

**World Council of Churches**  
**Prayer for Peace in Syria, Iraq, and Libya**  
**Sunday, 15 March 2015**

*Note: this service need not be used in its entirety. Please adapt and substitute it to answer your situation or congregation.*

**Procession of the cross<sup>1</sup>**

*(A cross is brought in and placed in the altar area during the singing.)*

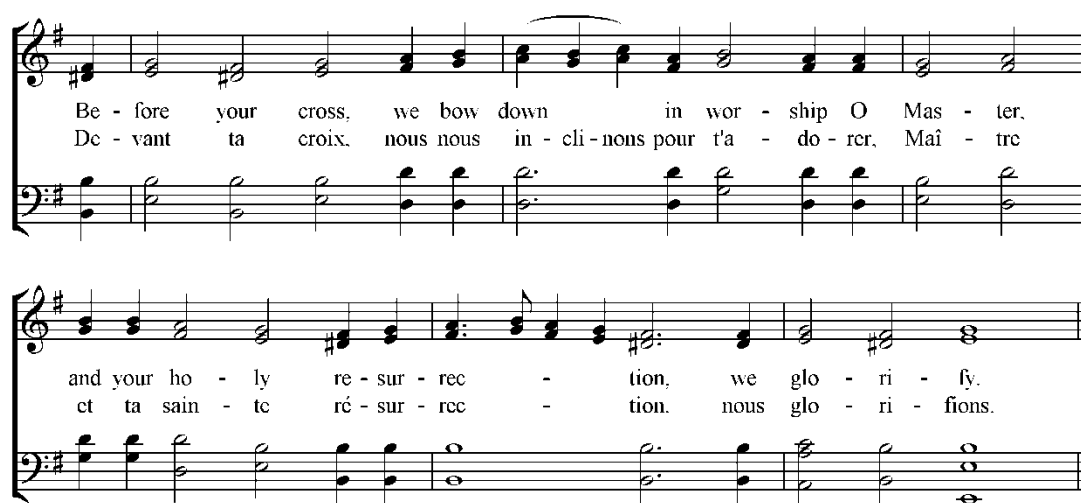
*(Please rise)*

**Before your Cross**

Hymn of the Holy Cross

**Τόν Σταυρόν Σου**

Orthodox , Russia



Be - fore your cross, we bow down in wor - ship O Mas - ter,  
De - vant ta croix, nous nous in - cli - nons pour t'a - do - rer, Maî - tre

and your ho - ly re - sur - rec - tion, we glo - ri - fy.  
et ta sain - te ré - sur - rec - tion, nous glo - ri - fions.

Τόν Σταυρόν Σου προσκυνούμεν  
Δέσποτα καί τήν αγίαν  
Σου Ανάστασιν δοξάζομεν

*Vor deinem Kreuz neigen wir uns in Anbetung,  
O Herr, und deine heilige Auferstehung verherrlichen wir.*

Ton Stavrón Su proskínúmen  
Théspotá ke tin agían  
Su Anástasin thoxázomen

*Oh Maestro! ante tu cruz nos inclinamos en adoración  
y glorificamos tu santa resurrección.*

**Call to worship**

**L:** In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

**C:** **Amen.**

**L:** Grace to you and peace from God,  
the love at our beginning and without end, in our midst and with us.

**C:** **Thanks be to God.**

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<sup>1</sup> In the Eastern Orthodox Church, this Sunday, 15 March 2015, (the third Sunday of Great Lent) is the Sunday of the veneration of the holy cross. For more information, see [http://lent.goarch.org/sunday\\_of\\_the\\_cross/learn/#sthash.wtON7bjs.dpuf](http://lent.goarch.org/sunday_of_the_cross/learn/#sthash.wtON7bjs.dpuf). The processional song can be substituted with another hymn about the cross of Jesus, such as "Lift high the cross." At the foot of the cross (if the cross is big) or around the cross (if the cross is small), you can put colourful flowers.

