

## Final Message Palm Sunday Procession 2022

Jerusalem April 10, 2022

Dearest Brothers and Sisters,

After a long journey we have finally entered Jerusalem, and here today our Church, the Church of Jerusalem, is gathered inside the Holy City. We come from many parts of the Holy Land: from Palestine, from Israel, we also have representatives from Jordan and Cyprus. After the pandemic, we also have with us many pilgrims from different parts of the world, and we greet their return with joy: Thank you for remembering us and returning. We have been waiting and praying for your return. And now your presence brings us hope and joy, it will bring smiles to many families. Jerusalem is also your home, for Jerusalem is the home of all peoples! Let no one in Jerusalem feel excluded!

*“They spread their cloaks on the road”* (Lc 19,36). Christ enters Jerusalem, the disciples prepare the road, the city rejoices. The body of Christ, the Church, enters Jerusalem with us today. The Prince of peace enters our homes and our families. Let us lay down our cloaks like the disciples, let us welcome him. Welcoming Him brings us peace.

We are entering Holy Week today, and in a few days, we shall celebrate in the liturgy the memory of Jesus' death and resurrection, we shall celebrate the events of redemption and salvation that were historically fulfilled right here in Jerusalem and from here reached the whole world.

We are not here in Jerusalem to guard a memory of the past, to protect monuments of history. We are here to tell everyone that the salvation that changed the world two thousand years ago is also possible today, here, and now.

As Christian citizens of the Holy Land, we cannot separate our experience of salvation from the Holy City Jerusalem. With this beautiful procession, with young and old, men and women, religious and laity, with all the different ecclesial communities, today we affirm once again our love for this City and our desire for peace and unity for it, our desire for sincere fraternity for all its inhabitants, without distinction.

This city of ours, unfortunately, over which Jesus wept, and which he loved so much, continues to be wounded by divisions, by the logic of possession and exclusivism. Well, we here today, the Church of Jerusalem, reaffirm:

- To those who want to divide, among religious communities and affiliations, in political life, among our ecclesial communities, among the churches: you will not stop our love! We will always continue to be, in spite of everything, even in spite of ourselves, a Church that wishes to be a source of unity, that seeks encounter and that will not surrender to the logic of division, hatred and contempt for the other. We will continue to love you always, because this is what our Master taught us!
- To those who want to impose logic of possession. You will not be able to own us and you will not be able to own the city. We all belong to it, and not the other way around.
- To those who want to exclude. Jerusalem is the Mother who gave birth to us and mothers love all their children, who for them are all equal, all loved, freely, without exclusions. To exclude any of her children is to wound the very identity of our City.

From the City of Jesus, we want to pray for the whole world. The events of these last few weeks are of great concern to us. We are seeing more violence and more deaths here in our Holy Land. We are tired of violence, hatred, and revenge! Let us pray for justice and peace for our peoples of the Holy Land!

Let us also pray for Ukraine and for all places in the world where wars and divisions tear apart the lives of millions, where the same logics of possession and exclusion that we know here create pain and death.

Jerusalem must become a place of healing for all nations, the place where all pray and praise the Lord for the wonders he has done here. And from here we will pray and work so that from here, from the place that has known the salvation of the world, a sincere desire for peace may arise for all!

*Lauda Jerusalem Dominum, Lauda Deum tuum, Sion! Hosanna Filio David!*