

# **Fr. Manuel Musallam, The "Palestinian" Arab Islamochristian Who Will Propagandize For The Jihad When He Greets The Pope In Gaza**

On a French television broadcast I recently saw Fr .Manuel Musallam, who lives in Gaza. He was bemoaning the state of Christians in Gaza, whose numbers have been so reduced. But he did not,, dared not, would not admit that Muslims as a matter of faith, following what is inculcated by the Qur'an and Sunna, treat Christians (and other non-Muslims) badly, often murderously badly. He can't do that. He, with his deceptively kindly face, his twinkly-eyed sweetness that so misleads, has been for his entire life an "Islamochristian," that is a Christian Arab who, in order to protect himself and his flock, has adopted, accented, deeply internalized, the Muslim world-view, and above all other parts of that world-view, the hatred for Israel and the tissue of nonsense and lies about the Jewish claim – historic, moral, legal – to the Land of Israel, and nonsense and lies, too, about the attempt by Israelis to protect themselves from the unending Jihad, military, economic, diplomatic – that is waged against them. Father Manuel Musallam sad that those Arabs who made life so difficult for Arab Christians like himself was that those same Christians, like himself, were those who could most effectively make the "Palestinian" case for them. In other words, he understood that no appeal to decency would work with the Muslims and, as his whole life has shown, the only way Christians might win a kind of begrudging and limited acceptance would be if they were "useful" in the Jihad against

Israel.

And then Father Manuel Musallam, he of the diminishing flock in Gaza, he of the kind furrowed face and twinkly eyes, sad that he looked forward to proving the worth of Christians to the Muslims by making their case when, this May, he meets Pope Francis in Gaza. That's his function: to lie and progandize and promote the Muslim war against the Jews, the Jihad against Israel, in order that he might, so he thinks, make Gaza safe for a handful of Christians. He chooses not to notice the Muslim war on Christians in Syria, in Iraq, in Lebanon, in Egypt, chooses to look away and not try, at this late point in his misdirected life, to undo the damage he has done to Christians (never mind the Jews of Israel) by misrepresenting the behavior, and ideology, of the Muslim Arabs among whom he lives. He cannot possibly arrive at the truth which Father Gabrel Naddaf arrived at, and understand that now, in the Middle East, the only sure safe haven for Christians is in Israel. How can he, at this point?

But the Israelis, if they could exhibit a small bit of sense, should publicize now, and not wait for Father Manuel Musalam to do whatever damage he can do when and if he meets Pope France, his views, and discuss, endlessly, the phenomenon of the "Islamochristian" of which he is the embodiment, and discuss, too, why it is that many Maronites, and to a slightly lesser extent Copts (especially when in the safety of the West) have managed not to become "islamochristians" and why it is that almost all "Palestinian Arab" Christians have been so fearfully intent on parrrotting the same line as the Muslims who surround and threaten them.

For a good introdduction to that quintesssential Islamochristian, Father Manuel Musallam, there is this sickening gush by Stuart Littlewood, the propangist for the Cause of, the Jihad for, Palestine:

**By Stuart Littlewood – London**

Fr Manuel Musallam recently retired at the age of 71 after serving as the parish priest of the Holy Family Church in Gaza for 14 years.

For most of that time the Israelis would not allow him to visit his family and friends in the West Bank. So, in spite of failing health, he soldiered on through the devastating siege and the murderous blitzkrieg.

I was privileged to meet a couple of years ago and I just love the way this man speaks out. He doesn't mince words. He tells it the way it is, with truth and style.

Retirement hasn't silenced him or dimmed his perceptions.

This Easter he's concerned, as always, about the Occupation and how it robs those in the Holy Land of Easter's message of hope and joy.

"We Christians of Palestine have been under Occupation for many long years. We've been suffering with bitterness being kept away from the Holy Sites. We've been denied our right to worship in Jerusalem. Many Christian generations have never been able to reach Jerusalem to visit its holy places.

"The Occupation has been continuously imposing unlawful obstacles. This year, we are confronted by the Israeli Apartheid Separation Wall, checkpoints, and roadblocks guarded by Israeli soldiers denying us movement and access to Jerusalem.

"All these measures not only suffocate the Palestinian people, but also asphyxiate peace in Israel and Palestine."

Fr Manuel explains how Palestinians are denied the freedom to worship as and where they please, even at Easter. In particular they are prevented from going into Jerusalem. The Zionist claim that Palestine was 'a land without a people for a people without a land' has had a disastrous impact on the Palestinians. "It does not mean that Jerusalem is without a people, but rather it should be evacuated to be handed over to another people. David Ben Gurion himself articulated the plan in 1937 when he declared: 'We must expel Arabs and take their places.'

"Every stone built in the Apartheid Wall, every axe strike digging under the Al-Aqsa Mosque and every house destroyed by Israel will increase the intensity of resistance and resentment. However, cooperation with Palestinians will give Israel the hope for a future, dominated by serenity and peacefulness."

"We lament Jerusalem..."