L: Jesus calls us to journey with him,  
to journey with him to a hill looking out across Jerusalem,  
to journey with him to dangerous and chaotic streets in Syria, Iraq and Libya,  
to journey with him to the crowded refugee camps.

Jesus calls us to weep with him,  
to weep with Rachel for the massacre of her children,  
to weep with those who mourn of the execution of Christians,  
to weep with the victims of war in Syria, Iraq and Libya.

**C: And Jesus calls us to hope when hoping seems hopeless,  
Jesus calls us to hope for new life where there is death,  
Jesus calls us to hope for resurrection in the midst of crucifixion  
Jesus calls us to hope for peace in the turmoil of war.**

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### Song "Come, O Prince of Peace" (stanza 1 and 2)

1. Come, O Prince of Peace, from dread and fear save your peo - ple,  
1. Komm, o Frie - dens - fürst, nimm uns' - re Furcht, uns' - re Ängs - te.

In - crease our love for neigh - bours we meet, and o - pen our minds and our hearts.  
Lass wach - sen uns' - re Lie - be für and' - re und öff - ne un - se - re Her - zen.

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2. Come O Prince of Peace,  
Oh, purify and refine us.  
Help all our leaders, guide us to peace,  
and grant us your favour, we pray.

2. Komm, o Friedensfürst,  
läutere uns, mach uns besser.  
Zeig den Mächt'gen den Weg zum Frie-den;  
erweise uns deine Gnade.

L: As we gather to worship God in this place,  
let us remember and pray for our sisters and brothers in Syria, Iraq and Libya.  
We lament the massacre of Christians and people of other faiths;  
we lament with those persecuted because of their beliefs;  
we grieve with Christians and other minority groups,  
who are forcefully displaced from their homes and lands  
by those who perpetuate suspicion, hatred and terror  
against those different from them.  
We are here to pray for peace in those countries and in our world,  
to renew our hope in the Triune God,  
and to strengthen our commitment to strive for justice and peace.  
Jesus says, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves  
and take up their cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

## Song “Come, O Prince of Peace” (stanza 3 and 4)

1. Come, O Prince of Peace, from dread and fear save your peo - ple,  
 1. Komm, o Frie - dens - fürst, nimm uns' - re Furcht, uns' - re Ängs - te.

In - crease our love for neigh - bours we meet, and o - pen our minds and our hearts.  
 Lass wach - sen uns' - re Lie - be für and' - re und öff - ne un - se - re Her - zen.

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2. Come O Prince of Peace,  
 Oh, purify and refine us.  
 Help all our leaders, guide us to peace,  
 and grant us your favour, we pray.

3. Come, O Prince of Peace,  
 with heav'nly song now surround us.  
 Your reign of peace protect and guard,  
 Your justice roll down like a stream.

4. Come, O Prince of Peace,  
 Come, fill the hungry with good things.  
 Rescue the hopeless, the poor, the oppressed  
 Come now! – come and save us, O Lord.

2. Komm, o Friedensfürst,  
 läutere uns, mach uns besser.  
 Zeig den Mächt'gen den Weg zum Frie-den;  
 erweise uns deine Gnade.

3. Komm, o Friedensfürst,  
 mit Gesang triumphierend.  
 Wach' in Frieden über uns,  
 auf dass Recht und Wahrheit regieren.

4. Komm, o Friedensfürst,  
 sättige alle, die hungern.  
 Schenk' den Geknechteten Freiheit  
 und rette uns Gott, rette uns.

\*\*\*\*\*

*(Please be seated)*

## We ask for God's mercy

L: Jesus says, “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Let us now bring our grief and sorrow to God, our refuge and strength.

O God, our God,  
 we see pain, suffering, and terror in Syria, Iraq, and Libya.  
 Towns and villages are torn apart  
 by war, oppression, injustice, and hunger.  
 Refugee camps are springing up,  
 and quickly fill to overflowing.  
 Christians and other people from minority groups are in constant threat,  
 in danger of losing their lives and future.  
 Terror reigns,  
 Human life seems worthless.

**C: Why, O God?**

L: People are crying,  
 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

**C: God, our God, why have you forsaken us?**

L: Why must there be death and destruction?  
 Why must there be bloodshed and suffering?

**C: Why, O God?**

Aramaic as taught by Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: Syria

*Fine*

Mo-ran e - th-ra ha - ma' - lain. Mo-ran e - th-ra ha - ma' - lain. Mo-ran

e - th-ra ha - ma' - lain. Mo - ran e - th - ra ha - ma' - lain. Mo - ran

*D.C. al Fine*

e - th - ra ha - ma' - lain. Mo - ran e - th - ra ha - ma' - lain.

Lord, have mercy on us. Herr, erbarme dich. Seigneur, aie pitié de nous. Señor, ten piedad de nosotros.

© Metronolitan Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim. P.O. Box 4194. Aleppo, Syria.

L: When will we ever learn, O God, our Creator,

**C:** When will we ever learn?

L: When will we learn  
that you created us for community,  
to live together as sisters and brothers  
in wholeness and peace.

**C: When will we ever learn?**

L: When will we learn  
that we are your children,  
members of one family,  
the human family,  
all made in your image?

**C:** When will we ever learn?

**Response:**

[illegible]

L: O God, our Redeemer and Sustainer,  
In the midst of the gunfire, the chemical warfare and the incendiary bombs,  
Help us remember:

C: Help us remember your love.

L: Help us remember that you loved the world so much that  
You gave your only begotten Son,  
Whose love was nearly overwhelmed by hate,

**C:** Whose light was nearly extinguished by darkness,

L: Whose life was nearly destroyed by death ...  
But not quite....

For love vanquished hate,

C: Life overcame death,

L: Light overwhelmed darkness,

C: And we can live with hope.

**Response:**

Aramaic as taught by Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: Syria

Mo - ran e - th - ra ha - ma' - lain. Mo - ran e - th - ra ha - ma' - lain.

## Assurance of God's mercy

**L:** Blessed be the Lord,  
whom has heard the sound of our pleading.  
The Lord is our strength and our shield;  
in the Lord our heart trusts.  
The Lord is the strength of his people;  
he is the saving refuge of his anointed,  
their shepherd who carries them for ever. (*Psalm 28*)

**C: Blessed be the Lord!**

*(Please rise)*

## Song

**Adom** Unknown, Ghana

Language: Twi, Ghana

A - dom, wa - na na A - dom. A - dom, On - ya-me na A - dom. A -  
What grace, heav-en - ly grace! God's grace, poured out up - on us. What

dom, wa na-na A - dom, On - ya - me na A - dom, O - de a - hyi - ra yen.  
grace, gen er - ous grace! We thank you, O God, for your lov - ing grace!  
We thank you, O God, for your sav - ing grace!  
We thank you, O God, for grace, rich and free!  
We thank you, O God, for trans-form-ing grace!

1. Ode<sub>u</sub>hyira yen 2. Ode<sub>u</sub>agye yen nkwa 3. Ode<sub>u</sub>akye yen kwa 4. Ode<sub>u</sub>asesa yen

*Literal text:* *(Singing translation: Andrew Donaldson)*

*Oh Grace! Whose Grace is it? Oh Grace! It is God's Grace.*

*...with which he has blessed us!...with which he has saved us!*

*...which he has given us for free!...with which he has transformed us!*

*Ó Graça! Qual graça? Graça, graça de Deus.*

*...com a qual ele nos abençoa!...com a qual ele nos salva!...que nos deu de graça!...que nos transforma!*

*Oh Gracia! Cual Gracia? Gracia, Gracia de Dios.*

*...que nos bendice!...por la cual nos salvó!...que nos fue dada de gracia!...que nos transforma!*

*(Please be seated)*

## Prayer

L: God of truth and mercy,  
 You lifted up the afflicted,  
 and judged the wicked.  
 In the midst of war that terrorizes your people,  
 give us courage to name what is evil,  
 strong commitment to strive for justice and peace,  
 and compassion to help the victims.  
 While denying ourselves and taking our cross daily,  
 give us faith to follow Jesus Christ our Lord,  
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
 one God, forever and ever.

