



PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF THE CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM

Easter Message — 2025

“I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.”

John 11:25–26

From the midst of the present darkness that engulfs our region, We, the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem, nevertheless boldly proclaim to the world a message of life and hope. It is the same message first announced to the women who had come to mourn at Christ’s tomb. As the angel said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen” (Luke 24:5). At these astonishing words, the women’s sorrow was suddenly transformed into joy, their grief into exultation. The Lord had risen indeed!

Two millennia later, the living light of the resurrected Christ that burst forth from the tomb on Easter continues to shine forth from the darkness, overcoming the power of sin and death (Romans 8:2). As human beings, we have experienced times of war and darkness throughout our history. In our personal lives as well, we sometimes fall. We believe that, through his death, Jesus physically carried the burden of our fall. Yet that fall did not crush him: he stood back up, he rose again. His resurrection is the light that dispels the darkness and raises up those who come to him in faith (Romans 6:4).

This marvelous light guides and empowers God’s faithful people to show forth the Almighty’s wondrous deeds of mercy to the poor, the downtrodden, and the oppressed (1 Peter 2:9–10; Luke 4:18). With deep gratitude for God’s redeeming grace in Christ, we embrace this mission, especially as we seek to respond pastorally to all who have suffered so grievously in our region over the past eighteen months.

Yet we cannot accomplish this weighty task alone. We therefore call upon Christians and others of goodwill from around the world to recommit themselves to working and praying for the relief of the afflicted, the release of all captives, and an end to the wars and assaults that have led to immeasurable human suffering, death, and destruction throughout our beloved Holy Land—as well as in other parts of the world similarly stricken. Most of all, we call upon them to join us in working for a just and lasting peace—beginning in Jerusalem, the City of the Resurrection—and extending from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

While offering this Easter message to Christians everywhere, we would like to convey our special greetings to our faithful clergy and people taking refuge over the past year-and-a-half inside St. Porphyrios Orthodox Church and Holy Family Catholic Church in Gaza. We likewise express our solidarity with the staff of the Anglican-run Ahli Arab Hospital, who have courageously persevered in extending God’s healing hand to the critically wounded in the midst of unspeakable hardships.

Finally, we note with gladness that this year the eastern and western celebrations of our Lord’s resurrection fall on the same date. Providentially, this coincides with the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicea, the first of the great ecumenical councils that brought together Christian leaders from around the world.

We pray that this happy confluence of events may inspire our churches to increasingly strive for greater unity in Christ, even as this year we proclaim to each other on the same day that ancient Easter greeting that continues to reverberate across the ages: “Christ is Risen! (*Al Maseeh Qam! Christos Anesti! Christos haryav i merelotz! Pekhrestos aftonf! Christ est Ressuscité! Cristo è risorto! Christus resurrexit! Meshiha gam! Christos t’ensah em’ muhtan! Christus ist auferstanden!*) He is Risen, indeed! Alleluia!”

—The Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem