



PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF THE CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM

Easter Message — 2026

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead . . .”

1 Peter 1:3

In the weeks leading up to this year’s commemoration of Christ’s death and resurrection, a new and devastating regional war has once again plunged the Holy Land and the wider Middle East into turmoil. Each passing day has brought increasingly fierce escalations—a relentless cycle of death, destruction, and frightful suffering that now ripples across the globe in rising economic hardship. From the blackened smoke of this expanding wreckage, a deep darkness has engulfed our region, as stifling as the air inside the sealed tomb of the crucified Christ. Hope itself appears to have abandoned us.

Yet as Scripture teaches and our faith reveals, the desolation of the tomb was not the end of the story. Death did not have the final word. By the power of God, Christ rose victorious from the grave, bursting the bonds of sin and death. As the Apostle Paul wrote, “In fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:20). As a consequence, for those who look to the Risen Lord in faith, God grants them “a new birth into a living hope” (1 Peter 1:3, above).

Thus, in the midst of these cataclysmic times, We, the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem, affirm these powerful and encouraging words to our communities and to Christians around the world as the heart of our Easter Message. For “just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4b).

In keeping with this profound truth, we bid the faithful and all those of goodwill to work and pray ceaselessly for the relief of the countless multitudes throughout the Middle East and beyond who are suffering severely from the ravages of this war. Likewise, we appeal to them to advocate and intercede for an immediate end to the bloodshed and for justice and peace to finally prevail throughout our war-torn region, beginning in Jerusalem and extending to Gaza, Lebanon, and all the Holy Land; to the Gulf States and Tehran; and to the ends of the earth.

Finally in this vein, we recall once more the words of St. Paul who, in the midst of his countless ordeals, wrote: “We are afflicted in every way but not crushed, perplexed but not driven to despair, persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed, always carrying around in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies” (2 Corinthians 4:8–10).

With this same deep faith in the transformative power of Christ’s Resurrection, in the midst of our own torments, let us exchange with each other that ancient Easter greeting that continues to echo across eternity: “Christ is Risen! (*Al Maseeh Qam! Christos Anesti! Christos haryav i merelotz! Pekhrestos aftonf! Christ est Ressuscite! Cristo è risorto! Christus resurrexit! Meshiha qam! Christos t'ensah em' muhtan! Christus ist auferstanden!*) He is Risen, indeed! Alleluia!”

—The Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem