

URBI ET ORBI MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

EASTER 2023

Central loggia of the Vatican Basilica
Sunday 9th April 2023

Dear brothers and sisters,

Christ is risen!

On this day we proclaim that he, the Lord of our life, is “the resurrection and the life” of the world (cf. *Jn* 11:25). Today is Easter, the Pasch, a word that means “passage”, for in Jesus the decisive passage of humanity has been made: the passage from death to life, from sin to grace, from fear to confidence, from desolation to communion. In him, the Lord of time and history, I would like to say to everyone, with heartfelt joy, Happy Easter!

May this Easter be for each of you, dear brothers and sisters, and in particular for the sick and the poor, the elderly and those experiencing moments of trial and weariness, a passage from affliction to consolation. We are not alone: Jesus, the Living One, is with us, forever. Let the Church and the world rejoice, for today our hopes no longer come up against the wall of death, for the Lord has built us a bridge to life. Yes, brothers and sisters, at Easter the destiny of the world was changed, and on this day, which also coincides with the most probable date of Christ’s resurrection, we can rejoice to celebrate, by pure grace, the most important and beautiful day of history.

Christòs anesti! – “Christ is risen; he is truly risen!” In this traditional proclamation of the Churches of the East, the word “truly” reminds us that our hope is not an illusion, but the truth! And that, in the wake of Easter, humanity’s journey, now marked by hope, advances all the more readily. The first witnesses of the resurrection show this by their example. The Gospels speak of the haste with which, on the morning of Easter, the women “ran to tell the disciples” (*Mt* 28:8). Mary Magdalene “ran and went to Simon Peter” (*Jn* 20:2), while John and Peter himself then “ran together” (cf. v. 4) to the place where Jesus had been buried. Later, on the evening of Easter, after meeting the Risen Lord on the road to Emmaus, two disciples “set out without delay” (cf. *Lk* 24:33) and travelled several miles, uphill and in the dark, spurred on by the irrepressible joy of Easter that burned in their hearts (cf. v. 32). The same joy that led Peter, on the shore of the Lake of Galilee, after catching sight of the risen Jesus, to leave the boat with the others, to throw himself immediately into the water and to swim quickly towards him (cf. *Jn* 21:7). At Easter, then, the journey quickens and becomes a race, since humanity now sees the goal of its journey, the meaning of its destiny, Jesus Christ, and is called to make haste to meet him, who is the hope of the world.

May we too make haste to progress on a journey of reciprocal trust: trust among individuals, peoples and nations. May we allow ourselves to experience amazement at the joyful proclamation of Easter, at the light that illumines the darkness and the gloom in which, all too often, our world finds itself enveloped.

Let us make haste to surmount our conflicts and divisions, and to open our hearts to those in greatest need. Let us hasten to pursue paths of peace and fraternity. Let us rejoice at the concrete signs of hope that reach us from so many countries, beginning with those that offer assistance and welcome to all fleeing from war and poverty.

At the same time, along this journey we also encounter many stumbling blocks, which make it more difficult and demanding to hasten towards the Risen Lord. To him, then, let us make our prayer: Lord, help us to run to meet you! Help us to open our hearts!

Help the beloved Ukrainian people on their journey towards peace, and shed the light of Easter upon the people of Russia. Comfort the wounded and all those who have lost loved ones because of the war, and grant that prisoners may return safe and sound to their families. Open the hearts of the entire international community to strive to end this war and all conflict and bloodshed in our world, beginning with Syria, which still awaits peace. Strengthen all those affected by the violent earthquake in Turkey and in Syria itself. Let us pray for all those who have lost family and friends, and for those left homeless. May they receive consolation from God and assistance from the family of nations.

On this day, Lord, we entrust to you the city of Jerusalem, the first witness of your resurrection. I express deep concern for the attacks in recent days that threaten the desired climate of trust and reciprocal respect necessary for the resumption of dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians, so that peace may reign in the Holy City and in the entire region.

Lord, aid Lebanon, which still seeks stability and unity, so that divisions may be overcome and all citizens cooperate for the common good of the country.

Be mindful of the beloved people of Tunisia, and in particular the young and those suffering from social and economic hardship, so that they may not lose hope and may work together to build a future of peace and fraternity.

Turn your gaze to Haiti, which has long experienced a grave social, economic and humanitarian crisis, and support the efforts of political actors and the international community to seek a definitive solution to the many problems that afflict that sorely tried people.

Consolidate the processes of peace and reconciliation undertaken in Ethiopia and in South Sudan, and grant an end to violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Sustain, Lord, the Christian communities that today celebrate Easter in particular circumstances, as in Nicaragua and Eritrea, and remember all who are prevented from freely and publicly professing their faith. Grant consolation to victims of international terrorism, especially in Burkina Faso, Mali, Mozambique and Nigeria.

Help Myanmar to pursue paths of peace, and enlighten the hearts of leaders, so that the deeply afflicted Rohingya may encounter justice.

Comfort refugees, deportees, political prisoners and migrants, especially those who are most vulnerable, as well as the victims of hunger, poverty and the dire effects of the drug trade, human trafficking and all other forms of slavery. Lord, inspire the leaders of nations to ensure that no man or woman may encounter discrimination and be violated in his or her dignity; that in full respect for human rights and democracy these social wounds may be healed; that the common good of the citizenry may be pursued always and solely; and that security and the conditions needed for dialogue and peaceful coexistence may be guaranteed.

Brothers, sisters, may we rediscover the enjoyment of the journey, quicken the heartbeat of hope and experience a foretaste of the beauty of heaven! Today, let us summon the energy to advance in goodness towards Goodness itself, which never disappoints. If, as one of the ancient Fathers once wrote, "the greatest sin is not to believe in the power of the resurrection" (SAINT ISAAC OF NINEVEH, *Sermones Ascetici*, I, 5), today let us believe and profess: "Christ is truly risen from the dead!" (*Sequence*). We believe in you, Lord Jesus. We believe that, with you, hope is reborn and the journey continues. May you, the Lord of life, encourage us on our journey and repeat to us, as you did to the disciples on the evening of Easter: "Peace be with you!" (*Jn 19:21*).