



PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF THE CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM

EASTER MESSAGE — 2024

We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. (Romans 6:9-10)

We, the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem, while observing two distant dates of commemoration this year, nevertheless join together in unity to proclaim to the world the Good News of Christ's Resurrection, first announced by angels nearly two millennia ago at the empty tomb here in the Holy City of Jerusalem.

This hopeful Easter message not only confirms Christ's triumph over sin and death, but also promises salvation to those who come to our Lord in faith with penitent hearts. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Romans 6:4b-5).

In issuing this Easter proclamation, we fully recognize the intense suffering that surrounds us here in the Holy Land, as well as in many other parts of the world. Speaking more directly to our own circumstances, we repeat our denunciation of all violent actions in the present devastating war, especially those directed against innocent civilians, and we reiterate our call for an immediate and sustained ceasefire.

In concert with these, we renew our plea for the speedy distribution of humanitarian aid; the release of all captives; the unimpeded access of fully-equipped doctors and medical staff to tend the sick and injured; and the opening of internationally facilitated negotiations aimed at ending and moving beyond the present cycle of violence. Only in this way, we believe, can a comprehensive solution be finally advanced for a just and lasting peace here in the land where our Lord sacrificed his life, breaking down the dividing wall of enmity, in order to offer the world the hope for reconciliation (Ephesians 2:14; Colossians 1:20).

While extending this Easter message to Christians and others around the world, we offer our special greetings to those of the faithful in Gaza who have been bearing especially heavy crosses over the past several months. These include those taking refuge inside St. Porphyrios and Holy Family Churches, as well as the courageous staff and volunteers of the Anglican-run Ahli Hospital, along with the patients they serve.

To them and to all who look to Christ's Resurrection in faith, even in the midst of the present darkness, let us affirm with St. Paul this hopeful acclamation: "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

It is in this confident spirit, that, whatever our circumstances, we can join with each other in repeating the ancient and joyous Easter greeting that continues to echo across the ages: "Christ is Risen! (*Al Maseeh Qam! Christos Anesti! Christos haryav i merelotz! Pikhirstos aftonf! Christ est Ressuscité! Cristo è risorto! Christus resurrexit! Meshiha qam! Christos t'ensah em' muhtan! Christus ist auferstanden!*) He is Risen, indeed! Alleluia!"

—The Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem