



# P.O.V.

Season

# 22

DISCUSSION GUIDE

## This Way Up

A film by Georgi Lazarevski



[www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov)



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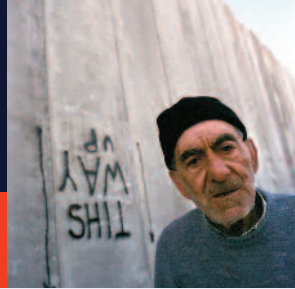
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**INTRODUCTION**

The separation wall near the Home of Our Lady of Sorrows.

Photo courtesy of Georgi Lazarevski

This is a story about a wall -- the separations it's meant to enforce, and the unintended ones it creates. The security wall being constructed by Israel on the West Bank has divided Palestinian families and communities. It has also isolated the Catholic-run Our Lady of Sorrows nursing home outside of Jerusalem, leaving the feisty residents to face old age in the throes of one of the world's most bitter conflicts. With beautiful imagery, moments of laughter and use of a quietly eccentric older guide, **This Way Up** puts a human face on political debates as it examines the social, economic and personal costs of barriers and division.



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Marie, an elderly resident of the Home of Our Lady of Sorrows in East-Jerusalem..

Photo courtesy of Georgi Lazarevski

## Our Lady of Sorrows

A Catholic-run nursing home primarily serving elderly Palestinians of various faiths, Our Lady of Sorrows was founded in east Jerusalem in 1955. The facility has space for about 50 residents, including many who are poor and disabled. Few of the residents' families are able to pay for their care; the facility is run by a small group of nuns, a staff of 18, whose work provides the residents with the bare necessities. The majority of residents – and staff – come from the West Bank, and most of their families continue to live there.

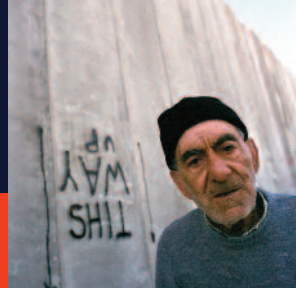
The state of Israel first put up a security barrier across from Our Lady of Sorrows in 2002. The wall has made daily life more difficult for the staff and residents of the home, as anyone coming from the West Bank must go through a series of checkpoints or else must scale the wall without being de-

tected. The access issues have also made the delivery of supplies and transportation of the home's residents to medical facilities more complicated.

### Source:

"The Wall and Its Consequences for Ordinary Citizens."  
AsiaNews. Feb. 9, 2004.

<http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=349>



## Israel's Security Barrier

The Israeli government began building a barrier in and around the West Bank in 2002 after a wave of suicide bombings by Palestinian militants that began in 2000. The project has been controversial from its inception. There has even been a heated debate over what to call the barrier – Israeli officials describe it as a fence, while critics often insist that it is a wall. The barrier, which runs more than 420 miles, is composed of different sections. Some parts, located in populated areas, consist of concrete slabs 26 feet high, with watchtowers occupied by border guards. In more isolated areas, the barrier includes multiple rows of fencing, with ditches, surveillance cameras and guards patrolling in vehicles.



Thomas, an elderly resident of the Home of Our Lady of Sorrows in East-Jerusalem. At the end of his life, Thomas is still waiting and struggling for a Palestinian State.

Photo courtesy of Georgi Lazarevski

When the Israeli government announced its intention to build a barrier, the project prompted outcries within Israel and the Palestinian territories, as well as abroad. One point of contention was that the wall incorporated territory that had been regarded as Palestinian land before the Six-Day War in 1967. During that time, Israel seized control of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights. In June 2004, Israel's highest court deemed that the barrier itself was permissible, but that sections of it should be rerouted to accommodate Arab populations. In July 2004, the International Court of Justice issued an advisory opinion that the barrier violated international law because it was built partly on Palestinian land. It is estimated that 10 percent of the Palestinian population is enclosed on the Israeli side of the barrier.

### Sources:

"Guide to the West Bank Barrier." BBC News.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/guides/456900/456944/html/default.stm>; "The World: Israel's Wall; Building for Calm by Giving Up on Peace." *The New York Times*. July 18, 2004.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/07/18/weekinreview/the-world-israel-s-wall-building-for-calm-by-giving-up-on-peace.html>;

"Country Guide: Israel." *The Washington Post*.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/countries/israel.html>;

"The World's Most Complex Borders: Israel/West Bank." *Wide Angle*. July 26, 2005. [www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/episodes/border-jumpers/the-worlds-most-complex-borders/israelwest-bank/2328/](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/episodes/border-jumpers/the-worlds-most-complex-borders/israelwest-bank/2328/)



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION



## Palestinian Christians

While the majority of Palestinians are Muslim, there have been Christians in the region since the founding of that faith. Their numbers are relatively small. Within Israel, about 9 percent of the members of the Palestinian population (which is about 19 percent of the country as a whole) are Christian. In the West Bank and Gaza, it is estimated that Christians comprise less than 3 percent of the population. A survey by the Palestinian Authority in 1997 counted 40,000 Christians among the 3.76 million people in the West Bank and Gaza. Christian groups have reported numbers as high as 90,000. Of those Christians, most are Catholics or Greek Orthodox, but there are small numbers of members of other denominations, including Armenian and Russian Christians.