C: Amen.

## Scripture readings

First reading Numbers 21:4-9

## Psalm 85

Andrew Donaldson Une Jeune Pucelle: Canada

1. O ho - ly God, there was a time your fa - vor knew no  
 2. Let me now hear the word of peace that God, our God, will  
 3. Soon stead - fast love and faith - ful - ness will meet here face to  
 4. Soon right - eous - ness with brill - iant rays will pour down from the

bound. With ten - der hand you healed our ills and made us whole and  
 say. The faith - ful turn to you and wait; Lord, do not turn a -  
 face, And peace will join with right - eous - ness in ten - der, close em -  
 sky, And God will grant us all things good as earth re - sponds with

sound. You cooled your right - eous an - ger then, and  
 way. For sure - ly good news is at hand, that  
 brace; And like a green and grace - ful stem, God's  
 joy. Soon peace will go be - fore the Lord and

*Refrain*

cleared your peo - ple of their sin. God, our hope, God, our life,  
 glo - ry may shine in our land.  
 jus - tice will spring up a - gain.  
 make a road - way for our God.

show us your grace that we may re - joice in you.

© 2010 Andrew Donaldson

Second reading Romans 8:22-25, 31-39

## Song “Que nuestro Dios creador”

*Adagio*

Que nues - tro Dios cre - a - dor      nos ben - di - ga con su a - mor  
 By your word, cre - a - ting God,      bless us now with grace and love,  
 Mö - ge Gott, der uns er - schuf,      mit sei - ner Lie - be seg - nen.  
 Que no - tre Dieu, Cré - a - teur,      nous bé - nisse a - vec a - mour.

y que a - ni - de en su pue - blo la paz  
 and gent - ly - nest your peace in our hearts!  
 Sein Frie - de bau - e bei uns sein Nest!  
 Que sa paix fasse en nos coeurs son nid!

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## Gospel Mark 8:31-38; 9:1

*Adagio*

Que nues - tro Dios cre - a - dor      nos ben - di - ga con su a - mor  
 By your word, cre - a - ting God,      bless us now with grace and love,  
 Mö - ge Gott, der uns er - schuf,      mit sei - ner Lie - be seg - nen.  
 Que no - tre Dieu, Cré - a - teur,      nous bé - nisse a - vec a - mour.

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## Sermon

*(Please rise)*

### Affirmation of justice and peace<sup>2</sup>

**All: I believe in God,  
 who is love and who has given the earth to all people.**

<sup>2</sup> You may replace it with a traditional affirmation of faith.

**I believe in Jesus Christ,  
who came to heal us,  
and to free us from all forms of oppression,  
whose suffering and death bring new life.  
I believe in the Spirit of God,  
who works in and through all who are turned towards the truth.  
I believe in the community of faith,  
which is called to be at the service of all people and God's creation.  
I believe in God's promise to finally destroy the power of sin in us all,  
and to establish the kingdom of justice and peace for all.**

Men: I do not believe in the right of the strongest,  
nor the force of arms, nor the power of oppression.

Women: I believe in human rights, in the solidarity of all people,  
in the power of non-violence.

Men: I do not believe in racism, in the power that comes from wealth and privilege,  
or in any established order that enslaves.

Women: I believe that all men and women are equally human,  
that order based on violence and injustice is not order.

Men: I do not believe that war and hunger are inevitable and peace unattainable.

Women: I believe in beauty of simplicity, in love with open hands, in peace on earth.

**All: I do not believe that suffering needs to be in vain, that death is the end,  
that the disfigurement of the world is what God intended.  
But I dare to believe, always and in spite of everything,  
in God's power to transform and transfigure,  
fulfilling the promise of a new heaven and a new earth  
where justice and peace will flourish.**

Adapted from a creed from Indonesia

*(Please be seated)*

### **Intercessions**

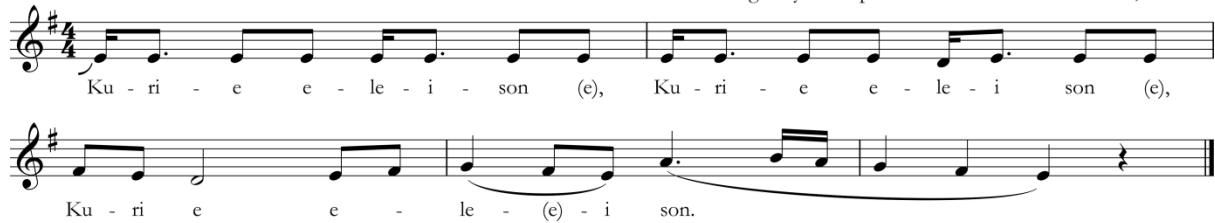
L: God of our birth and all creation,  
as you raised Jesus from death and gave new life,  
help us to treasure all life and to work toward ending violence.  
Give us courage to go where you go  
and to stand with the people of Syria, Iraq, Libya,  
and wherever violence against humanity occurs.  
Heal us of our lust for power.  
Free us from assumption that only we hold the divine truth.  
Grant hope and renewed strength to all who suffer from war and terrorist threat  
to those who are kidnapped and abducted,



especially Metropolitan Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim and Metropolitan Boulous Yazigi,  
Father Paolo Dall'Oglio, and others whom we cannot name.

**C: (singing) Kurie eleison**

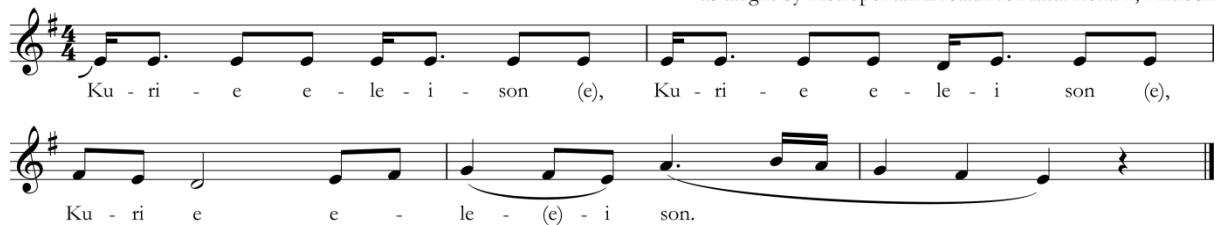
as taught by Metropolitan Eustathius Matta Roham, Antioch



L: God of strength,  
as Mary wept at the cross of Jesus,  
we also weep with the women in Syria, Iraq and Libya  
who are subjected to unimaginable pain and suffering.  
Families are torn apart:  
mothers have lost their children, wives their husbands, daughters their fathers.  
and many women, in unjust situations,  
or victims of rape,  
outcast in despair and shame,  
have to shoulder heavy burdens alone.  
We pray that you will hold the women of Syria, Iraq, and Libya close to you

