



Easter Message 2022

Prot. No. (1) 319/2022

To the Bishops, priests, religious and all the faithful of the diocese of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem!

Dearly beloved,

This year too Easter brings us a proclamation of love, peace and life. The signs of the Resurrection communicate this good news to us to this day: the stone of Jesus' tomb is overturned and no longer encloses anyone, the darkness is empty; the cloths no longer wrap Christ's body. The angel, the women and the disciples, through the Gospel passages that we will proclaim in these blessed days, still announce this news to us today: that we are not alone, that Jesus is alive and that in him we are saved. In these days of intense liturgical celebrations, everything speaks of celebration and joy, of a God who has changed the fate of the world, who has brought a new light of hope for humanity.

But at the same time I must also recognize that not infrequently we struggle to connect what we celebrate with what we live. That we do not always succeed in making the synthesis between life and faith. Besides, we might add, in today's torn and violent world, how can we speak of Easter hope? Where and how can we see the signs of the Resurrection when we see throughout the world the consequences of conflicts and injustices?

I am thinking at this moment of the violence that still wounds our Holy Land. The political conflict absorbs so much of our energy and finds expression in the repeated violent tensions that seem to be flaring up again in these days. But it also finds expression in the continuous effort of our communities to build a normal life, which here is always wearisome and tiring: moving, working, meeting, celebrating are operations that are never taken for granted and never immediate. Situations that create mistrust and risk extinguishing the hope that we proclaim at Easter. The consequences of all this often surface in our discourse and find a place in many hearts: resentment, prejudice, misunderstanding, suspicion, fear and fatigue are words that are almost never missing from our vocabulary.

I am also thinking of what is happening in Europe, in Ukraine, a country attacked by another brother country, creating human tragedies of enormous magnitude... I could go on at length listing situations where talking about love, peace and life would seem to be just a slogan.



PATRIARCHATUS LATINUS - JERUSALEM

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Is it therefore really possible today, in this life of ours, to see the signs of Christ's resurrection, to listen to the testimonies, to meet the Risen One? Is it still possible to believe in this announcement today?

Yes, it is possible! We believe it, and we reaffirm it because we have experienced it. Easter is not just a word, it is not a slogan, but it is a reality that we can still touch and experience today. We must believe it, we too want to say, "I believe, Lord; help my unbelief!" (Mk 9:24).

Because it is not true that in the world there is only darkness and violence and that we experience only death and pain. In the world there is also so much love, so many people who give their lives for others, who fight for justice, who work for peace. Doing Easter means recognizing and celebrating Christ who, through courageous witnesses, in the Holy Land and throughout the world, shows us the power of love that truly still knows how to overturn stones and bring light into the lives of so many people throughout the world and also in our Holy Land.

"Therefore let us cast away the works of darkness and put on the weapons of light" (Rom. 13:12). Yes, this is what Easter is calling us to this year as well: to become the witnesses who, by their actions, their prayers, their giving of their lives, continue to bring to the world the light that has sprung from Christ's tomb.

Happy Easter! Christ is Risen!

Jerusalem, April 13, 2022

†Pierbattista Pizzaballa
Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem