

Exhibit available
Iraqi Women of Three
Generations:
Challenges, Education,
and Hopes for Peace

An Exhibit of Images and Stories
by Sister Martha Ann Kirk, Th.D. and
Sister Patricia Madigan, Ph.D.

Stories of Iraqi women's resilience, courage, and compassion have wisdom which can encourage understanding and healing across cultures and religions. Six years after the 1988 massacres of over 150,000 people in Northern Iraq, Turkish Muslims quietly began schools to give children hope and promote peace. The teachers were inspired by Fethullah Gülen, an Islamic scholar who encourages education which builds reconciliation, respect for diversity, justice, and peace. While people of families speaking Kurdish, Turkmen, Arabic, and Syriani (the contemporary language from the Aramaic spoken by Jesus) had often been separated from each other in the past, within the schools they are becoming friends and learning to respect each other and work together.

The information was gathered in summer research trips 2010 to 2012 from both people of northern Iraq and those who are fleeing the on-going danger in the south. Women's voices which have often been ignored are at the center of this research. Many of the grandmothers and some of the mothers are illiterate. Many grandmothers and mothers were determined to provide more opportunities for their daughters. Education is opening the horizons of young women, giving them confidence, knowledge, skills, and virtue that can contribute to a better future for their country. One woman said, "We have had wars and wars and more wars." None of these have brought peace, but women's words and friendship give glimpses of hope. Another said that the best thing in her life has been learning in these schools not to hate. "Hate is a

prison." This exhibit and the research in Iraq have been made possible through generous grants from the Gülen Institute at the University of Houston. Highlights of 2010 research are published at <http://www.guleninstitute.org/publications/researches/223-hope-and-healing-stories-from-northern-iraq-where-persons-inspired-by-fethullah-gulen-have-been-serving>.

Sister Martha Ann Kirk, CCVI, Th.D. is a Professor of Religious Studies at the University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio, Texas, and the author of *Women of Bible Lands: A Pilgrimage to Compassion and Wisdom* with stories of ancient Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Sister Patricia Madigan, OP, Ph.D., is the Director of the Dominican Centre for Interfaith Ministry, Education and Research, Sydney, Australia. She has written *Women and Fundamentalism in Islam and Catholicism, Negotiating Modernity in the Globalized World*.



This exhibit of 24 panels has about three photos and stories of the women on each panel. The panels are 36 inches tall and 24 inches wide. Use of the exhibit and presentations on it are free through the generosity of the Gülen Institute, University of Houston, For more information, contact Sister Martha Ann Kirk, Th.D., University of the Incarnate Word, kirk@uiwtx.edu Phone: 210-829-3854.

“Iraqi Women of Three Generations: Challenges, Education, and Hopes for Peace,” An Exhibit of Images and Stories by Sister Martha Ann Kirk and Sister Patricia Madigan has been shown at:

The Episcopal Church of Reconciliation, San Antonio, August 2011.

Dialog of Civilizations Platform, The Turquoise Center, Houston, September 18 to 24, 2011.

St. Edward's University, Scarborough-Phillips Library, Austin, October 1-25, 2011 with presentations to Education and Religious Studies classes.

North American Chapter of the World Council for Curriculum and Instruction Conference, Austin, October 26-28, 2011.

Institute of Interfaith Dialog Annual Friendship Dinner, San Antonio, November 10, 2011.

Part of the exhibit was shown with a presentation “Peace-Building in Northern Iraq through Education,” SoL Center, University Presbyterian Church, San Antonio, November 15, 2011.

Incarnate Word High School Library, San Antonio, January 13 – February 10, 2012 with presentations to all the faculty, to the Pax Christi organization, and to the whole student body .

Texas Pax Christi State Conference, San Antonio, March 23-24, 2012.

University of Texas Pan American Library, Edinburg, TX, Sept. 4-28, 2012 with presentations to Criminal Justice and Literature classes and the press and study guide for History classes.

Silk Road Festival, Houston, TX, October 6-7, 2012 with presentation to the public.

University of the Incarnate Word Fine Arts, San Antonio, TX, October 10-31, 2012 with presentations to Education, Literature, Arts, and Religious Studies classes.

The International School of the Americas, San Antonio, TX, November 4 – December 20, 2012 with a showing to Iraqi refugee students.

Northwest Vista College, San Antonio, TX, January 29 – February 27, 2013 with presentations to Humanities, Peace and Conflict Resolution, and Geography classes.

St. Mary's University Library, San Antonio, TX, March 4 – April 12, 2013 with a presentation to the general public.

The University of Texas at Austin, April 18, 2013, hosted by the Islamic Dialogue Student Association and the Institute of Interfaith Dialog.