**C: (singing) Kurie eleison**

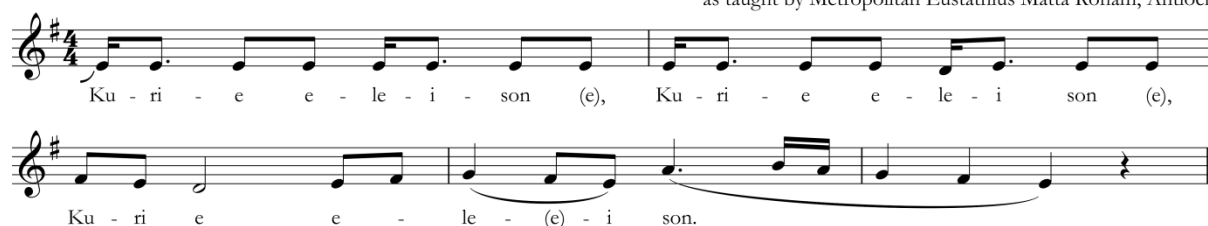
as taught by Metropolitan Eustathius Matta Roham, Antioch



L: God of love and care,  
as Jesus embraced little children before his death,  
embrace the children of Syria, Iraq and Libya with your loving and healing touch.  
We pray that they may have a chance to dream of the future  
and experience security and peace.  
We pray that they may have an opportunity to enjoy the same rights as other children –  
the right to be a child.  
When they are scared and tremble in fear, O God, hold them tight in your embrace.  
We pray for young men and women who consider joining terrorist groups,  
enlighten their mind with your wisdom and their heart with your love,  
so they may see your image in every person they encounter  
and that you desire peace not war, life for all and not deadly threat.

**C: (singing) Kurie eleison**

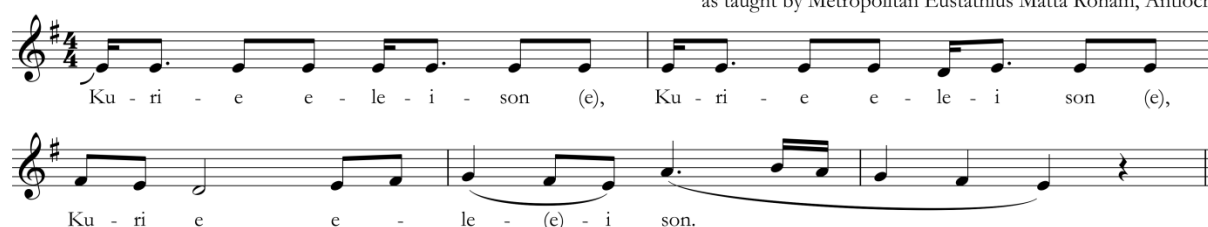
as taught by Metropolitan Eustathius Matta Roham, Antioch



L: God of wisdom,  
as Jesus experienced dreadful treatment from leaders of the community,  
we pray that you may help government officials and community leaders understand  
that violence cannot and will not end violence.  
Help the leaders of nations make decisions which promote life and peace on earth;  
let them seek justice, love mercy and walk humbly before you.

C: **(singing) Kurie eleison**

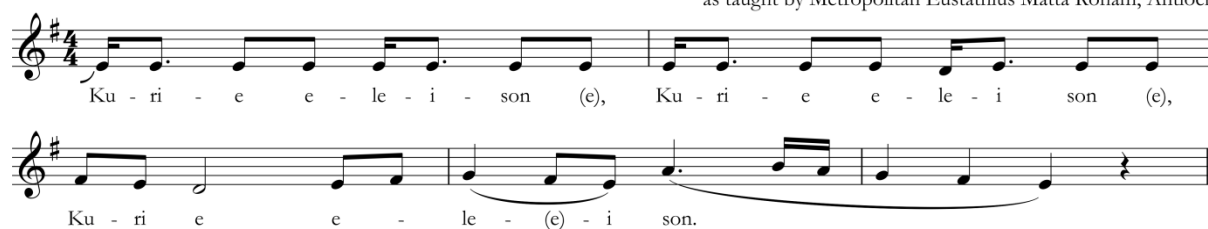
as taught by Metropolitan Eustathius Matta Roham, Antioch



L: God of creation,  
as the earth shook at the death of Jesus,  
we pray for the environment that has been destroyed and plundered during war.  
We pray for the preservation and protection of the whole of creation.

