on factuality; rather they are about meaning, insight, seeing." (GOM, p.37)
- "...the purpose of parables is to initiate thought by inviting the hearer of the parable into the story." (GOM, p.38)

Query, Reflection and Add Your Questions:

1. Observe how Jesus interacts with people – what do you learn about Jesus from his interactions?
2. What kind of storm will create fear in you?
3. Are you surprised that Jesus shows no fear of the Gerasene man who, according to Jewish law, is unclean because he lives among the tombs and is possessed?
4. Because of the faith of a father, a young girl is healed and faith of a woman is healed - revived to health. Begin to define faith.
5. Let your imagination wander to participate in the overwhelming joy of the family of the little girl.
6. Why do you think Jesus tells the parents to be silent about what has transpired?

# THE WAY OF THE CROSS IN MARK'S GOSPEL

## WEEK 3:

### Rejection, Miracles and Conflict

#### Mark 6:1-8:21

Mark continues the Galilee ventures of Jesus bringing him to his home town of Nazareth. No banners flying "Yeah Jesus." Mark gives an extensive description of John the Baptist's demise and the likely results of truth speaking to power. Two more miracles Mark provides: feeding of the 5,000 and the disciples struggling on the lake to make it to land safely. Finally the religious leaders from Jerusalem confront Jesus.

Query, Reflection and Add Your Questions:

1. What do you make of the response of Nazareth to Jesus -- surprised or not surprised? Why are they offended?
2. When Mark says their lack of faith astonished Jesus, do you get the feel of shock?
3. What do you think of how little the disciples are allowed to take with them on their preaching / healing expedition? Remember no McDonald's falafel stands on those hilly, stony roads. What does this say about commitment?
4. Crowds follow Jesus to hear him teach; what do you make of his concern for the people being hungry?
5. In his encounter with the Pharisees and scribes, what kingdom value does Jesus reveal?
6. Are you surprised that a woman - a non-Jewish woman - changes the mind of Jesus??? Take note, there's hope!
7. Why do you think Jesus is so irritated with his disciples?

## II JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM FROM GALILEE

### WEEK 4:

#### Mark 8:22-10:52

Mark's story will now begin to pick up momentum as Jesus and his disciples head to Jerusalem and confrontations. This section is a connector to the Galilee ministry and the final destination of Jerusalem. Jesus asks an important personal question of his disciples, and he then sets forth what it means to follow him.

Query, Reflection and Add Your Questions:

1. "Who do you say that I am?" is a question posed to us as well as to those first disciples. The inquiry never grows too old. What does Peter's response mean? (vs.28-29)
2. What are Jesus' requirements of discipleship --of being a follower? (vs. 34-38)
3. What do you understand Jesus to mean that a follower "must take up his cross and follow him."? Threatening?
4. Are you aware of the price that Christians in the Middle East are paying to remain loyal to Jesus? In places like Palestine, Egypt, Iraq and Iran? If Christians are unaware of these situations, how can you help them become aware?
5. Do you get any sense of Jesus' call to discipleship in your congregation? If so, in what way(s)? If not, why? How do you feel about this?
6. Jesus says faith makes everything possible! Do you believe that? How do/will you put that into practice?

# THE WAY OF THE CROSS IN MARK'S GOSPEL

## III. THE LAST WEEK IN JERUSALEM

### WEEK 5

Sunday-Tuesday

Mark 11-12

Mark's finely detailed description of day-to-day and even hour-to-hour events in the last week of Jesus' earthly life is evidence of its import to the early Christian community. On Sunday, the beginning of the week of Passover, Jesus and his followers of "the way" arrive in Jerusalem. There is a crush of people in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, the Jewish festival remembering the exodus from Egypt. Mark does not mention the military procession of the Roman governor Pontius Pilate to insure law and order during the festivities in Jerusalem. Two processions were taking place, an imperial procession from the west and a peasant procession from the east.