UIW Rosenberg School of Optometry, November 1st to December 20, 2013.

Publications on the research in Iraq: *Hope and Healing: Stories from Northern Iraq Where Persons Inspired by Fethullah Gülen Have Been Serving*, Martha Ann Kirk, Houston: Gülen Institute University of Houston, 2011 and also web published <http://guleninstitute.org/publications/researches/223-hope-and-healing-stories-from-northern-iraq-where-persons-inspired-by-fethullah-gulen-have-been-serving>

“Exhibit lets Iraqi women tell stories of heartbreak and hope,” Abe Levy, Religion Writer, *San Antonio Express-News*, Saturday, August 20, 2011; <http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/religion/article/Exhibit-lets-Iraqi-women-tell-stories-of-2133261.php>

Abe Levy's article was re-published in the *Iraq Daily Times*, August 25, 2011 <http://iraqdailytimes.com/exhibit-lets-iraqi-women-tell-stories-of-heartbreak-and-hope/>

“Thanks to Education, Reconciliation and Hope Arise” Sister Patricia Madigan, *Aurora* magazine of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, Australia, December 2011 <http://aurora.realviewtechnologies.com/?iid=57085&startpage=1&crd=0&searchKey=December 2011>

“Capturing Iraqi women's struggle for peace,” Blanca Morales, *Waging Nonviolence, People-Powered News and Analysis*, September 27, 2011 <http://wagingnonviolence.org/2011/09/capturing-iraqi-womens-struggle-for-peace/>

“Iraqi Women of Three Generations Exhibit” by Virginia Haynie Gause. *Life at the Library, The University of Texas – Pan American Library* eNewsletter, September 2012. <http://php.lib.utpa.edu/newsletter/#article4>

Video, “Iraqi Women of Three Generations,” Sept. 10, 2012 (on the right in the list) at <http://www.themonitor.com/video/c/1155331309/top-videos/1832816364001/news-fi-tm>

“Exhibit documents lives, education of Iraqi women” by Gail Burkhardt. *The Monitor*, McAllen, TX, September 15, 2012 9:18 PM <http://www.themonitor.com/articles/exhibit-63883-iraqi-lives.html> and the article also appeared in the Brownsville Herald <http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/news/edinburg-144979-women-education.html>

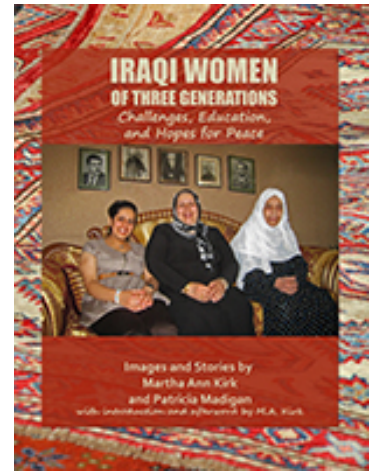
Iraqi Women of Three Generations *Challenges, Education, and Hopes for Peace*

Images and Stories by Sister Martha Ann Kirk, Th.D. and Sister Patricia Madigan, Ph.D.
With Introduction and Afterword by M.A. Kirk

<http://peacecenterbooks.com/iraqi-women/>

Trade paperback, 8½" x 11", 112 pages. \$17.00

100 color photos; stories from 23 families ISBN-13: 978-1502570734



Stories of Iraqi women's resilience, courage, and compassion have wisdom which can encourage understanding and healing across cultures and religions. Six years after the 1988 massacres of more than 180,000 people in Northern Iraq, Turkish Muslims quietly began schools to give children hope and promote peace. The teachers were inspired by Fethullah Gülen, an Islamic scholar who encourages education which builds diversity, justice, and peace.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Sister Martha Ann Kirk, CCVI, (on the right) a professor in the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas, has received a number of peacemaking awards for her work building understanding and bridges between religious and cultural groups. She and the Incarnate Word Sisters were declared the 2013 San Antonio Peace Laureate by the peaceCENTER. Among her publications are *Growing Seeds of Peace* and *Healing and Hope* (both available from www.guleninstitute.org) and *Women of Bible Lands: A Pilgrimage to Compassion and Wisdom* (www.litpress.org) which has sites from a dozen countries and the history of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim women associated with them. She frequently leads students on study tours helping to build cross-cultural relations. She was a scholar in-residence at Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem. She holds a Th.D. in Theology and the Arts from the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA; an M.A. in Religion from Fordham University; and an M.A. in Art Education from the University of New Mexico. She is a Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word of San Antonio, Texas.

