

**“The Spirit of God is upon us....”**

Litany and Prayer Vigil Resource Material

**In a time of testing, may we be guided by the vision recounted in the Book of Isaiah and repeated in Luke’s gospel. These are the words Jesus chose to read in the synagogue:**

**“The spirit of our God is upon me, anointing me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”**

Military autopsy reports provide indisputable proof that detainees are being tortured to death while in US military custody. 44 US military autopsy reports present irrefutable evidence that US operatives tortured detainees to death during interrogations.

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Palestinians and other Muslims have demonstrated for the freedom of the four Peacemakers, an exemplary action. Our prayers are also with U.S. Catholic Workers who are in Cuba now, demonstrating for justice on behalf of detainees held in Guantanamo.

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A report issued by Human Rights Watch on September 25, 2005 begins with this summary:

One officer and two noncommissioned officers (NCOs) of the 82nd Airborne who witnessed abuse, speaking on condition of anonymity, described in multiple interviews with Human Rights Watch how their battalion in 2003–2004 routinely used physical and mental torture as a means of intelligence gathering and for stress relief. According to their accounts, the torture and other mistreatment of Iraqis in detention was systematic and was known at varying levels of command. Military Intelligence personnel, they said, directed and encouraged Army personnel to subject prisoners to forced, repetitive exercise, sometimes to the point of unconsciousness, sleep deprivation for days on end, and exposure to extremes of heat and cold as part of the interrogation process. At least one interrogator beat detainees in front of other soldiers. Soldiers also incorporated daily beatings of detainees in preparation for interrogations. Civilians believed to be from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) conducted interrogations out of sight, but not earshot, of soldiers, who heard what they believed were abusive interrogations.

One soldier raised his concerns within the Army chain of command for seventeen months before the Army agreed to undertake an investigation....

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Interviewed on November 30, on the "Democracy Now" program, celebrated journalist Seymour Hersh (who helped break the Abu Ghraib story) told of his first encounter with CPT: ". . . they were on a cutting edge. . . most of the things that I ended up writing about in Abu Ghraib, most of the general concepts, they knew a great deal about earlier . . . So, these are people toiling, really for the good of Iraqi people. . ."

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A Jordanian cleric jailed in Britain for links to al Qaeda urged Iraqi militants to free four Western aid workers kidnapped last month, saying they should not be punished for the policies of their governments.

"I, your brother Abu Qatada ... beseech my brothers in the Swords of Truth in Iraq, who are imprisoning the four Christian peace activists, to release them in accordance with the fundamental principle of mercy of our faith," he said in an appeal aired on Arab television on Wednesday.

"Our prophet said mercy should be shown unless there is a reason in Sharia (Islamic law) that prevents it," he added in a videotape supplied to Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya channels by his lawyers.

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The Christian Peacemaker Teams have worked and will continue to work around the world for peaceful and steadfast responses to horror, and their response this week included loving concern for the victims on both sides, and for the detainees on both sides, and for the anxious friends and families on both sides, and for the armed parties on both sides, and for all the abductors on either side, those following orders and those taking their own dreadful initiatives.

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We do not know what will befall our friends. But we know what must befall so many persons living under any occupation: and so we pray for all those afflicted by warfare, military occupation, and captivity. We follow in the spirit of Christ's birth, the Prince of Peace born into an occupied land, imprisoned, tortured, and killed as he heralded our essential oneness. He called us to "get in the way." We pray for grace to be disciples of Jesus, pursuing the works of mercy and working despite dangers for justice and peace.

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