

November 27, 2023

Dear Friends,

I hope you enjoyed a restful and joyous Thanksgiving holiday.

It offers some consolation to see the most recent developments in the terrible conflict between the people of Israel and Gaza, though we must be cautious in assuming too much at this point. Still, the release of some of the hostages and the continuing cessation of violence are branches to hold onto for the moment.

Some of you attended the Nov. 13th lecture/discussion led by Dr. Bernard Sabella and co-hosted by the Churches for Middle East Peace Catholic Advisory Council and our own Office of Community Relations, Theology and Religious Studies Department, Political Science Department, Ellacuría Initiative and Peace and Justice Studies.

Dr. Sabella, a Palestinian Catholic sociologist and retired professor from Bethlehem University, streamed in from Jerusalem and was graciously present to us from midnight-2am his time. He focused on the responsibility of thinking of ways forward, away from war and conflict, in the context of dialogue and coexistence and a just and lasting peace.

I was most impressed to see the Rose Room filled to capacity and by the depth of questions and comments that emerged from those present. Special thanks to Julie Schumacher Cohen and Fr. Michael Azar for facilitating the discussion.

If you didn't have the chance to attend this most worthwhile event, you can watch it here at your convenience: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OrcBOdBQ2PE>

Finally, a reminder that many within our University community have family and friends who may be directly affected by these tragic events. The following campus resources remain available to offer support: the Dean of Students Office (201 DeNaples Center; 570-941-7680), Counseling Center (6th Floor O'Hara Hall; 570-941-7620) and Campus Ministry (200 DeNaples Center; 570-941-7419) for students and the Employee Assistance Program for staff and faculty.

Let us continue to hold the Israeli and Palestinian peoples in our hearts and prayers as we work together for a just and peaceful society characteristic of the Kingdom of God.

Yours faithfully,

Fr. Marina

