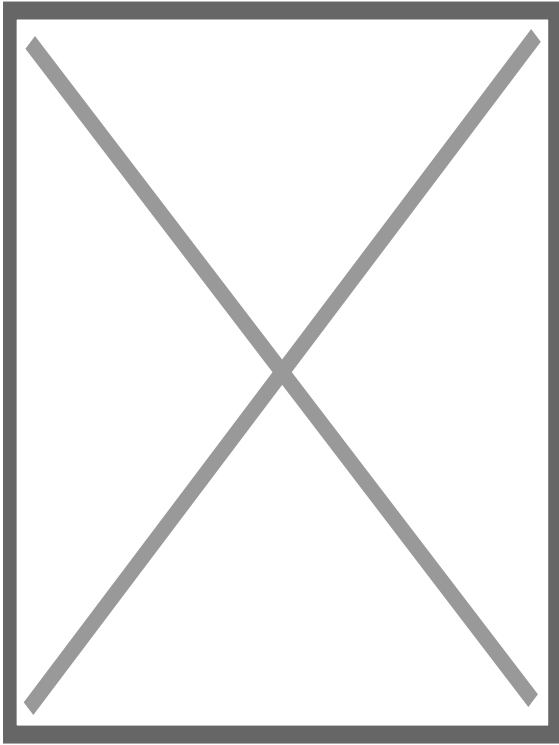


Save us

By [Stephanie Jaeger](#)

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*For more commentary on this week's readings, see the [Reflections on the Lectionary](#) page, which includes Jaeger's current Living by the Word column as well as past magazine and blog content. For full-text access to all articles, [subscribe](#) to the Century.*

A few years ago, while wandering through the Old City of Jerusalem, I stumbled upon a spray-painted sign on the side of a small factory building. It called out in English: “We need peace.”

It seemed to me like a modern-day cry of “hosanna” coming from the people of Jerusalem. In the course of my lifetime—which now spans 50 years—I have witnessed the Middle East peace process as a repeating cycle of dashed hopes. First there is the longing for peace. Then comes a wave of hope for successful negotiations that might lead to a two-state solution to end the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian people. Then when the talks fail, disappointment follows, and then anger that leads to more violence.

But this spray-painted cry for peace disrupted that cycle for me. It reminded me that even in the midst of disappointment and anger and fear, the longing and need for salvation continues. The challenge for us is to continue to hear the cry “hosanna” even in the midst of the noise of terrorist attacks and arguing diplomats. We learn from our readings on Palm/Passion Sunday that God continues to hear our cries for salvation—and that God will answer them, just not in the way that we might expect.

I have often regretted that I did not knock on the door next to the spray-painted sign, to get to know who was crying out for peace and to see if I might be able to bring them a word and act of hope. I didn’t knock, but still I

try to find other ways, small ways to bring peace: by supporting schools for Palestinian children, by engaging in dialogue with Israelis and Palestinians. And I pray for the people who painted those words—that God will hear them, and will send them the peace that they long for.