



The Holy See

URBI ET ORBI MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

EASTER 2017

*Central loggia of the Vatican Basilica
Easter, 16 April 2017*

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Happy Easter!

Today, throughout the world, the Church echoes once more the astonishing message of the first disciples: “Jesus is risen!” – “He is truly risen, as he said!”

The ancient feast of Passover, the commemoration of the liberation of the Hebrew people from slavery, here finds fulfilment. By his resurrection, Jesus Christ has set us free from the slavery of sin and death, and has opened before us the way to eternal life.

All of us, when we let ourselves be mastered by sin, lose the right way and end up straying like lost sheep. But God himself, our shepherd, has come in search of us. To save us, he lowered himself even to accepting death on the cross. Today we can proclaim: “*The Good Shepherd has risen, who laid down his life for his sheep, and willingly died for his flock, alleluia*” (*Roman Missal, IV Sunday of Easter, Communion antiphon*).

In every age, the Risen Shepherd tirelessly seeks us, his brothers and sisters, wandering in the deserts of this world. With the marks of the passion – the wounds of his merciful love – he draws us to follow him on his way, the way of life. Today too, he places upon his shoulders so many of our brothers and sisters crushed by evil in all its varied forms.

The Risen Shepherd goes in search of all those lost in the labyrinths of loneliness and

marginalization. He comes to meet them through our brothers and sisters who treat them with respect and kindness, and help them to hear his voice, an unforgettable voice, a voice calling them back to friendship with God.

He takes upon himself all those victimized by old and new forms of slavery, inhuman labour, illegal trafficking, exploitation and discrimination, and grave forms of addiction. He takes upon himself children and adolescents deprived of their carefree innocence and exploited, and those deeply hurt by acts of violence that take place within the walls of their own home.

The Risen Shepherd walks beside all those forced to leave their homelands as a result of armed conflicts, terrorist attacks, famine and oppressive regimes. Everywhere he helps these forced migrants to encounter brothers and sisters, with whom they can share bread and hope on their journey.

In the complex and often dramatic situations of today's world, may the Risen Lord guide the steps of all those who work for justice and peace. May he grant the leaders of nations the courage they need to prevent the spread of conflicts and to put a halt to the arms trade.

Especially in these days, may he sustain the efforts of all those actively engaged in bringing comfort and relief to the civil population in beloved Syria, so greatly suffering from a war that continues to sow horror and death. Yesterday saw the latest vile attack on fleeing refugees, resulting in the death and injury of many. May he grant peace to the entire Middle East, beginning with the Holy Land, as well as in Iraq and Yemen.

May the Good Shepherd remain close to the people of South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, who endure continuing hostilities, aggravated by the grave famine affecting certain parts of Africa.

May the Risen Jesus sustain the efforts of all those who, especially in Latin America, are committed to ensuring the common good of societies marked at times by political and social tensions that in some cases have resulted in violence. May it be possible for bridges of dialogue to be built, by continuing to fight the scourge of corruption and to seek viable and peaceful solutions to disputes, for progress and the strengthening of democratic institutions in complete respect for the rule of law.

May the Good Shepherd come to the aid of Ukraine, still beset by conflict and bloodshed, to regain social harmony. May he accompany every effort to alleviate the tragic sufferings of those affected by the conflict.

The Risen Lord continues to shed his blessing upon the continent of Europe. May he grant hope to those experiencing moments of crisis and difficulty, especially due to high unemployment,

particularly among young people.

Dear brothers and sisters, this year Christians of every confession celebrate Easter together. With one voice, in every part of the world, we proclaim the great message: "The Lord is truly risen, as he said!" May Jesus, who vanquished the darkness of sin and death, grant peace to our days.

Happy Easter!

Dear brothers and sisters,

I offer Happy Easter wishes to all those who have come here from Italy and from different countries, and to all those who are joining us through various means of communication. May the Easter announcement of the Risen Christ rekindle the hopes of your families and your communities, in particular those of the new generations who are the future of the Church and of humanity.

A special thank you to those who donated and arranged the floral decorations, which again this year come from the Netherlands.

May you feel the presence of the Risen Christ every day and share with others the joy and hope that He gives to us. Please do not forget to pray for me. Happy holidays and *Arrivederci!*