



The Garden of Forgiveness Project was born when one woman who had lived through the civil war in Lebanon awoke one night to a vision. The vision was that a green garden must be built in the middle of the Green Line of destruction which cuts through the city of Beirut, following the horrific civil war—a garden where people of all faiths and traditions could come and pray and meditate on the need for peace.

Miraculously, a site freed up when bulldozers plowed into a Roman column at the Green Line location. Excavations later showed that seven different civilizations had been caked on top of one another at this site (including ancient Greek and Roman); in addition, there had once stood a Shrine to Nouriya, the Virgin Mother. At this shrine, Christians and Muslims had prayer together for more than one hundred years. As a part of the renovation to Saint George's Orthodox Church, the Shrine to Nouriya has been rebuilt.

The 5.7-acre site, reduced to rubble by Lebanon's civil war, has now been dedicated to the Garden of Forgiveness (*Hadiquat as Samah*). The site is a stunning archaeological masterpiece and is surrounded by three churches, representing each of the major Christian churches in Lebanon, and three mosques, representing the major strains of Islam in Lebanon.

Alexandra Asseily is the visionary leader of the Garden of Forgiveness Project in Lebanon.



*An architect's view of the site, showing surrounding places of worship, natural springs, and the central walkway*