

An Israeli Jesuit reflects on war in the Holy Land

April 2024 — On February 12, 2024, the Carney Latin America Solidarity Archive ([CLASA](#)) at the University of Detroit Mercy (UDM) hosted a presentation (via Zoom) by Father David Neuhaus, SJ entitled *A Catholic priest's reflection on war in the Holy Land*.

Father Neuhaus brings a unique perspective to this issue. He was born in South Africa to German Jewish parents who fled Nazi persecution in Germany. At the age of fifteen, his parents sent him to Jerusalem as they feared he would get too involved in the struggle against apartheid. Coming to Jerusalem with no family, he was adopted by a Palestinian Muslim family where he learned Arabic. At the age of seventeen, he became an Israeli citizen. Later, he was baptized, joined the Catholic Church and eventually entered the Society of Jesus.

Father Neuhaus provides invaluable context for anyone struggling to understand what is happening in the Holy Land today. He explains how the present crisis began long before October 7, 2023; and identifies three critical factors that shape the Israeli/Palestinian reality: the historic persecution and suffering of the Jewish people, the Bible and white European colonialism and nationalism. With regard to the Bible, Father Neuhaus warns of the dangers of applying ancient texts to modern understandings of the nation state. He also discusses Christian Zionism and notes that it came out of Protestantism and predates Jewish Zionism.

[A recording of Father Neuhaus' talk](#) is now available on the UDM YouTube channel. It runs about 90 minutes.