Query, Reflection and Add Your Questions:

1. What are the distinct differences between the two processions into Jerusalem?
2. What is the symbolism in Jesus' entry into Jerusalem?
3. Jerusalem was the seat of the Roman domination system: political oppression (rule by few), economic exploitation and religious legitimization. (LW, p. 4-5) The temple mediated both God's presence and forgiveness. Through the sacrifice of animals forgiveness was given. The Temple was a collaborator with Rome in collecting taxes. In what ways was the Temple system threatened by Jesus?
4. In what ways is the current situation for Palestinians in Jerusalem similar to that of Jews living under Roman occupation in Jesus' time?
5. What are the conflicts between Jesus and the authorities, and are they prevalent issues today? Identify.
6. Is there a nationwide and church-wide blindness today to poverty, injustice and militarism that needs Jesus' healing? Explain.
7. Sacrifice was the way individuals created, maintained and restored good relations with their deity. The sacrifice was either a gift or a meal. "Offerers never thought to make the animal suffer, or that the greatest sacrifice was one in which the animal suffered lengthily and terribly."(TLW p.37) In light of this understanding, how do you view the substitutionary theory of Jesus' suffering and dying on the cross for our sins? What does Mark say about this?
8. In reading Mark, pay close attention to whom he identifies as being responsible for Jesus' death sentence. Does this seem like part of a divine plan to pay for the sins of the world or is there another cause for Jesus' death?
9. What are the entrapments used by the religious groups to catch Jesus? What do you think of the ways in which he maneuvers around the entrapments?

# THE WAY OF THE CROSS IN MARK'S GOSPEL

## WEEK 6

Wednesday – Thursday

Mark 13-14

Mark moves from inside the Temple to the outside where one of his disciples becomes fascinated by the huge size of the stones used to construct the building. Josephus reports that the stones were 68 feet long, 9 feet high and 8 feet wide. (TLW, p.75). It was assumed to be indestructible. Jesus pronounces judgment against the Temple and its destruction for being a den of robbers. The destruction forthcoming includes Jerusalem. Mark moves us from the Temple to the Mt. of Olives where there is a panoramic view of the city and the Temple.

Query, Reflection and Add Your Questions:

1. The fourth day in Jerusalem - Why did the authorities want to silence Jesus?
2. What might be the motives of Judas to betray Jesus? Do you think that he believed he had a worthy cause?
3. Do you think that the unnamed woman who anoints Jesus in Simon the leper's home illustrates a model of leadership? Why so many accolades from Jesus about her?
4. Characterize the events of this night...betrayal, denial etc. During your lifetime, how many of these events have you actively participated in, i.e. betrayal, denial...?
5. Note the power of collaboration between the Jewish religious establishment and the Roman domination system. What is it about Jesus that stirred up their hostility toward him?
6. Are there ways in which the church collaborates with our government in its national and foreign policies?
7. Describe Jesus' responses to his accusers? What would you expect his responses to be? What does this tell you about Jesus?

# THE WAY OF THE CROSS IN MARK'S GOSPEL

## CONTEMPORARY STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN JESUS' HOMETLAND OF PALESTINE

### WEEK 7

#### Friday and Saturday

The Via Dolorosa is the Way of Suffering! Following, you will view photographs of Palestinian life today where there is much suffering, pain, violence and fear.

Study a photo as it relates to a contemporary way of the cross – a place of unwarranted suffering of the innocent.

Read the information regarding the photo.  
Reflect, journal and pray!

On Friday and/or Saturday, you may want to invite some friends in to share in reflecting on the contemporary ways of the cross in Palestine.

- Spend time in silence and reflection
- Share your thoughts and feelings about the contemporary way of the cross in Palestine
- Join in a prayer time
- Join in a simple potluck meal and fellowship
- You may want to explore together where the contemporary Via Dolorosa in the global community and in U.S.A. are.
- The Question and suggested process: Create a support community and identify one of the contemporary ways of the cross where you want to help bring about change. Identify steps to begin the change process. Share assignments and ways to be accountable to one another.

### THE TRADITIONAL STATIONS OF THE CROSS

First Station	Jesus is condemned to die
Second Station	Jesus carries his cross
Third Station	Jesus falls the first time
Fourth Station	Jesus meets his mother
Fifth Station	Simon of Cyrene carries the cross of Jesus
Sixth Station	Veronica wipes Jesus' face
Seventh Station	Jesus falls the second time
Eighth Station	Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
Ninth Station	Jesus falls the third time
Tenth Station	Jesus is stripped
Eleventh Station	Jesus is nailed to the cross
Twelfth Station	Jesus dies on the cross
Thirteenth Station	Jesus is taken down from the cross
Fourteenth Station	Jesus is laid in the tomb and after the third day is raised from the dead

From Contemporary Way of the Cross  
--A Liturgical Journey along the Palestinian Via Dolorosa,  
Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center,  
Jerusalem, 2005, page 3.



