



World Council of Churches

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Overwhelmed by sadness and despair, the myrrh bearing women went in the very early morning to see the tomb of their beloved Lord Jesus. Their hope has vanished; Jesus had died on the cross and was buried.

To a very large extent, today we feel this same despair. As we look around, we see only signs of destruction and death. The victims of economic and ecological injustices are increasing throughout the world. The pandemic has widened the gap between rich and poor, between powerful and vulnerable. The cruel war in Ukraine and elsewhere in the world are taking thousands of innocent lives, allow all sorts of atrocities, destroy everything on their way, and multiply the wave of displaced and refugees. Violence against women, children, elderly people and those who are different from us is dramatically increasing. As every new day is dawning, anguish, desolation, and hopelessness seem to prevail everywhere.

Yet, amid the many tribulations and the intense hopelessness of our world, the Church continues to announce the joyful and full of hope message that Christ is Risen. The voice of the angel who spoke at the tomb to the visiting women is the same for the world today and continues to be the same until the end of ages: **“Do not be afraid”** (Matth. 28: 5); **“Do not be alarmed”** (M16: 6), Jesus who was crucified has been risen from the dead! Life has overcome and conquered death!

Strengthened by our faith and hope we should not be afraid, we should not despair when we see what happens in our world today but confront it with courage. Looking at the empty tomb and listening to the angel's voice, we discover in the midst of the darkness of our world a life of light, joy, love, and newness.

¹ Illustration: Resurrection Icon Myrrhbearing women Empty tomb. Photo by Ted/Flickr, Creative Commons license



Christ's resurrection ever reminds us that, ultimately, God, the God of life, prevails over all powers of sin and death which disfigure and seek to destroy human beings and creation (1 Cor. 15: 54-55).

Christ's resurrection is the source of a new life recreating and renewing all things in Christ. It is a source of healing, wholeness, and renewal. It is joy for the sorrowful; light for those living in darkness; liberation for those oppressed. It leads the world to unity and reconciliation.

Christ's resurrection is the power offering to the world the possibility and the chance for a new beginning. The death of our Savior has set us free. Christ is risen and life prevails. (2 Cor. 5: 17).

As we prepare to celebrate Easter this year, in the midst of tragic wars and a divided world, let us remind one another that the Risen Lord continues to stand today among us, telling us as he did to the Apostles after his Resurrection "**Peace be to you**". The Risen Lord bestows upon us the gift of peace and asks that we make it a reality in our lives. It is the greatest challenge to all of us to live this peace, to struggle for this peace, to make all possible efforts that the peace of the Lord, passing all understanding (Phil. 4: 7), succeeds.

Christ is Risen!

Christ is Risen, indeed!

Ioan Saucă

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² 11 March 2022: Sunset and barbed wire over a fence near the Vyšné Nemecké border crossing between Slovakia and Ukraine. The border crossing at Vyšné Nemecké sees up to some 10,000 refugees from Ukraine cross each day, with faith-based and humanitarian organisations providing immediate support to people as they come into Slovakia.