He warns of the relentless Zionist programme to completely Judaize Jerusalem, alter its features, expel its people, destroy its houses, seize its land and build numerous settlements. "We lament Jerusalem, and miss its beautiful ceremonies. This year thousands of tourists will weep with us. They will not be able to march the 'Way of the Cross' with Palestinians. There will be no national Palestinian Folklore to discover or Arab religious crafts to take with them as gifts, and no local prayers, hymns and music to experience in the warm faith of believers in Palestine. They will be shocked entering the Holy Sepulchre to find Israeli police inside."

Easter symbolizes liberation from sin and slavery but hopes of national liberation are evaporating. The slavery and humiliation of occupation are felt more keenly than ever by Palestinian Christians. "We do not foresee any political settlement, or an end to occupation, or hope for the return of Palestinian refugees, or the forming of our state with Jerusalem as its capital, or the right to self-determination, or the liberation of thousands of prisoners, free access and movement, an end to Gaza siege, and the dismantling of the Apartheid Wall around Jerusalem.

"We are appalled by the continuous threats of more war. And we are distressed by the daily humiliation, hunger, thirst, unemployment and the absence of sustainable development in our country."

The world's silence is perplexing, he says, and the international community seems unable to implement the resolutions it used to create the State of Israel. Recent events only to lead closer to the abyss.

He reminds us that Palestinians have been building and enhancing Jerusalem for 5000 years and never stopped... except during the Occupation, which has practically destroyed everything they had accomplished. Unable to find any traces of their own heritage, he observes, the Occupiers have annexed some of the Palestinians' holy places.

"Jerusalem was the city of God, peace, and prayer but has been converted into a city of man, war and hatred. Instead of becoming the key to the doors of heaven, it has become a key to war and blood."

"Protect our holy sites"

Jerusalem, the holiest place on earth, is now the focus of sin and crime, he says, because one man is killing another, insulting him and trampling his dignity and his right to live. "Jerusalem is ours. It is not a disputed land. We are not soliciting to share the legacy and heritage of Jerusalem with Israel or with anyone else.

"We do not accept the speech of Israeli leaders that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and that building in it is no different from building in Tel Aviv. Occupation is a sin and a form of terrorism, and when relying on the texts of the Torah to kill people or expel and remove them from their land it rises to the level of a crime against humanity. All perpetrators should be judged by the International Criminal Court before being judged by the just court of God."

Supporters of Netanyahu's remarks, and those who fail to condemn them, simply give Israel more time and excuses to intensify its crimes against the Palestinian people. Hence they become accomplices in a "sin against the nations".

In his appeal to the world this Easter, what seems to worry Fr Manuel most is how the dwindling numbers that are now allowed to reach the Holy Sites might cause them to be turned into historic monuments or even destroyed. In the eyes of Israeli leaders, these places are 'pagan sites' and whoever destroys them is brought closer to God. "A long time ago," he says, "the Zionist Jewish leader Theodore Herzl said: 'If one day we recover Jerusalem and I am still able to do anything when we do so, my first action will be to cleanse it thoroughly. I will remove everything that is not holy and burn the monuments that are centuries old.'

"Israel has devastated and tortured us in their many wars. We ask you to see the wounds of innocent Palestinian people and to be compassionate towards the Palestinian holocaust that you witness with your own eyes and touch with your own hands, and to know those who perpetrated this crime against our children. Search with us for justice that is the mother of peace. Protect us and safeguard our Holy Sites."

I recall that in 2008 Fr Manuel was with his Christian community during their darkest hour when Israel, with a nod from America and the EU, unleashed a deadly onslaught intended to finally crush the half-starved Gazans.

At the height of the killing spree, Fr Manuel sent this message from the smoking ruins to anyone who would listen: "Our people in Gaza are treated like animals in a zoo. They eat but remain hungry, they cry, but no one wipes their tears. There is no water, no electricity, no food, only fear, terror and blockade... Our children are living in a state of trauma and fear. They are sick from it and for other reasons such as malnutrition, poverty and the cold... The hospitals did not have basic first aid before the war and now thousands of wounded and sick are pouring in and they are performing operations in the corridors. The situation is frightening and sad."

In exasperation he added: "May Christ's compassion revive our love for God even though it is currently in 'intensive care'." Was anyone listening?

Wimpish churchmen and politicians in the West would wet their pants at the very thought of speaking plainly against Zionist lawlessness and cruelty the way Fr Manuel does, which is why the Holy Land is such an unholy mess. Their inaction ensures that nothing changes for the better. Indeed, the situation gets progressively worse. Some will no doubt be muttering, "Will nobody rid us of the turbulent priest?" as did King Henry II in 1170 referring to Thomas Becket who rebelled against his unjust reforms.

But we need many more good and turbulent priests. They inspire. They might even succeed in goading the cowardly international community to action. Meanwhile it seems God still has work for Fr Manuel, even in retirement.

– Stuart Littlewood is author of the book *Radio Free Palestine*, which tells the plight of the Palestinians under occupation. For further information please visit [www.radiofreepalestine.co.uk](http://www.radiofreepalestine.co.uk). He contributed this article to *PalestineChronicle.com*.