



## PATRIARCHATUS LATINUS - JERUSALEM

بطريركية القدس لللاتين

Prot. N. (1) 1160/2026

**Object:** Celebrations of Holy Week in Jerusalem and at the Holy Sepulcher – a call to prayer

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May the Lord give you peace!

Due to the war, this year we were unable to experience the traditional Lenten journey in Jerusalem, with the solemn celebrations at the Holy Sepulcher and in the Holy Places of the Passion. Though we were able to pray and prepare personally, we felt the loss of the community journey towards Easter. Now we ask ourselves about the celebrations of Holy Week, the beating heart of our faith, in Jerusalem and at the Holy Sepulcher.

The restrictions imposed by the conflict and the events of recent days do not bode well for any imminent improvement. In constant dialogue with the competent authorities, together with the other Christian Churches, we are evaluating how, in the ways to be agreed upon, we can celebrate the central Mystery of our salvation in the heart of our Churches. The situation is constantly evolving, and it is not possible to provide definitive indications for the days to come; we will therefore be forced to coordinate on a day-to-day basis.

It is already clear, however, that ordinary celebrations open to all cannot take place. In light of this, I communicate the following:

- The traditional Palm Sunday procession, which goes up to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, to Jerusalem is canceled. It will be replaced by a moment of prayer for the city of Jerusalem, at a location to be determined.
- The Chrism Mass is postponed to a date to be determined, as soon as the situation allows, possibly within the Easter season. The Dicastery for Divine Worship has already granted the necessary approval.

The churches of the Diocese remain open. Parish priests and priests, in the forms and ways that are possible, shall do everything they can to encourage prayer and the faithful's participation in the celebrations of the Paschal Mystery.

The harshness of this time of war, which affects us all, today bears the added burden of not being able to celebrate Easter together and with dignity. This is a wound that adds to the many others inflicted by the conflict. But we must not allow ourselves to be discouraged. Though we may not gather as we would like, let us not give up prayer.

This is the time to remember Jesus' invitation to his disciples: "Pray always and do not lose heart" (Luke 18:1).

We therefore wish to compensate for these limitations with moments of prayer as families and in our religious communities. I know that prayer is already being practiced everywhere, and I am comforted by the commitment to keeping spiritual tension alive. However, I feel the need to propose a special day in which, while each of us remains in our own places, we feel spiritually united in prayer to find comfort.

We desire peace, first and foremost for our troubled hearts. Only prayer can give it.

I therefore invite you to join in prayer next Saturday, March 28, reciting the Rosary to implore the gift of peace and serenity, especially for those suffering because of the conflict. We will do so with humble hearts, certain that our prayer, even while we are physically distant, is capable of drawing upon the strength of God's love, which unites us in a spirit of hope and trust.

Attached you will find a form for praying the Rosary, prepared by Father Francesco Patton.

Easter, which we celebrate in the name of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection, reminds us that no darkness, not even that of war, can have the last word. The empty tomb is the seal of the victory of life over hatred, of mercy over sin. Let us allow this certainty to illuminate our steps and sustain our hope.

In Christ, I embrace each of you and give you my blessing.

*Jerusalem, March 22, 2026.*

*+ Pierbattista Pizzaballa*

+Pierbattista Card. Pizzaballa

Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem

