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Who Will Save the Holy Land, Brokering a 'New Jerusalem'?

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The Holy Broker: Sow Love

Political leaders have historically tried and failed to make a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians. President Obama will try to be the next one to "broker peace." Trouble is, the forces against this outcome are greater than any human can confront on his own. I submit that only divine Intervention can save the Holy Land. God is the only hope for achieving a "New Jerusalem." It will take help from "The Woman" predestined on the case for it to be resolved peacefully. Middle East conflict is historically the epitome of politics, religion and business intertwined in an intractable knot. The emotions are deeply entrenched by all citizens of this region. The hierarchy of hatred and oppression is all-encompassing. It affects Jews, Christians and Muslims alike and the rest of the world is involved. The personal livelihood of Israelis and their neighbor Arabs is in constant turmoil. Jerusalem is the place to watch and to protect. Jerusalem is the "lynchpin" of world peace and security. As Jerusalem goes, the world goes. It has been destroyed before and it took divine help to rebuild it. Like biblical times, it will take a world of prayer to prevent a world of suffering.

Palm Sunday ushers in the events of Holy Week and the Passion of Jesus Christ, the bearer of true holiness and lasting peace. It will take conversion of hearts to save the world from destruction. Holy people can influence this necessary first step toward peace by selfless examples of love and humility. The Holy Spirit is the divine broker of a "New Jerusalem." Mary, mother of Jesus and daughter of Israel is "The Woman" with the closest mystical relationship with the Holy Spirit. She is descendant of Sarah, the wife of Abraham. It will take humility on the part of political, spiritual and community leaders to surrender power to The Holy Spirit and "The Woman." It will take shared commitment to follow the laws and will of God. But first it will take believing in Him and that there is accountability not reward for defying His commandments to "love Him above all else and to love neighbor as oneself."

Discord: Sow Harmony

Some of the happiest years in my life were living in Israel. First as a teenager, then working in tourism and later as a graduate student of theology in Jerusalem. It was surprising to learn the prejudice which exists between Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews. In the Seventies, Jewish immigrants hailing from European countries were the most privileged except for the Sabras, those born in Israel and highly revered. It is understandable that victims of the Holocaust should be treated with special deference. However, Jews from Morocco and Yemen were discouraged by their lack of opportunity in Israel. Until the Soviet Jews arrived and they became the lower group. Then the Ethiopians were discovered, believed to be the "Lost Tribe of Israel." They became the lowest paid immigrants and experienced painful disdain by fellow Jews. The next low on the totem pole are the Israeli-Arab Christians and the lowest are the Israeli-Arab Muslims. This demonstrates the problem of peace being brokered by any human who is not God's instrument.

My visits to neighboring Egypt for education and to Jordan to help establish school programs for Iraqi refugees led to special relationships. On one such visit from Jerusalem to Amman, via the Allenby Bridge, I was given a gift by a dear Muslim friend and sister. The necklace has a small Arabic word that means "Allah." In return, I gave her a "Miraculous Medal" and she exclaimed, "We love Mary!" It was at that moment, the light and vision of peace glowed, in her eyes, from her smile and most of all within her heart and mine too. The Jewish Mother of Jesus, first disciple of Christianity and most blessed woman in Islam who suffered with Her Son in Israel finding refuge in Egypt to save him from being killed as a child by King Herod, is The Woman to help broker a "New Jerusalem." She will help bring peace to the Middle East, perhaps through her priest son, Pope Francis. Already we know that the first invitation to the new pope by a political leader, Shimon Peres, president of Israel, was to visit the Holy Land. Pope Francis has a history of reaching out to the Jewish community and notably during his recent ecumenical papal event and installation as Bishop of Rome he specifically welcomed the Jewish representatives present at the Catholic Mass. The Pope knows the enormous consequences of a world continuing on the path it is on of building weapons of mass destruction instead of building bridges of lasting peace.

Doubt: Sow Faith

Prophetically it is only a matter of time, and some believe it will be sooner rather than later, that Jerusalem is destroyed again. One could argue that spiritual destruction is already in process. The soul of Jerusalem is eroding. While attending a Jerusalem school of theology a few years ago, I lived in the Old City. I came away from this awesome experience feeling both elated and sad. Development is focused on re-building monuments to King Herod instead of endeavoring to re-build faith in God. First hearing of growing atheism in Israel by my biblical professor, I could not believe it. So I validated his remark by asking my friend who is a high-ranking general in the Israeli Army.

