



PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF LOCAL CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM

Easter Message of the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem

We, the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, join together in proclaiming the triumphant victory of our risen Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ from the dead. The message of Easter, which was first announced in Jerusalem, and has echoed down the centuries, now resounds again in Jerusalem, the city of the Resurrection.

This year we have witnessed the restoration of the Holy Aedicule in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, two centuries after the last renovation, and almost one hundred years after steel girders were installed to support it. The completion of this challenging work is testament to the support from around the globe involved in the project, and to thank them for their prayers and support.

The service to celebrate the unveiling of the restored Holy Aedicule was a testimony to our spirit of Ecumenism and a celebration of our unity in Christ. We stood together, as one body, one voice, around the empty tomb. We stood as Christians united in offering hope, perseverance and determination to transform this world under the banner of Christ who conquered all evil through his Resurrection. The sacred history of Jerusalem, and particularly of the Holy Sepulchre, is a constant reminder for the whole world that in this place and at a certain time, the Resurrection was proclaimed for all people and for all time. The Resurrection inspires a resolute steadfastness in the living stones (local Christians) as living witnesses in the Holy Land.

It is our prayer that the hope established through our risen Lord will enlighten the leaders and nations of the whole world to see this light, and to perceive new opportunities to work and strive for the common good and recognize all as created equal before God. This light of Christ draws the whole human family towards justice, reconciliation and peace, and to pursue it diligently. It draws us all to be unified and to be at harmony with one another. The power and resonance of the Resurrection permeates all suffering, injustice and alienation, bringing forth hope, light and life to all.

Through the Resurrection and the empty tomb, we need to remember that pain, suffering, and death do not have the final word, it is God – who has the first word, and the last. This was the message of the Easter angel, who challenged the first disciples – both women and men – “Why do you look for the living among the dead? [Jesus] is not here, but has risen” (Luke 24.5).

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

- +Patriarch Theophilos III, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate
- +Patriarch Nourhan Manougian, Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Patriarchate
- +Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Apostolic Administrator, Latin Patriarchate
- +Fr. Francesco Patton, ofm, Custos of the Holy Land
- +Archbishop Anba Antonious, Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, Jerusalem
- +Archbishop Swerios Malki Murad, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate
- +Archbishop Aba Embakob, Ethiopian Orthodox Patriarchate
- +Archbishop Joseph-Jules Zerey, Greek-Melkite-Catholic Patriarchate
- +Archbishop Mosa El-Hage, Maronite Patriarchal Exarchate
- +Archbishop Suheil Dawani, Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East
- +Bishop Munib Younan, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land
- +Bishop Pierre Malki, Syrian Catholic Patriarchal Exarchate
- +Msgr. Georges Dankaye', Armenian Catholic Patriarchal Exarchate

(Easter 2017)