World Council of Churches
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Easter Message 2026

"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile…" (1 Corinthians 15:17)

How can we celebrate Easter in a time in which shouts of joy are so often drowned out by cries of despair? So many victims of war, economic injustice, sexual violence, political oppression, climate disasters, and religious persecution are to be mourned. Can we authentically celebrate Easter without addressing these sufferings?

Easter is the cornerstone of our faith as Christians. It is the one big source of hope in these troubled times. Jesus tremendously inspired the people of his time when he spoke words of love and words of hope, when he touched people with his healing hands, when he led together people from very different backgrounds into one loving community. They could feel the presence of God himself.

In a time of occupation and political oppression, Jesus opened a window into a world, in which every human being, created by God equally, would live in dignity. Hope began to spread. Yet then, came the big disappointment. They arrested Jesus. They tortured him. He was put to death and he cried out: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" It was a situation of despair. Another inspiring moral and spiritual leader in the history of the world who, in the end, failed. One more disappointed hope as we have seen it so many times and are seeing it so clearly before our eyes in these days of wars, conflicts, violence, and a climate catastrophe.

Yet, then came the third day, the experience of the women at the tomb of Jesus, that changed everything. When they came with their tears to mourn, the tomb was empty. They encountered the living Jesus. They told the story to the disciples. They overcame their disbelief and spread the good news into the whole world, so that an innumerable number of people today, many of them also in desperate situations, celebrate Easter, the feast of Jesus' resurrection, and trust in his promise to be with us "always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). Death will not have the last word. The last word is life.

Easter does not promote spiritual pacification in the face of suffering that is otherwise unbearable. Jesus' death and resurrection is inseparably connected with his life of love, reconciliation, and justice. Therefore, our Easter belief in resurrection is not only a big source of hope but also a protest against the denial of dignity and humanity, expressed in aggressive warfare, the spreading of hate and contempt against whole groups of people, and sins such as racism, antisemitism, nationalism, or xenophobia.

Christians are people who live from a message that leads into life – a life filled with hope in the Risen Christ who conquered sin, suffering, and death.

May we celebrate this Easter as a time of reassurance that in all the abysses we presently experience in the world, there is more to come. And that it is not a dark hole that we are walking into but a new heaven and a new earth in which all tears are wiped away. This outlook continues to unite us in our global church community. It connects us with all people on this earth, who are together with us created in God's image.

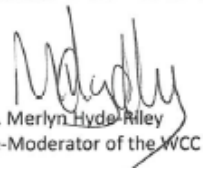
Blessed Easter!



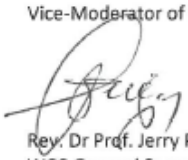
Bishop Dr Heinrich Bedford-Strohm
Moderator of the WCC Central Committee



H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken Aykazian
Vice-Moderator of the WCC Central Committee



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Vice-Moderator of the WCC Central Committee



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