C: **(singing) Kurie eleison**

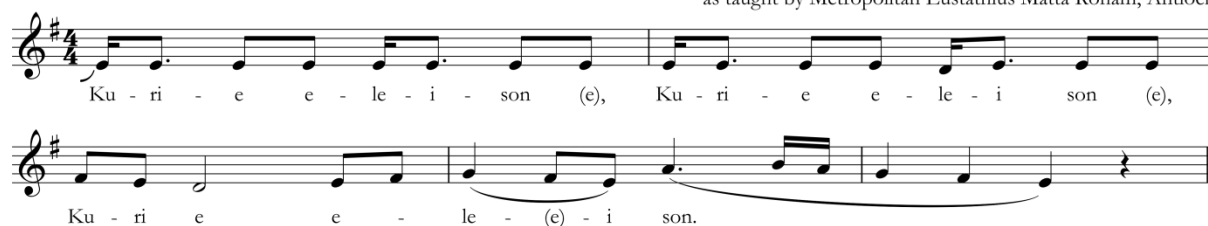
as taught by Metropolitan Eustathius Matta Roham, Antioch



L: God of mercy,  
as the criminal crucified with Jesus repented,  
we pray for the terrorists and those who spread terror and death,  
forgive them and enable us to forgive, even when we cannot justify their evil doings.  
Lead them in your way, the way of repentance,  
teach them your will that conveys love and compassion,  
justice and peace for all humans, despite differences that exist.

C: **(singing) Kurie eleison**

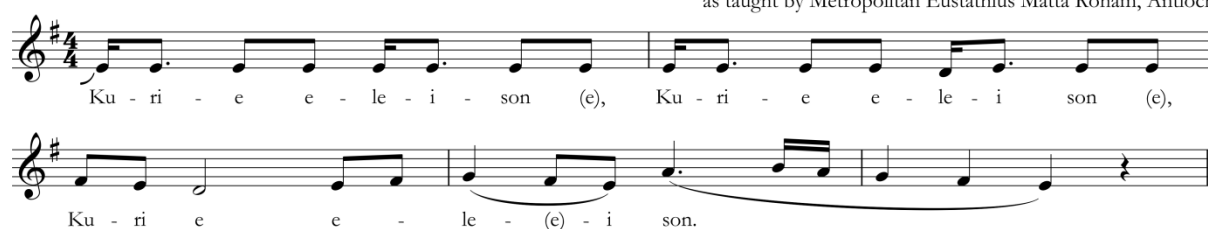
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L: God of all nations,  
as Jesus came, died, and resurrected to bring peace,  
we pray for your presence among the people of Syria, Iraq, Libya  
and the people who live in the surrounding countries.  
Fill every heart with your love and mercy.  
Challenge our understanding of justice and peace  
and encourage us to act according to your Word.  
God, end hatred and suffering in the this world,  
grant the whole world peace.

C: (singing) **Kurie eleison**

as taught by Metropolitan Eustathius Matta Roham, Antioch



L: God of all times and places,  
in Jesus Christ, lifted up on the cross,  
You opened for us the path to eternal life,  
We commend to your loving embrace our Christian sisters and brothers  
who have died for the sake of your Son.  
Comfort their grieving families.  
Help us to remember them and their faith in Jesus Christ.  
Give us such faith to follow our Lord,  
walking in your holy ways.  
May the Holy Spirit sustain us.

