

*“He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples.  
They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.  
Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.”*

Isaiah 2:4

## New Hope

**A**dvent is a time to turn toward Bethlehem and behold the occupants for whose sake the savior was born, those who still live under occupation, denied their freedom, dignity and independence. Advent calls all who espouse justice and peace to allow the people of Bethlehem to rejoice at Christmas by working for the restoration of their dignity, freedom and independence.



God is love, not a god of armies and wars, nor a god who orders one people to oppress another, nor a god that strips one people of their land and gives it to another. This is a season for refugees. Jesus took refuge in Egypt as a child when he escaped the oppression of the powerful of that time. Jesus walks today among the crowds of refugees; he walks with them and for them, teaching, healing, granting life and directing the attention of the strong to stop killing and displacing people. Jesus tells the leaders of the world to sheathe their swords and turn them into tools for life, as the prophet Isaiah said.

We are given new hope, despite the cruelty of human against human, regardless of wars and ongoing death and hatred in the land of God. Indeed, because death is commanding hearts and injustice is escalating, we need new light and hope to come from the hearts of all believers in the Christmas message. Then the joy of Christmas will be fully realized in Bethlehem, where God’s mystery still touches the Earth alongside human oppression and the pain of the oppressed.

*H.B. Patriarch Michel Sabbah is the Latin Patriarch Emeritus of Jerusalem and Co-Author of the Kairos Palestine Document. To read the full message, go to: [www.globalministries.org/kairos\\_palestine\\_announces\\_its\\_christmas\\_alert\\_2018](http://www.globalministries.org/kairos_palestine_announces_its_christmas_alert_2018)*

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