# THE WAY OF THE CROSS IN MARK'S GOSPEL

## CONTEMPORARY STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN JESUS' HOMETLAND OF PALESTINE

### WEEK 7

#### Friday through Saturday

Read the information regarding the photo.  
Reflect, journal and pray!

### STATION ONE Aida Refugee Camp

The Palestinian refugee crisis began with the 1948 creation of the State of Israel.

Registered refugees:

- West Bank 788,108
- Gaza 1,122,569
- Syria 496,000
- Jordan 2,000,000 +
- Lebanon 455,000

Jesus carried the weight of his cross. The weight of the cross borne by the Palestinians falls heaviest on the refugees.



Wall art inside Aida Refugee Camp

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CONTEMPORARY STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN JESUS' HOMETLAND OF PALESTINE

**WEEK 7**  
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## STATION TWO The Separation Barrier

The Separation Barrier, built mostly inside the West Bank, impairs Palestinian movement. There are 73 checkpoints and gates along the Barrier. 38 gates are between a Palestinian farmer and his fields.

The farmer needs a special permit and prior coordination with the Civil Administration to pass through. Israel is restricting permits. To pass the Barrier, a Palestinian has to show an identity card or a crossing permit.



# THE WAY OF THE CROSS IN MARK'S GOSPEL

## CONTEMPORARY STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN JESUS' HOMETLAND OF PALESTINE

### WEEK 7 Friday through Saturday

Read the information regarding the photo.  
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### STATION THREE Checkpoints

Within the West Bank there are 99 Fixed checkpoints.

Hundreds of flying check-points.  
Sometimes as many as 310 monthly.

At times Israel prohibits youth and men, usually 16-35 years old, from crossing checkpoints.

Israel prohibits private Palestinian vehicles unless the driver has a permit from moving within the West Bank. They restrict almost all Palestinians from entering East Jerusalem, and the Jordan Valley.

This prevents movement for work, school, medical care, visiting relatives, or moving farm produce.

Israel prevents travel between the West Bank and Gaza in almost all cases.

Israel makes it difficult for Palestinians to enter Israel or to travel abroad.



# THE WAY OF THE CROSS IN MARK'S GOSPEL

## CONTEMPORARY STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN JESUS' HOMETLAND OF PALESTINE

### WEEK 7

#### Friday through Saturday

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### STATION FOUR Family Reunification

From 1967 until 2002 Israeli citizens married to residents of the Occupied Territories could apply and obtain a legal status in Israel for their spouse. In 2002 the government froze the handling of applications.

Now, statute prohibits Israelis married to residents of the Occupied Territories to live with their spouses in Israel. Any child of these marriages born in the Occupied Territories cannot be registered as a resident of Israel.

The statute severely impairs family life for tens of thousands of persons. If the couple decides to live in the Occupied Territories the Israeli spouse is considered a lawbreaker. Military commanders have forbidden Israelis to enter Area A.

The state argues that the law is needed for security reasons.

The real reason, Israel is seeking to prevent the further increase of the Arab population in Israel in order to preserve the Jewish character of the state.



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CONTEMPORARY STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN JESUS' HOMETLAND OF PALESTINE

**WEEK 7**  
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Reflect, journal and pray!

STATION FIVE **Gaza**



Operation Cast Lead  
The slaughter of the Innocent  
2008- 2009

The Gaza strip is the most densely populated area in the world. Gaza is surrounded by a security zone, a no man's land. Today farmers trying to farm near the line are shot at regularly by Israel Defense Forces.

Checkpoints are brutal. Prior to 2000 Gazans worked in Israel. Almost no permits are issued today for Gazans to work in Israel.



# THE WAY OF THE CROSS IN MARK'S GOSPEL

## CONTEMPORARY STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN JESUS' HOMETLAND OF PALESTINE

**WEEK 7**  
**Friday through Saturday**

Read the information regarding the photo.  
Reflect, journal and pray!

### STATION SIX **Settlers and Settlements**

Through the construction of settlement rings around Palestinian- inhabited and controlled areas, Israel effectively arrests Palestinian economic and territorial growth.

The Palestinian population faces violence and abuse from settlers.

The settler abuse is now also directed at Jews who do not agree with their rigid standards of dress.