C: **Amen.**

**Lord's prayer**

**Offering**

*(Please rise)*

**Sending out**

L: Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart,  
and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary,  
repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing.  
(1Peter 3:8-9)

**C:** Thanks be to God.

## Song

### My peace I give unto you

My peace, my peace I give un - to you. My peace, my peace I  
Frie - den, Frie - den geb' ich euch, lass ich euch. Frie - den, Frie - den geb' ich

give, Al - le - lu - ia. 1. As the flow - ers bloom in the field let us  
(give,\* give un - to you.) 2. Like the birds that soar in the air, nev - er  
euch, Ha - le - lu - ja. 1. Wie die Blu - men blühn auf dem Feld, wach - sen  
(\*euch, für al - le Zeit.) 2. So, wie Vö - gel ziehn ü - ber uns, un - be

grow in Je - sus' peace, plant - ing in the world seeds of  
fear or have a care, fly now, high as on wings of  
wir in Je - su Geist, tra - gen in die Welt Glau - bens-  
sorgt, ge - trost und frei, tra - gen Flü - gel uns zum Frie - den

faith, seeds of hope and seeds of love.  
faith, spread - ing jus - tice ev - ery - where.  
kraft, Hoff - nungs saat und Lie - bes - glut.  
hin säen Ge - rech - tig - keit da - bei.

Music and English: 2012 WCC.

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## Blessing

**L:** May the blessing of the God of peace and justice be with us;  
may the blessing of the Son  
who weeps the tears of the world's suffering be with us;  
and may the blessing of the Spirit  
who inspires us to reconciliation and hope be with us  
from now into eternity.

**C:** Amen.

*(Congregants may pray near the cross or lit a candle or any other act of venerating the cross, while "Yarabb as salami," "Salaman atruku lakom" and other peace songs being sung.)*

## Yarabba as salami

Palestine

$\text{♩} = 78$



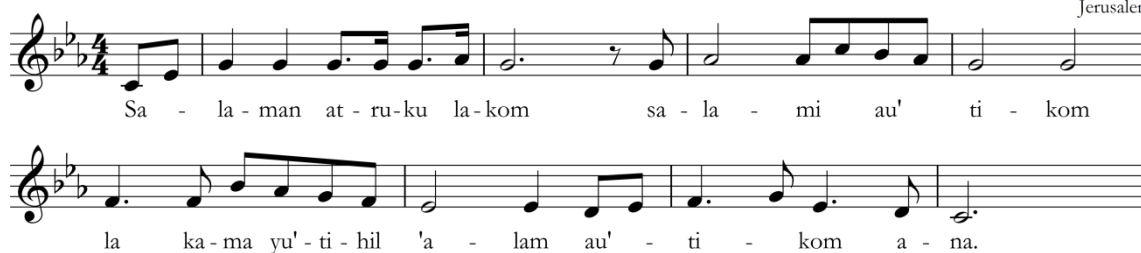
Ya - ra - bba ssa - la - mi am - ter a - lay - na ssa - lam.  
 Send peace on our world, God, You, the cre - a - tor of peace.  
 Du Gott des Frie - dens, giess dei - nen Frie - den auf uns.  
 Toi Dieu de la paix en - voie ta paix sur nous tous.  
 Tú, oh Dios de la paz, dá - nos a - mor por tua paz.

Ya - ra - bba ssa - la - mi im la' qu - lu - ba - na ssa - lam.  
 Our hearts fill with peace, God. You are the source of heal - ing peace.  
 Du Gott des Frie - dens, fül - le mit Frie - den un - ser Herz.  
 Toi Dieu de la paix comb - le nos coeurs de ta paix.  
 Tú, oh Dios de la paz, en nues - tras vi - das siem - bra paz.

Traditional from Palestine. English: Terry MacArthur. German: Renate Schiller © Weltgebetstagskomitee, Stein, Germany. Spanish: Martin Junge.  
 French: Marc Chambron. © IWF/WCC-COE, Route de Ferney 150, Post Box 2100, CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland.

## Salaman atruku lakom

As taught by Jiries Boullata,  
 Jerusalem



Sa - la - man at - ru - ku la - kom sa - la - mi au' ti - kom  
 la ka - ma yu' - ti - hil 'a - lam au' - ti - kom a - na.

سلاماً أترك لكم، سلامي أعطيكم  
 لا كما يعطيه العالم، أعطيكم أنا

A peace I leave to you,  
 my peace I give unto you,  
 not as the world gives  
 I do.