



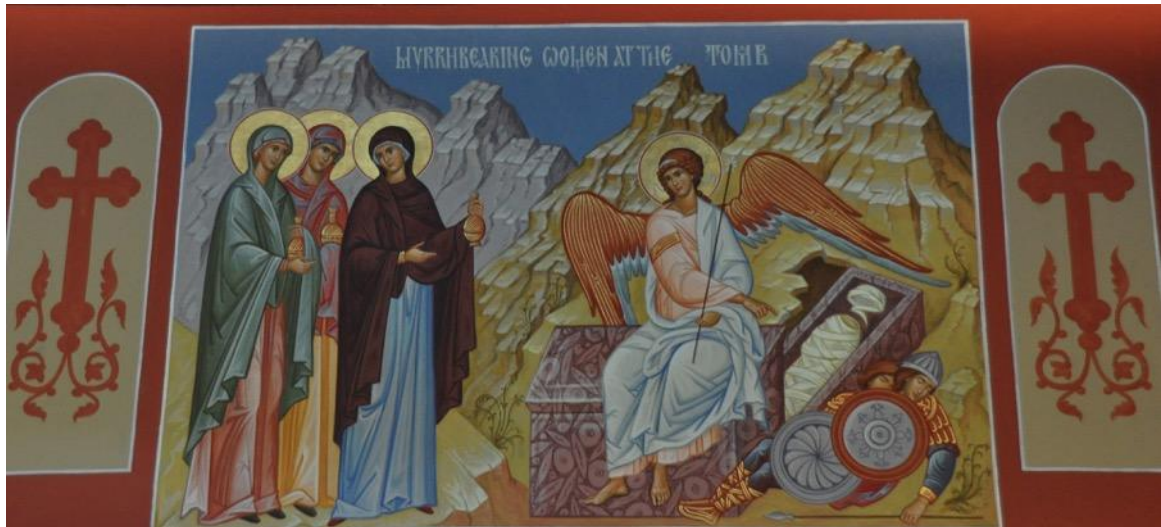
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But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said” (Matthew 28, 5-6).ⁱ

Dear sisters and brothers in the Crucified and Risen Lord,

As the days of celebrating Easter approach, we convey to you with joy the traditional Christian greeting: **“Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!”**

I share this message at a difficult time in the lives of many peoples, churches and nations. This year, we observe Easter for the second time in a challenging context amid painful situations. Many of our people are experiencing fear and uncertainty, as well as trauma, separation, isolation, loss of hope, or sickness and death in their families or in their church communities. The COVID- 19 pandemic, which has affected the whole world, is also affecting the way Easter will be celebrated. To protect our own lives and those of others, many of us will celebrate Easter again and will meet with the Risen Lord “behind closed doors” (John 20,19-20).

Yet, despite these traumatic and painful situations, the message of Easter shines. The Risen Lord is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). Easter is a reminder and encouragement that God in Christ continues to love and care for the whole world, overcoming death with life, conquering fear and uncertainty with hope. The tomb is empty; Christ is Risen!

Throughout the centuries, the Easter greeting “Christ is risen!” has always infused Christians with the power and courage to confront death, destruction, oppression and enslavement, fear, doubt and uncertainty. As we are confronted today with the challenges of COVID-19, we assure you that we are united with you in prayers and in affirming together our common

faith and hope in the Risen Lord: “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:55, 57).

Yours faithfully,



*Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca
Acting General Secretary
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ⁱ *Illustration: Myrrhbearing women Empty tomb. Photo by Ted/Flickr, under Creative Commons license*