



### **Advent Reflection – The Grief of Mary**

The massacre of the Bethlehem innocents was the crucible event in which Mary's faith was forged. "Whom shall my grief serve?" became the axial event around which Mary's life revolved. Indeed this was the axial event around which the redemption of the whole world revolved. Surely the slaughter of newborns, for a new mother, would have been a particularly significant and shattering event.

Penelope Duckworth's words (Mary: The Imagination of her Heart) spoke to my heart, to my spirit and to my mind. I had never thought of that before – the grief Mary must have felt as she held her small child, feeling the preciousness of this new life and hearing the brutal stories of the killing of the children in Bethlehem.

Whom shall my grief serve?

Grief can do something more than wrap us in our selves, turn us inwards to dwell on "my woes" "my loss" "my troubles".

Grief can lead us into action – to participating in the redemption of the world.

In Canada this year we experienced grief as we came face to face with the deaths of Indigenous children at residential schools. As I write this I realize that somehow we have blocked our hearts from feeling the deaths of so many Indigenous people – such a litany we could write.

And, I realize, that a driving force causing me to continue to act on behalf of human rights for Palestinians is the grief I feel as I hear stories of the midnight raids on the homes of Palestinians, the torture of Palestinian teens as they are being interrogated, the children who are shot by Israeli military and, of course, the deaths of some 60 children in May of this year as destruction rained down on Gaza.

Whom shall my grief serve? How can my heart move me to the perseverance needed to reach others? I celebrate the people who join together across Canada to turn their grief into positive action that will reach the people of Canada to feel the pain and to say with conviction, "I can do something to make a difference for the children of Palestine".

Let's walk with Mary during this Advent journey. As we focus on our children, let us open our hearts to the children of Palestine.

- Marianna Harris November 30, 2021

## Some conversation starters for the children in your life

- Ahed Tamimi ["Free Palestinian Political Prisoners" colouring sheet](#) by Zola
- ["Every Child Matters" colouring sheet](#) by Hawlii Pichette
- ["Travelling through Palestine"](#) maze activity