



World Council of Churches

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April 9, 2020

Dear sisters and brothers in the Crucified and Risen Lord,

As the days of celebrating Easter approach, we would like to convey to you the traditional Christian greeting, which affirms the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and its powerful liberating message, bringing joy and hope to the world, overcoming fear and uncertainty—

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

This year, we observe Easter in a challenging context amid painful situations. 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, we cannot fill the streets with processions, nor will churches resound with hymns and liturgies, expressing and sharing our Easter joy with one another. Instead, we will share the mystery of Easter and meet the Risen Lord in our homes, behind closed doors. Many of our people are experiencing fear and uncertainty, as well as trauma, separation, isolation, loss of members or even death in their families or in their church communities.

Yet, despite these traumatic and painful situations, the message of Easter continues to be a joyful one of courage and hope.

The first experience of the disciples with the Risen Lord occurred in similar circumstances. Out of fear and to protect their lives, Jesus' disciples gathered in a room, behind closed doors. And there the Risen Christ came among them, bringing his peace. As they were startled and terrified, "He said to them, 'Why are you frightened?... See that it is I myself.'" (Luke 24:37-39).

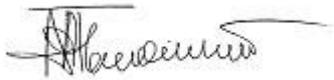
The Risen Lord is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). Easter is a reminder and encouragement that God in Christ continues to love and care for the whole world, overcoming death with life, conquering fear and uncertainty with hope.

To those who may be tempted to explain the present situation as an expression of God's punishment and wrath, the Easter message conveys that our God is a loving God, the source of life, not death, the God of life and love "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." (John 3:16-17).

Dear sisters and brothers, 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 in these days 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,

The Leadership of the Central Committee



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