

First news from the Lutheran Church in Bethlehem

Letter from Rev. Mitri Raheb, pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem, 3 April 2002

Dear friends,

Just a quick note to let you all know that we are still alive. My wife, mother and two daughters are O.K. But Bethlehem is experiencing the worst invasion since decades if not centuries. The whole infra structure is under attack. The beautiful stone-paved streets around Christmas Lutheran Church are devastated. The tanks were standing around our Church and firing at the center of the old town. The entrance to our parsonage, car age and staircase were destroyed. Most of the shops on Paul VI. Street were totally damaged. Our Art & crafts workshops, where we are trying to train young women to earn their livelihood, to appreciate beauty experienced great destruction. The offices of our architect and engineer also experienced much vandalism. The apartment of our volunteers as well. My office was hit too, this is why I can't write as usual. I hope that our communication specialist will be able to post some of the pictures I took on our website. Please check there in few hours. These are first reports of what is going on here. Journalist are forbidden in entering the city to cover the cruelty of occupation. I wonder for how long can the world watch Sharon destroying everything we try to build. This has nothing to do with fighting terrorism. This is the Nero complex of a someone who rejoices when he see cities in flame. We need you to raise your voice and to tell your politicians: Not with the "little town". Please try it as long as there is a "little town". We are here and we will remain here. Nothing will be able to stop us witnessing to the Lord of life. In these Easter days, this is our conviction. Once our staff are back in the center, we will try to write to you in details.

Blessings

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