Sister Patricia Madigan, OP, (above, left) is the director of CIMER, the Dominican Centre for Interfaith, Ministry, Education and Research, which engages with communities of people of other faiths, and contributes to mutual understanding and social cohesiveness in Australian society. The centre especially focuses on women's roles, participation, and contributions. Between 2004 and 2012 she has been an Australian delegate at five inter-governmental conferences of the Asia-Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue. Dr. Madigan completed her studies in ecumenical and interfaith dialog at Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem, the Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin, and Harvard Divinity School, where she specialized in Christian-Muslim relations. She was awarded her Ph.D. in the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Sydney. She has written *Women and Fundamentalism in Islam and Catholicism, Negotiating Modernity in the Globalized World* (Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 2011) which takes a theological-historical approach to understanding the complex relationships among gender, religion, economics and politics in the global context, with particular reference to Islam and Catholicism. She has worked on research projects with the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Australian Women's Coalition (AWC), the Gülen Institute, Macquarie University Law School and the National Office for the Participation of

Women (OPW) of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference. She is currently serving on the Leadership Team of the Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands.

PRAISE FOR THREE GENERATIONS OF IRAQI WOMEN

“This book provides many life lessons for all members of the human family. It imparts basic wisdom passed down from generations—love your family, be kind to others, do charitable acts, respect people and their differences. Through conversations between grandmothers, mothers and daughters, the authors provide powerful teachings about the heartaches and hardships that families endured during the political turmoil in Iraq as well as the formidable resiliency in humans to overcome suffering and loss. As I engaged with the text, I revisited the political events I read about a while back in the newspapers or watched on TV, because I was now putting a human face with the atrocities committed against humanity such as chemical warfare, political repression, terrorism, discrimination and violence. These multi-generational talks shed light on the importance of education, but most importantly, on having teachers who care about social justice. These teachers care about imparting academic knowledge and using it to change the world. It is also important that students learn to care about the human condition.

“I was reminded of a speech that Sargent Shriver, director of the Peace Corp made in 1981 at a twentieth anniversary reunion of volunteers: ‘The cure is care. Caring for others is the practice of peace. Caring becomes as important as curing. Caring produces the cure, not the reverse. Caring about nuclear war and its victims is the beginning of a cure for our obsession with war. Peace does not come through strength. Quite the opposite. Strength comes through peace. The practices of peace strengthen us for every vicissitude. The task is immense!’” This book is a must read for anyone who wants to learn about social justice and the power of caring through education.”

— **Irasema Coronado, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation**

“This book is clearly a labor of love—but not in the conventional sense. There’s little doubt that the subject of the book is of great importance to the authors. But this work is a labor of love in a much deeper sense: it is the fruit of the mutual love, respect, and trust shared between two Catholic women religious animated by faith, hope, and a passion for justice, and the three generations of Iraqi women animated by the very same spirit. The voices and stories heard in this book are a rich reward for those who take peace-building and reconciliation seriously enough to turn away—if only for a short time—from mass media coverage of ‘Muslims and the Middle East,’ and spend some time attending to the truth they contain.”

— **Scott C. Alexander, Ph.D. Director of Catholic-Muslim Studies, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago**

“The stories of the three generations of women in this wonderful book are in the realm of sacred stories. They are stories of extraordinary transformation in the midst of unimaginable hardship. From the vision for education held by women who had been denied this to the determination of women to pursue education, these are stories of ‘remarkable resourcefulness and sheer courage. Woven throughout all of these women’s stories is a persistent vision of hope and peace. In the words of Ela Bhatt, ‘peace is about the ordinariness of life . . . and that is what women do.’ Through their stories, these Iraqi women offer us a bridge into experiences that many of us will never know and teach us through their courage about what it can mean to change what we do with our lives.”

— **Gail Gill, Chairperson of the Council for Women, Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay (Sydney, Australia)**



About peaceCENTERbooks: Started in 2007, peaceCENTERbooks is a community publishing initiative of the San Antonio peaceCENTER. We publish selected books that we fervently hope will celebrate peace, teach peace and assist those who are working for peace and justice in our city and other communities across the planet.

About the peaceCENTER: Since 1995, the all-volunteer and interfaith peaceCENTER continues to be a significant community catalyst for peace in San Antonio. Compassion and Justice are our strong guiding lights. Contemplative Practices, Experiential Education, and Nonviolent Actions are our working expressions throughout the community at-large.

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The peaceCENTER named Sr. Martha Ann Kirk and the Incarnate Word Sisters the San Antonio 2013 Peace Laureate. See http://www.interfaithdialog.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=328:2013-san-antonio-peace-laureate-sister-martha-ann-kirk