

MESSAGE OF THE HEADS OF THE CHURCHES IN THE HOLY LAND

Alleluia! Christ is Risen. He is Risen Indeed. Alleluia!

We, the Heads of the Churches in the Land of the Holy One, share with you the Good News of the life of our local Christian Church as one Body in Christ who live the resurrection faith every day. Our message to you, whether near or far, is one of hope, encouragement and perseverance. We know the struggles so many Christians face, both here in this land and elsewhere in the world.

We know the power of despair. We know the power of evil. We know the power of the “principalities and powers” of this world which promote agendas of division and oppression to bring harm to God’s people throughout God’s creation. We, with you, know the power of sin and death.

We also know the power of the Resurrection. We know the power of God to bring hope out of despair. We know the power of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior, to use forgiveness and love to conquer evil. We know the power of God in Christ to confront those same “principalities and powers” to promote faith, mutual respect, compassion and courage to speak the truth to benefit all of God’s people. We know the power of the forgiveness of sins to redeem relationships in families and among the family of nations. We know the power of the gift of eternal life for all who believe.

Christians, in all generations, face many challenges. Our current generation is no different than those who have gone before us. We, with you, have great responsibilities and many obstacles. The Christian Church faces struggles here in this land and yet we continue to be full of hope that we are at one and the same time the Church of Calvary and the Church of the

Resurrection. Our faith is not in the power of death, but in the power of the sacrificial life of Christ.

We encourage your prayers for us and all your Christian brothers and sisters, the "living stones" of all the Christian traditions, here in the Land of the Holy One. We ask you to pray for us in our struggle for justice, peace and reconciliation; so that when Jesus returns he will not again weep for Jerusalem but share in our joy of unity, respect and love for all people in the Holy Land. Be assured, at the same time, of our prayers for you.

May the one and living God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit bless, preserve and keep you, now and always. Amen.

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+ Patriarch Theophilos III, Greek Orthodox Patriarch

+ Patriarch Fouad Twal, Latin Patriarch

+ Patriarch Torkom I Manoogian, Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Patriarch

Fr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, ofm, Custos of the Holy Land

+ Archbishop Anba Abraham, Coptic Orthodox Patriarch

+ Archbishop Swerios Malki Murad, Syrian Orthodox Patriarch

+ Archbishop Bishop Jules Zerey, Greek Melkite Catholic Patriarch

+ Archbishop Abouna Matthias, Ethiopian Orthodox Patriarch

+ Archbishop Paul Sayyah, Maronite Patriarchal Exarch

+ Bishop Suheil Dawani, Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem

+ Bishop Munib Younan, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land

+ Bishop Pierre Malki, Syrian Catholic Patriarchal Exarch

+ Fr. Rafael Minassian, Armenian Catholic Patriarchal Exarch