Settlers have contaminated Palestinian water sources and set poison out where Palestinian sheep graze.



# THE WAY OF THE CROSS IN MARK'S GOSPEL

## CONTEMPORARY STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN JESUS' HOMETOWN OF PALESTINE

### WEEK 7

#### Friday through Saturday

Read the information regarding the photo.  
Reflect, journal and pray!

### STATION SEVEN Home Demolitions

There are 4 reasons given for home demolitions:

- Punitive - punishment for actions of people associated with the house. 8.5%
- Administrative - for lack of a building permit, or close to a military base, or near a road for settlers. 26%
- Land clearing operation/ military demolition - 65.5% Includes to achieve a military goal or kill wanted persons as a part of Israel's extra judicial executions.
- Undefined demolitions - From 1967 - 1982 Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions is still researching reasons. Includes all categories, majority being land clearing.

Since 1967 there have been 24,813 home demolitions. Since 1967 the Israelis have not granted any permits for Palestinians to build homes or add on to an already established home.

Between 2004 and 2011 392 homes, housing 1546 people of which 842 were minors, have been destroyed.



### STATION EIGHT Home Incursions

View [btselem.org](http://btselem.org) for the latest video of what the Israeli Defense Force is doing. In the middle of the night soldiers knock on the door of the homes of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. They are armed and they request the adult in the home to wake the children, identify them, present their identification number which they record. They then take photographs of the children aged 10 and over.

Home incursions have been happening since 1947, even before the State of Israel was ratified. In the 1990's IDF forces entered homes where women were giving birth, opened windows to the cold, thus endangering the baby and ignoring the women's need for privacy at that delicate time. Incursions happen often in the middle of the night, resulting in the arrest of men and young boys who can be held in administrative detention for an indefinite period without any charges for the action.

# THE WAY OF THE CROSS IN MARK'S GOSPEL

## CONTEMPORARY STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN JESUS' HOMETLAND OF PALESTINE

### WEEK 7

#### Friday through Saturday

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Reflect, journal and pray!

### STATION NINE **Bureaucratic Oppression**

Daily life as a Palestinian is marked by what sometimes seems like an endless web of paperwork and applications to acquire the necessary permits and identify documents to maintain a relatively "normal" life. Failure to obtain these documents can result in a permanent removal of their right to live and work in the place that may well have been their home for many years. The process, however, is made as difficult as possible and many people end up confused and worn down by the inadequate services dedicated to this aspect of life.

A tiny office dealing with birth certificates, marriage licenses, death certificates, ID cards and travel documents for 250,000 people is sometimes not open or can't address the requested help. With no alternative people must line up day after day.

Palestinians continue to pay municipal taxes, but even the most basic parts of civilized society are clearly under-resourced for Palestinians.



### STATION TEN **Olive Grove Elimination**

The olive tree has a special place in the heart of a Palestinian. For centuries it has provided oil for cooking and baking. It has been a source of income for the farmer and a source of wood for artisans who use the pruned branches from the trees for their craft.

In 2011, 3600 olive trees on Palestinians land were destroyed by Israeli bulldozers, or settlers. Since 2001, 548,000 olive trees have been destroyed. Sometimes mature olive trees are dug up and replanted in new Israeli settlements to "prove" the settlement is old. If well cared for olive trees have been known to last thousands of years.

Just recently settlers have taken to burning Palestinian agricultural land. This has resulted in the loss of 150 olive trees in the village of Burin, near Nablus, and 90 olive trees in Salfit. 5000 other trees were also lost.

Israeli bulldozers are uprooting olive groves in Beit Iksa village. Tens of fruit trees have been dug out.



# THE WAY OF THE CROSS IN MARK'S GOSPEL

CONTEMPORARY STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN JESUS' HOMETOWN OF PALESTINE

WEEK 7

Friday through Saturday

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STATION ELEVEN **Water Resources**



Israel's citizens, like those of developed countries worldwide, benefit year-round from unlimited running water to meet their household needs. On the other hand, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians suffer from a severe water shortage throughout the summer.

In the Occupied Territories there are 134 communities that are not connected to running water. This affects 2,212,262 people. There are only three communities where almost all are connected: Bethlehem, Ramallah, and Jericho. In Jerusalem (El Quds) 3% are not connected.

The water crisis in the Occupied Territories results not only from the restrictions Israel has placed on Palestinian residents, but also from Israel's minimal investment in water infrastructure. They didn't connect rural areas to running water and didn't maintain existing networks to prevent loss of water. This neglect causes a loss of one third of the water supply to the West Bank.

Palestinians lack water to bathe and Israelis have swimming pools.

# THE WAY OF THE CROSS IN MARK'S GOSPEL

## CONTEMPORARY STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN JESUS' HOMETLAND OF PALESTINE

### WEEK 7

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### STATION TWELVE Stress and Humiliation

The stress and humiliation caused by the occupation is well documented to be causing physical and psychological damage to the Palestinian people. There is a high incidence of chronic disease and high blood pressure which are considered to be aggravated by the stress of the occupation.

A young man was asked how he could accept the degradation at the checkpoints. He answered, "It's normal." When it was suggested that this should not be normal, he replied, "To tell you the truth I don't think about it. If I were to think about it, I would die."

A father of 5 children in school and one handicapped child was caught and beaten by the Israelis. He is unable to work and is afraid to leave the house.

A 22 year old boy was driving an old car to work. An Army jeep hit his car intentionally. He broke an arm and

a leg. The leg healed but the arm was broken in many places. He needs to go to Jerusalem to fix his arm but has not been granted a permit to enter Jerusalem.

If a woman works in the fields she can earn 20 shekels a day.(\$5) A man earns 30 shekels. (\$7.50) Yet the economy of Israel is expensive. Many products cost more than in the U.S.

If the spouse of an Israeli citizen chooses to live in Israel when he/ she does not have Israel citizenship that person lives in fear of discovery and punishment.

A wife from the Occupied Territories, married to an Israeli citizen had a baby. The Israeli government would not put her name on the birth certificate although she had permission to live in Jerusalem. If she should ever divorce her husband, she has no way to prove that the child is hers.



A Palestinian family standing amongst their belongings after their home was demolished the previous day.

# THE WAY OF THE CROSS IN MARK'S GOSPEL

## CONTEMPORARY STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN JESUS' HOMETLAND OF PALESTINE

**WEEK 7**  
**Friday through Saturday**

Read the information regarding the photo.  
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### STATION THIRTEEN Land Confiscation



On 29 Oct. 2011, Palestinian residents of Beit Ummar demonstrated on part of their land against theft of their lands. A B'Tselem volunteer documented settlers entering the security buffer strip surrounding the adjacent Carmei Tzur settlement, and throwing stones at the demonstrators. Soldiers at the scene did not try to stop the assault; instead, they removed the Palestinians by shooting tear gas and throwing stun grenades.

The Civil Administration has announced a plan to "relocate" the 27,000 Bedouins living in Area C in the West Bank. In Jan. 2012, some 2,300 Bedouins will be forcibly transferred to a site near the Abu Dis refuse dump, east of Jerusalem, in blatant contravention of international law, which prohibits the forced transfer of protected persons. The expulsion will advance the splitting up of the West Bank by enabling expansion of the Ma'ale Adummim settlement, exacerbating the injustice.

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### STATION FOURTEEN You Name it!

The United States gives Israel \$8 -10 million each day for military aid.

The United States is denying funds to United Nations' organizations because the UN allowed a vote on Palestinian statehood.

The United States is complicit in the maiming and killing of innocent women and children in Gaza through its military aid.

The United States is allowing Israel to continue to build settlements with no consequences for their action.



A Palestinian activist, confronts Israeli soldiers during a demonstration against the occupation and settlements, in the West Bank village of Nabi Saleh.

#### PRAYER

Loving God of all the earth, we pray for those who perpetrate injustices in the Holy Land, regardless of their motives; we pray that you will change their hearts and fill them with the spirit of mercy. Teach us all the pathways of peace and forgiveness.

Blessed Redeemer of all the earth, we pray for your church in the Middle East. Stand with your church and protect it from disintegration. May the women, men and children who are your body in the Middle East and who are the Temple of the Holy Spirit continue to shine forth with the light of your love, truth, grace and goodness upon all their neighbors.

Spirit of comfort whose glory covers the face of our earth, comfort the oppressed, give shelter to the homeless and let your peace dwell in every heart.

