

***“If Miftahi¹ cannot be at the home lost to me
May it be where my loss is remembered.”²***

Sculptor: John Bodza



¹ Arabic: ‘My Key’

² Title of poem by Randa Hamwi Duwaji, inspired by this photo and Father Geraint’s story.

**“If Miftahi cannot be at the home lost to me
May it be where my loss is remembered.”**

Cold. So cold
I long for the clasp
Of their hands
For sunshine upon me
On the ledge where I'd be
For the missing youth
If ever he returned home
“You know where to find Miftahi, son...”

Still. So still
I miss the pushes and heaves
Jolted by man and beast
Lost... searched for in every pocket
‘Where did I put ‘Miftahi’?’
Kissed gratefully when found

Quiet. So quiet
I mourn the children
Clamoring together
Throwing me in air and to each other
Falling, tinkling upon stone
‘There is ‘Miftahi!’
Game ends
Back in place for lost brother

Alone. So alone
Since the day of Fear
When they all left home
And I lost purpose

But now, here I am
In a place of love
On a stand that tells my tale

People pass by
And understand
People stop to remember
And it is no longer cold.

**From Father Geraint ap Iorwerth, Rector of Pennal,
Holy Week, 2004:**

“I conceived of the sculpture during a service to commemorate Deir Yassin Day, 2003, at my church of St Peter ad Vincula, Pennal in southern Snowdonia, Wales. A simple memorial to the Palestinian catastrophe of 1948, with a key as its focal point: an actual Palestinian house key and not a replica. A key belonging to a real family, a symbol of a home lost and a community destroyed.

The idea of somehow finding such a key and bringing it to Wales left me feeling angry and powerless. When it finally arrived I felt numb for weeks. Now that we are its guardians it is like being responsible for a sacred relic from 'the Holy Land'. That is exactly what it is - a relic that is strangely 'alive' and whose significance we Westerners may never truly understand.

We are used to seeing a variety of stands in our churches, especially for flowers and candles. They are light and easy to grasp. We think nothing of moving them about as required. On first seeing 'the key' many instinctively reach out to grasp it, until the barbed wire makes them pull back.

At the top of the stand is the world in the shape of a heart that embraces the shepherd's crook on which hangs a solitary key. The heart is surrounded by a barbed crown (symbolic of Good Friday), while the stem is also encircled by barbed wire. The bottom half of the key, however, is exposed. On its own. Outside. The shepherd's crook is a symbol of those who are irrevocably linked to the destiny of the Palestinians, e.g. 'God', Biblical Israel (Ps 23, Ps 80, Ezek 34), Western Christianity and its leaders, etc. An integral part of the sculpture is the chain and lock (not shown) that binds 'the key' to the communion rail. The key stands to the right of our Jewish holocaust memorial, a painting of 'The Crucified Jew' by Karel Lek (Beaumaris)”.


Father Geraint ap Iorwerth, Rector of Pennal

Sculptor: John Bodza, Pennal.

Photographer: Erfyl Lloyd Davies (Dolgellau)