Memorial Service for Kristallnacht (The Night of Broken Glass), November 9, 1938

31.10.2004 | Council of Christians and Jews, New South Wales, Australia

A brief service suitable for interfaith use to commemorate Kristallnacht, when synagogues were set afire all over Germany, Jewish shop windows smashed, and more than 30,000 Jews sent to concentration camps.

Memorial Service: The Night of Broken Glass

November 9, 1938

Council of Christians and Jews, New South Wales, Australia

Choral Items

Leader:

On the evening of November 9, 1938, the German Government unleashed a pogrom against the Jews, burning down synagogues and smashing the glass fronts of Jewish shops in Berlin and all big cities in Germany and Austria. The pogrom was allegedly in retaliation for the assassination of a German diplomat at the German Embassy in Paris by the 17-year old Herschel Grynszpan.

To describe it, the Nazis coined the phrase Kristallnacht or Night of Broken Glass. On that night 91 Jews were killed, 30.000 Jews sent to Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen-Oranienburg concentration camps. 5.000 Jewish shops were looted, 191 synagogues attacked, bonfires made of Torah scrolls, prayer books and volumes of Jewish history, philosophy and poetry. This action was a signal event whose importance in the history of the Shoah or Holocaust, as it is also called, is that it represents the shift from mass arrest and terror to mass murder. From the time of Kristallnacht onwards, the momentum of the Holocaust gathered force and led to the wholesale persecution and the killing of six million Jews including one and a half million children.

The Night of Broken Glass was crucial in the movement towards the Final Solution, a systematic programme of genocide, which was designed to annihilate every Jew in Europe. Soon would be added the deaths of millions of civilians, service men and women and partisans during WW II.

Short Address

Choral Items

Leader:

We remember a night of darkness and fear that swept the heartland of Christian Europe like a scourge. We remember those who were persecuted. Jews for being Jews. We remember those who spoke out, brave souls who tried to save a world.

And we remember the silence! How many stood aside, mute and unconcerned forgetting the divine command: "You shall not stand idle while your neighbour bleeds."

For the sin of silence,

For the sin of indifference,

For the secret complicity of the neutral,

For the closing of borders,

For the washing of hands from blame,

For the crime of forgetfulness,

For the sin of meaningless rhetoric,

Let there be no forgetfulness before the Throne of Glory, and let memory startle us at any moment, when we lie down and when we rise up. Let us remember and never forget.

Reading from the Prophet Ezechiel 37:1-14

Leader: Let us now remember as we are able, in silence.

(At the end of 2 minutes of silence, glass will be broken)

All:

God in Heaven we remember.

We remember the Night of Broken Glass.

We remember the burning of synagogues.

We remember the looting of schools.

We remember the destruction of orphanages.

We remember the arrests, the deportations, the deaths.

Leader:

God in Heaven we pray. We pray that with the breaking of this glass, our hearts may be broken in love and reconciliation. We pray that with the burning of the synagogues we too might burn with commitment to ensure that this never happens again. We pray that with the looting of schools, we too are pillaged of false pride and nameless fear, so that we might stand up for our neighbour. We pray that with the destruction of orphanages, hatred and oppression may be forever destroyed and the innocent be protected. We pray that those who suffered might teach us the enormity of silence in the face of injustice. God in Heaven, hear us we pray.

Kaddish

(The Kaddish is the Jewish prayer which is recited during the period of mourning and on every anniversary of a deceased member of a Jewish family or community. It prays that God may establish His kingdom of peace in the world.)

Yitgadal veyitkadash shemay rabba (Amen), b'alma div'ra chirutay veyamlich malchutay bechayechon uv'yomechon uv'chayay di chol bet Yisrael, ba'agala uviz'man kariv- v'imru Amen. Yehay shemay rabba mevorach l'alam ul'almay almaya.

Yitbarach veyishtabach veyitpa'ar veyitromam veyitnasay veyit'hadar veyitalay veyit'halal shemay di kudsha - Berich Hu- l'ayla min kol birchaata veshiratat tushbechata venechemata di amiran b'alma-v'imru Amen. Yehay shelama rabba min shemaya vechayim alaynu v'al kol Yisrael-v'imru Amen.

Osay shalom bimromav hu ya'aseh shalom v'al kol Yisrael-v'imru Amen.

Glorified and sanctified be God's great name throughout the world which he has created according to his will. May he establish his kingdom in your lifetime and during your days, and within the life of the entire house of Israel, speedily and soon: and say Amen. May his great name be blessed forever and to all eternity.

Blessed and praised, glorified and exalted, extolled and honoured, adored and lauded be the name of the Holy One, blessed be he beyond all the blessings and hymns, praised and consolation that are ever spoken in the world; and say, Amen.

May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life, for us and for all Israel: and say, Amen. He who creates peace in his celestial heights, may he create peace for us and for all Israel: and say, Amen. Choral Items

Leader:

Let us pray that we will be people of compassion who will make a space for the other.

All:

We share the world"s horror at the tragic loss of life resulting from terrorism in Bali, Israel, America and other parts of the world. Together we mourn for the victims and grieve with those whose loss is so great. As people of faith we pray for peace and call on world leaders to respond by seeking justice, not revenge. May the God of peace protect us all.

Shofar: The shofar is sounded.