With thankful hearts we pray in the Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

from Contemporary Way of the Cross by Sabeel, p.33

# THE WAY OF THE CROSS IN MARK'S GOSPEL

## SUNDAY MORNING THE GREAT DISCOVERY Mark 16

Early in the morning carrying spices to anoint him, three women came to the tomb worrying how they would displace the stone that sealed the doorway to the tomb. Filled with fear and in shock, they ran away upon seeing that the tomb was empty. Though an angel instructs them to tell the disciples and Peter to meet Jesus in Galilee, Mark says that they said nothing to anyone. Matthew and Luke change the ending of Mark's story and add that the women did tell the disciples.

Unlike other gospel accounts, Mark does not report any appearances of the risen Jesus to his disciples. Mark's account is the shortest of all the Gospels and seems to end rather abruptly.

Suggest that you read the resurrection accounts by Matthew (28), Luke (24) and John (20-21).

Query, Reflection and Add Your Own Questions:

1. Why did the resurrection of Jesus become such a transformative event for the cowardly disciples?
2. Discipleship is a way of recognizing the suffering of the oppressed /marginalized and working to transform the domination system that thrives on dehumanizing persons. How will you join Jesus to help to bring change to the growing domination system in our country?
3. Speaking truth to power is an essential part of bringing kingdom values to the front, and it has consequences. Are you willing to be emboldened by the Spirit of Jesus to be a kingdom proclaimer - a speaker of truth to power?
4. What does Mark teach you about the difference between believing things about Jesus and following Jesus?
5. What do you learn from Jesus about dealing with evil and the sources of evil?
6. In the midst of an ongoing oppressive occupation, Palestinian Christians are hope-driven survivors. What are we as U.S. Christians? And you personally? What drives and motivates you?
7. What is your Christian responsibility toward Palestinian Christian and Muslim brothers and sisters? And wherever there is the evil of dehumanization and injustice?
8. What do you learn from Jesus about living and dying?
9. What are the ways in which the ethics of the Kingdom of God are being compromised by the Church and current Congress? Does it make any difference to you?
10. According to Mark, what is the Good News? What is it according to you? How are you going to share the Good News and be Good News with and for Jesus?

*He is Risen!  
Hallelujah!*

*Go and tell the others,  
And don't be Afraid!*

# THE WAY OF THE CROSS IN MARK'S GOSPEL

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to order call 800.524.2612 PDS # 2646609001 or search for item # on <http://store.pcusa.org>

## WEBSITES

***Pal Craftaid*** - [www.palcraftaid.org](http://www.palcraftaid.org)

A non-profit organization importing fair trade Palestinian olive wood sculptures and traditional needlework for sale at church and other events with profits returned to the Occupied Palestinian Territories to support women's and children's programs and agencies.

***Israel/Palestine Mission Network of the PC(USA) - IPMN*** - [www.TheIPMN.org](http://www.TheIPMN.org)

An organized group of Presbyterians seeking to demonstrate solidarity, educate about the facts on the ground, and change the conditions that erode the humanity of both Israelis and Palestinians, especially those who are living under occupation in East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza

***B'Tselem*** - [www.btselem.org](http://www.btselem.org)

The Israeli Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories

***ICHAD*** - [www.ichad.org](http://www.ichad.org)

Israeli Committee Against Home Demolition

***UNRWA*** - [www.unrwa.org](http://www.unrwa.org)

United Nations Relief and Works Agency

# THE WAY OF THE CROSS IN MARK'S GOSPEL

## **About the Author:**

Rev. Elizabeth Knott is a retired Presbyterian minister. In July of 1992 she participated in a seminar to Palestine-Israel which was co-sponsored by the Presbyterian Global Ministries and Peacemaking agencies. The seminar became an unexpected transformative venture sending her back 32 times to the Holy Land. In 1993 she founded the volunteer ministry of Pal Craftaid whose purpose has been to provide support, healing and hope to Palestinian individuals and families. Through the importing and selling of Palestinian sculpted olive wood and counted cross stitch needle work to congregations, over \$500,000 has been returned to various Palestinian organizations who offer critical life-sustaining ministries to those in desperate need.

Currently she is an active member of the Israel/Palestine Mission Network (IPMN) of PC(USA) and Des Moines Presbytery's Leadership Council and Social Justice Task Force.

## **Photographs**

Photographs by Connie DePond.

Photographs on pages 18 and 20 from ActiveStills.org

Photographs of Gaza sent from the Atfaluna Society for the Deaf in Gaza City, Atfaluna.net