Mary, a resident at the Home of Our Lady of Sorrows in East-Jerusalem, and her son George, who has a lot of trouble getting through the separation wall to visit his mom.

Photo courtesy of Georgi Lazarevski

### Sources:

"Christians in the Middle East: West Bank and Gaza."

BBC News. Dec. 15, 2005.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4499668.stm#westbank](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4499668.stm#westbank)

"Christian Presence in Israel and Palestine."

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). March 2006.

<http://www.pcusa.org/worldwide/israelpalestine/resources/5christianpresence.pdf>

**GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Immediately after the film, you may want to give people a few quiet moments to reflect on what they have seen. If the mood seems tense, you can pose a general question and give people some time to themselves to jot down or think about their answers before opening the discussion.

Unless you think participants are so uncomfortable that they can't engage until they have had a break, don't encourage people to leave the room between the film and the discussion. If you save your break for an appropriate moment during the discussion, you won't lose the feeling of the film as you begin your dialogue.

One way to get a discussion going is to pose a general question such as:

- If you could ask anyone in the film a single question, who would you ask and what would you ask him or her?
- What did you learn from this film? What insights did it provide?
- Describe a moment or scene in the film that you found particularly disturbing or moving. What was it about that scene that was especially compelling for you?
- What is the significance or meaning of the film's title?



Thomas, an elderly resident of the Home of Our Lady of Sorrows in East-Jerusalem.  
Photo courtesy of Georgi Lazarevski



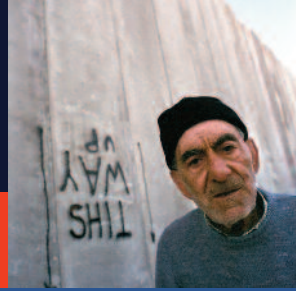
- What did you learn from this film about the effects of Israel's security wall? What information does the film include that reports on Palestinians and Israelis from mainstream news media generally do not? Whose stories do journalists usually tell and whose do they leave out?
- Knowing that fear of terrorists was one of the reasons for the construction of the wall, one of the residents declares, "No one is born a terrorist. One becomes a terrorist." Do you agree with him? Why or why not?
- How do you think you would respond if the government imposed rules requiring you to get its authorization to visit an ailing parent? How would you balance the need for security with human compassion?
- A young staff member describes returning from living in freedom abroad and feeling "as if I were going to jail. I was

Jad, an elderly resident of the Home of Our Lady of Sorrows in East-Jerusalem, smokes in the gardens of the Home while two Palestinians go to work, getting through the gardens to escape from Israeli soldiers.

Photo courtesy of Georgi Lazarevski

surrounded by walls. What a shock!" His female colleague says, "Life has lost its taste. You work, you eat and you sleep. Nothing more. This is our life. A dog's life!" If you were running the Our Lady of Sorrows nursing home, what would you do to heal the spirits of your staff and residents? How do restrictions on freedom of movement affect the human spirit?

- What is the significance of the film's title? Why do you think the filmmaker chose it?

**RESOURCES****FILM-RELATED WEB SITES**
**Original Online Content on  
P.O.V. Interactive ([www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov))**
**P.O.V.'s *This Way Up* companion website**
**[www.pbs.org/pov/thiswayup](http://www.pbs.org/pov/thiswayup)**

To further enhance the broadcast, **P.O.V.** has produced an interactive website to enable viewers to explore the film in greater depth. The companion website to **This Way Up** offers a streaming video trailer for the film; an interview with filmmaker Georgi Lazarevski; a list of related websites, organizations and books; a downloadable discussion guide; classroom activities and the following special features:

**VIEW THE SECURITY BARRIER**

See the barrier for yourself, courtesy of Google Earth.

**BOOK EXCERPT**

Read first person accounts about families separated by physical barriers.

**TIMELINE**

Examine the conflict through parallel timelines, from Israeli and Palestinian perspectives.