Witnessing the result of indifference to the sacred by visiting the Upper Room where Jesus held the Last Supper and Mary joined Peter at the first Christian Church Pentecost Service more than 2,000 years ago was enlightening. Then I spent a night sleeping in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, where Jesus died, was buried and rose from the dead. I asked myself, "Where are the holy in the Holy Land and who will save it?" Both of these holy and sacred places have been desecrated and defiled, filled with conflict and commercialism. The Jewish and Muslims in Israel protect their places of worship, the Christian sacred sites are less respected.

Our first encounter along the way to the Upper Room, , which is located in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, was to be accosted by a Kabbalah teacher who showed us his "holy" water that flowed under his cave's "holy" ground. He gave us an unsolicited but appreciated blessing only to revoke it and threaten a curse when we did not contribute enough into the dish on the way out. From my experience of learning Orthodox Judaism at the Yeshiva University and at our local Chabad, this unholy way of acting is completely contrary to true teachings of Judaism. We then went up the stairs to the "holy" and sacred place of "The Last Supper" to find another rogue rabbi joking around and standing like Santa Claus taking paid pictures with tourists who were smoking and kicking the numerous coke cans strewn throughout this sacred Christian room. Witnessing this depravity of reverence and respect led up to my next unholy encounter.

That night I had the rare opportunity to be locked into the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the Old City where the "holy" in charge are missing the "truly holy" message of Jesus in their stewardship. It was here that I discovered the Christians need to get their act together also. In the Russian Orthodox section of this sacred place of worship, people were allowed to yell on their cell phones, making deals. It was only serene in the Armenian Apostolic Chapel and the Roman Catholic section which is overseen by the Franciscans. But clergy from these Christian churches are intimidated by the Greek Orthodox who believe they are the "Masters of the House" of the Lord, since it is held that Greeks Constantine and his mother Helena were responsible for the original discovery and construction.

All the infighting is definitely indications of the forces of the dark side being active in the very place that Jesus died proclaiming, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do (Luke 23:34)." One can hear Jesus crying out that lament today, weeping again, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together. As a hen gathers her young under her wings but you would not have it" (Matthew 23). God with His loving mercy wants to save Jerusalem and humanity from its willful demise, if we will have it.

The saving grace for the Christian community living "truly holy" by example are Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity. The small chapel in their home for the poor in the Christian section of the Old City is the only place I truly felt God's presence. They are devoted to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and foster love, harmony and faith in God, irrespective of individual beliefs or financial contributions.

Despair: Sow Light and Hope

I believe the only hope for brokering peace amongst this diverse group of influence in Jerusalem is to call on "The Woman" to bring about a "New Jerusalem." Mary is "Theotokos," Mother of God for the Orthodox, the Apostolic and the Roman Catholic Christians. Mary is the "Daughter of Zion" an Orthodox Jewess and Mary is held by Muslims as the most blessed woman ever to exist on earth and in heaven. Like her role in Jerusalem during the first Pentecost, Mary is the uniter. She is faith. She is hope. She is love. Without her, President Obama or Pope Francis, cannot broker a lasting peace or "holy alliance" in Jerusalem or the Middle-East. Advice to Pope and President: either call on our Blessed Mother of Humanity to use her "truly holy" maternal intercession skills to broker the peace accords by securing Divine intervention or get ready for a diabolical attack that could destabilize the world on your watch. Set aside the Nobel, it's irrelevant. Mary delivered the one and true "peace prize," the "Prince of Peace," Jesus Christ to the world. He now delivers the "Queen of Peace" to us all, for our protection.

The growing secular-humanism and materialism, that is without God in the Holy Land and throughout the world, leads to darkness. If however, we open our hearts and accept the gift of grace "faith" which leads to the Light, we will find holiness and peace. If we listen to Mary's messages which emanate from her Son, "to love God and to love our neighbor" then there will be peace and happiness for all to enjoy in our lifetime and for future generations. World leaders, it simply takes humility and faith. I'm betting on Pope Francis to listen to his mama and help "The Woman" broker the peace of a "New Jerusalem."

As written in Holy Scripture she will not be alone in her mission, the real Savior is by her side, "Behold, I AM coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the prophetic message of this book" (Revelations 22:7).

Amen. Alleluia!