**PHOTO GALLERY**

Learn more about the residents of the Our Lady of Sorrows nursing home.

**9 STAR HOTEL**

Visit POV's companion website for **9 Star Hotel** (2008) by Ido Haar to follow Palestinian day laborers as they try to find work by illegally crossing the security barrier.

**What's Your P.O.V.?**

Share your thoughts about **This Way Up**

by posting a comment on the *P.O.V. Blog*

[www.pbs.org/pov/blog](http://www.pbs.org/pov/blog) or send an email to [pbs@pov.org](mailto:pbs@pov.org).

**West Bank Barrier**
**BBC NEWS: GUIDE TO THE WEST BANK BARRIER**
**<http://news.bbc.co.uk>**

This overview of the barrier provides an introduction, a map of the region, a timeline of its installation and a breakdown of the barrier structure.

**BBC NEWS: WORKING THE WEST BANK CHECKPOINTS**
**<http://news.bbc.co.uk>**

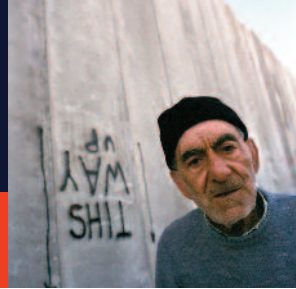
Following one truck driver's story of how the barrier has affected his work, this article covers many of the problems and politics caused by the building of the barrier. The article also features a map of the barrier in reference to key cities and Palestinian urban areas. (June 29, 2009)

**THE WASHINGTON POST: TWO PEOPLES, DIVIDED**
**[www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)**

This multimedia article about the West Bank barrier shows how it affects daily life for Israelis and Palestinians alike. (Oct. 19, 2007)

**THE NEW YORK TIMES:**
**HOW I LEARNED TO LOVE THE WALL**
**[www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)**

In this editorial, Muslim author Irshad Manji acknowledges the difficulty caused by the security barrier for Palestinians, but argues that the barrier was birthed by suicide bombers and that the barrier saves civilian lives, which justifies its existence. (March 18, 2006)

**RESOURCES****THE NEW YORK TIMES: A WALL AS A WEAPON****www.nytimes.com**

Noam Chomsky's editorial argues against the security barrier by pointing out that it does not fall on the Israel side of the internationally recognized border — the Green Line. Chomsky says that the construction of the barrier has allowed Israel to claim some of the most fertile lands of the West Bank and extends its control of water resources. (Feb. 23, 2004)

**ASIANEWS: THE WALL AND ITS CONSEQUENCES FOR ORDINARY CITIZENS****www.asianews.it**

Featuring a letter from one of the nuns working at Our Lady of Sorrows, the rest home featured in **This Way Up**, this article summarizes some of the problems the barrier has caused for Palestinian Christians, workers and families in their everyday lives. (Feb. 9, 2004)

**THE NEW YORK TIMES: THE WORLD: ISRAEL'S WALL; BUILDING FOR CALM BY GIVING UP ON PEACE****www.nytimes.com**

This article explains some of the results of the building of the barrier. Israel has noticed a decrease in attacks and people are much more at ease in their daily lives and are again returning to popular day and night spots. It also briefly describes the effects on some Palestinians who cannot get to what they once considered their farmland. (July 18, 2004)

**Palestinian Christians****AL-BUSHRA****www.al-bushra.org**

This organization seeks to spread information about the Catholic populations living in the Middle East. Its website features fact pages, a newsletter, information regarding pilgrimages and other resources for anyone interested in learning more about Catholic communities that are still surviving in the Middle East.

**BBC NEWS: PALESTINIAN CHRISTIAN COUPLE'S DIVIDED LIFE****http://news.bbc.co.uk**

He lives near Bethlehem; she lives in the Gaza Strip. But the Israeli military says that she is not allowed through the wall because her criteria for movement do not meet humanitarian standards. This article portrays how the dividing barrier affects families and loved ones — in this case a couple — living in the Middle East. (May 13, 2009)

**THE JERUSALEM POST: SOME TRUTHS ABOUT PALESTINIAN CHRISTIANS****www.jpost.com**

This comprehensive political history of Palestinian Christians and the Middle East in general talks briefly about the diaspora of Middle Eastern Christians, which has grown since the 1970s. (May 12, 2009)

**TIME: CHRISTIANS IN GAZA MAKE THEIR APPEAL TO THE POPE****www.time.com**

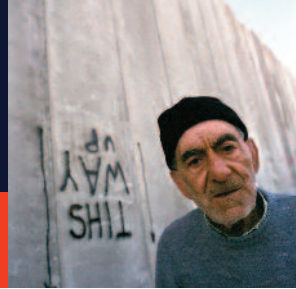
This recent article notes the anticipation of the Pope's arrival among the Christian population of the Gaza Strip in May 2009. The population has greatly dwindled in recent years as the conflict between Israeli and Palestinian populations has intensified. (May 11, 2009)

**BBC NEWS: CHRISTIANS IN THE MIDDLE EAST: WEST BANK AND GAZA****news.bbc.co.uk**

A fact sheet from the BBC highlights the basic statistics concerning Christian populations living in the West Bank and Gaza. It notes that the Christian percentage of the population has been cut in half during recent years. (Dec. 15, 2005)

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.): CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE****www.pcusa.org**

This fact sheet, published by Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), offers a brief overview/history and some basic information about Christians in Israel and Palestine. (March 2006)



## RESOURCES

## Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

### THE ALTERNATIVE INFORMATION CENTER: PALESTINE/ISRAEL

**www.alternativenews.org**

A progressive, joint Palestinian-Israeli activist group, The Alternative Information Center works to promote freedom and equality in the Middle East while working against the long-standing philosophy of separation. Its website features published articles and news reports about the ongoing conflict, as well as a page featuring a podcast series. (<http://www.alternativenews.org/News%20from%20Within:%20Palestine/Israel%20Podcasts.html>)

### CHURCHES FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE

**www.cmep.org**

This advocacy group, founded in 1984, is a coalition of 22 public policy offices of national churches and agencies — Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant — working to spread awareness of the Middle East conflict by maintaining dialogue with advocacy groups, diplomatic communities and government agencies. The group's website features an archive of its quarterly newsletters (<http://www.cmep.org/Policy/policy.htm>), as well as a resource center concerning the West Bank barrier (<http://www.cmep.org/documents/separationwall.htm>).

### INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

**www.crisisgroup.org**

The website for the International Crisis Group features a page dedicated to the Arab-Israeli conflict (<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=1271&l=1>). It also features updated articles and news reports about the ongoing conflict, an advocacy page that reports on the group's current work in conflict resolution and ways to get involved

### HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH (HRW): ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

**www.hrw.org**

This organization dedicates a page on its website to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, putting both sides at fault for their own actions during periods of fighting. The website also pro-

vides updates on the conflict, as well as multiple reports about the violence at different points in the conflict. Visitors can donate to the organization (<http://www.kintera.org/site/c.nIIWIgN2JwE/b.4542089/>) or sign up for the HRW newsletter to receive brief news updates ([http://www.kintera.org/site/c.nIIWIgN2JwE/b.4565619/k.6A7D/Email\\_Center\\_\\_Custom/apps/ka/ct/contactcustom.asp](http://www.kintera.org/site/c.nIIWIgN2JwE/b.4565619/k.6A7D/Email_Center__Custom/apps/ka/ct/contactcustom.asp)).

### ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PROCON.ORG

**<http://israelipalestinian.procon.org/viewtopic.asp>**

This pro/con website features articles and quotes on multiple issues involved in the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Specifically, the website features a page about Palestinians and Israeli Christians (<http://israelipalestinian.procon.org/viewquestions.asp?issueID=000066&subissueID=000193>), as well as an interesting back and forth on the building of the West Bank barrier (<http://israelipalestinian.procon.org/viewquestions.asp?issueID=000070&subissueID=000223>).

### THE WASHINGTON POST: COUNTRY GUIDE: ISRAEL

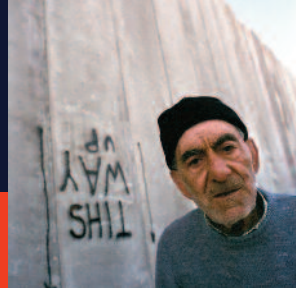
**www.washingtonpost.com**

This page provides a brief overview of the country of Israel from its inception up to the present day.

### BBC NEWS: MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

**[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in\\_depth/middle\\_east/2001/Israel\\_and\\_the\\_palestinians/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/middle_east/2001/Israel_and_the_palestinians/default.stm)**

This overview of the conflict provides information about the most recent conflict in Gaza, illustrated with a map of the conflict ([http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/7812136.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7812136.stm)). It also includes a brief Q-and-A section providing some answers to questions posed by the fighting ([http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/7818022.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7818022.stm)).



## RESOURCES

## NPR/PBS

## PBS

**THE ONLINE NEWSHOUR:  
ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT**
[www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)

The website for *The NewsHour* offers a comprehensive view of both the Israeli and Palestinian positions on the security border that has been built between the territories. Utilizing maps and detailed analysis from experts on both sides, it informs the reader about the complex situation in the territory. (2004)

**NEWSHOUR EXTRA: U.S. ENDORSES NEW TACTIC  
IN ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT**
[www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)

This story reports on the perceptions of the Bush administration and Palestinian analysts regarding Ariel Sharon's proposed policy of maintaining settlements in disputed territory. (April 14, 2004)

**WIDE ANGLE: THE WORLD'S MOST COMPLEX  
BORDERS: ISRAEL/WEST BANK**
[www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)

The borders between Israel and the West Bank have been disputed continually since Israel's annexation of the West Bank after the war in 1967, and continuous fighting and conflict have afflicted the area. This article highlights the controversy over the building of a barrier between the two lands and the politics surrounding the current dispute. (July 26, 2005)

## NPR

**ISRAEL'S BARRIER**
[www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org)

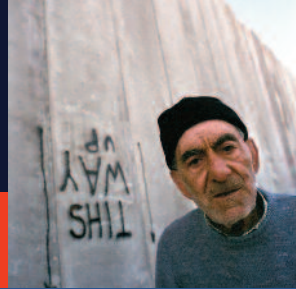
Split into four parts (Palestinians, Israelis Divided; Inside the Seam Zone; Seeking Protection; and One Man's Hardships), this companion website discusses the effects of the Israeli barrier on both the Israeli and Palestinian sides. Israel's wall and fence project has dramatically reduced suicide bombings and other attacks inside the country. But the barrier, which will stretch some 450 miles when completed, also has had a severely negative effect on the lives of ordinary Palestinians. The website also features an updated map of the barrier showing both its current route and parts that have been approved and are under construction (<http://www.npr.org/news/specials/2009/israelbarrier/map.html>). (April 9, 2009)

**MORNING EDITION: SIGNS OF ECONOMIC  
LIFE RETURN TO WEST BANK CITY**
[www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org)

Since some movement restrictions in Nablus were eased, economic life is starting to grow again in the West Bank city. Signs of new growth, such as a cinema and thriving restaurants, are drawing Palestinians who previously could not travel to the city. However, some Palestinians fear that the easing of restrictions will not last, so they are taking advantage of the opportunity to move freely in and out of the city. (July 10, 2009)

**ALL THINGS CONSIDERED: ACTIVISTS VOW  
TO REVIVE WEST BANK SETTLEMENT**
[www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org)

The settlement of Homesh in the West Bank was evacuated recently due to the escalated conflict between the Israeli and occupied Palestinian territories, but now the original Israeli settlers are vowing to revive the town. While they work to ensure that they keep control over the land, which they believe was given to them by God, the Palestinians in a settlement very close to Homesh wonder if they will ever have control over the land again and how the neighboring settlements will interact with each other. (June 29, 2009)

**HOW TO BUY THE FILM**

To order **This Way Up**, go to



Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and beginning its 22nd season on PBS in 2009, the award-winning P.O.V. series is the longest-running showcase on American television to feature the work of today's best independent documentary filmmakers. P.O.V., which airs June through September with primetime specials during the year, has brought more than 275 acclaimed documentaries to millions nationwide, and has a Webby Award-winning online series, *P.O.V.'s Borders*. Since 1988, P.O.V. has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information is available at [www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov).

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**P.O.V. Interactive** [www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov)

P.O.V.'s award-winning Web department produces special features for every P.O.V. presentation, extending the life of our films through filmmaker interviews, story updates, podcasts, video and community-based and educational content that involves viewers in activities and feedback. P.O.V. Interactive also produces our Web-only showcase for interactive storytelling, *P.O.V.'s Borders*. In addition, the *P.O.V. Blog* is a gathering place for documentary fans and filmmakers to discuss and debate their favorite films, get the latest news and link to further resources. The P.O.V. website, blog and film archives form a unique and extensive online resource for documentary storytelling.

**P.O.V. Community Engagement and Education**

P.O.V. works with local PBS stations, educators and community organizations to present free screenings and discussion events to engage communities in vital conversations about our world. As a leading provider of quality nonfiction programming for use in public life, P.O.V. offers an extensive menu of resources, including free discussion guides and curriculum-based lesson plans. P.O.V.'s *Youth Views* works with youth organizers and students to provide them with resources and training to use independent documentaries as a catalyst for social change.

**American Documentary, Inc.** [www.amdoc.org](http://www.amdoc.org)

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation. *Simon Kilmurry is executive director of American Documentary | P.O.V.*

Front cover: Jad, an elderly resident of the Home of Our Lady of Sorrows in East-Jerusalem.  
Photo courtesy of Georgi Lazarevski

