



EASTER ALERT 2026



Introduction

Easter in a Time of Existential Threat to Christianity in Palestine

Holy Saturday stands as one of the most profound moments of darkness and uncertainty in the Gospel story—the time between crucifixion and resurrection. For us Palestinians, this “Saturday” has stretched across decades, marked by ongoing suffering imposed through escalating ethnic cleansing, settler violence, settlement expansion, land confiscation, and the indifference—if not the outright complicity—of governments around the world. It is clear now that attacks on Christian Palestinian communities—along with predominantly Muslim towns—are not isolated incidents. These violent assaults are part of a broader, systemic reality engineered on the part of the Israeli government.

This Alert—still another heartfelt cry on the part of Palestinian Christians—is a call to the Global



Church to move beyond thoughts and prayers into active solidarity. It is also a pastoral word to the faithful, the Palestinian steadfast people, calling us to remain steadfast on our land, to celebrate our shared Palestinian Christian identity, and to protect our heritage and holy sites. An existential threat to the Palestinian Christian presence in the Holy Land is real. Israel’s 58-year occupation of our land and now the taking of northern Gaza and the annexation of ever-larger portions of the West Bank have accelerated emigration through the resulting economic

suffering, insecurity, land seizures and violence. Simply put, there is shrinking physical and demographic space for indigenous Christians. The following reflections—focusing on the historic towns of Taybeh, Beit Sahour and Gaza City—serve as a warning that Christian continuity in Palestine is no longer guaranteed.

In spite of our prolonged and costly Saturday experiences, we believe that Sunday is coming—resurrection out of the deaths we are experiencing. [**Our Kairos II document, A Moment of Truth: Faith in a Time of Genocide**](#), not only describes in detail the current realities of genocide, colonization and ethnic cleansing. It also proclaims our “hope in the God of the poor, the oppressed and the downtrodden.” It is an affirmation of our “faith in a holy and just God.”

We invite you to find ways—within your own context—to share the following testimonies for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday, each reflecting the lived realities of the communities of Taybeh, Beit Sahour, and Gaza City. This Easter Alert is, in essence, a lived expression of the Kairos II document: a resurrection faith that refuses silence in the face of injustice.

Maundy Thursday: Taybeh

FACTS ON THE GROUND

FATHER BASHAR FAWADLEH

A Town that Carries the Memory of Faith,
Today, the town of Taybeh stands at the intersection of pain and hope, where the wounds of the land meet the resilience of faith. Located east of Ramallah, Taybeh is far more than a small and quiet village; it is a living witness to a continuous Christian presence in



the very land where the Christian message first took root. As the only entirely Christian town remaining in the West Bank, Taybeh carries within its ancient stones, churches, and ringing bells a deep spiritual memory. It is not merely a place on the map, but a symbol of endurance and historical testimony. In its narrow streets and daily prayers, faith and history intertwine, turning ordinary life into a quiet act of belonging to both land and identity.

Violations that Strike the Land and Daily Life

Recent days, however, have brought painful developments to this peaceful town. A series of attacks has targeted the agricultural lands and properties of its residents. Crops have been damaged, lands violated, and farmers have faced growing obstacles in accessing and cultivating their fields. For the people of Taybeh,

these lands are not simply a source of income; they are the living memory of families and generations. Every olive tree carries the story of

Those who planted, tended, and protected it. Thus, these violations are not only material losses but also wounds inflicted upon the profound relationship between people and their land—a relationship rooted in dignity, heritage, and belonging.

Daily Challenges and the Resilience of the Community

These developments have inevitably affected the rhythms of daily life in Taybeh. The sense of safety that long characterized the town has been shaken, and working in the fields is now accompanied by anxiety and uncertainty. Yet the spirit of the community remains unbroken. Solidarity among residents continues to define the life of the town, and the commitment to remain on the land remains unwavering. In the midst of these challenges, the words of the Gospel resonate deeply: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9). Here, faith is not an escape from reality but a moral force that inspires perseverance, justice and dignity.

A Symbol of the Christian Presence in Palestine

What Taybeh faces today goes beyond the boundaries of a single town. It reflects the broader challenges confronting the Christian presence in Palestine. For centuries, this presence has been an integral part of the historical and cultural fabric of the land.

Taybeh, with its ancient churches and enduring traditions, stands as a symbol of this heritage—a reminder that Christianity in the Holy Land is not merely a memory of the past, but a living reality rooted in communities who continue to guard their faith and identity.

Hope Rising from the Land

Despite the hardship, hope continues to live in Taybeh. The town, resting quietly upon its hills, seems to echo the words of Christ: “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden” (Matthew 5:14). In the sound of church bells and the quiet prayers of its people, faith is renewed daily. Their perseverance reflects another promise from the Gospel: “In the world you will have trouble. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Thus, Taybeh endures—wounded, yet steadfast—like a small but steadfast light upon the hills of Palestine, reminding the world that the roots of faith in this land run deeper than any storm, and that hope can still rise from the soil even in the darkest of times.

**Father Bashar Fawadleh is parish priest of
Christ The Redeemer Church in Taybeh**

Maundy Thursday: Taybeh
AN APPEAL TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY
Mr. SULEIMAN ELIAS KHOURIEH

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Here in the town of Taybeh, the only entirely Christian town in Palestine, which was visited by our Lord Jesus Christ (John 11:54), we are going through extremely difficult days on several levels. The ongoing war during this period affects us negatively from all political, security, and economic aspects. In addition, there are the repeated attacks by settlers, day and night, against citizens of our town, our land, our blessed olive trees, our homes, and our vehicles.

These attacks include theft, assaults, arson, intimidation, and terrorizing women and children, which creates fear and anxiety among residents, encourages emigration, and causes a loss of hope among the youth. All of these factors threaten the Palestinian Christian presence in this Holy Land.



At the same time, there is a lack of financial support from the Palestinian National Authority which, due to the current difficult circumstances, has been unable to provide the assistance that municipalities previously

relied upon. As a result, the challenges facing the Municipality of Taybeh have intensified. The municipality oversees all the town's institutions, and these circumstances have negatively affected its ability to carry out its responsibilities toward citizens, institutions, and both domestic and international tourism.

Our town is a tourist destination that appears on the Palestinian tourism map and is visited by people from all over the world. However, this reality has led to the disruption of many development projects and daily services such as sanitation, lighting, and the preservation of our historic churches, as well as protecting what remains of our land and olive trees and meeting the needs of municipal employees and residents alike.

This has placed the municipality under heavy burdens with limited resources. Despite these harsh conditions, we continue striving to serve the people of the town and to preserve the elements of steadfastness on this sacred land.

Through you, we extend our heartfelt appeal to the churches, the international community, and all people of conscience around the world: Stand with us, listen to our story, and recognize the suffering our community endures. We call for both moral

and financial solidarity so that we may remain steadfast on this land, preserving the living Christian presence that has endured here for generations. Together, we seek to safeguard the heritage of our forefathers and the sacred Christian sites of Palestine—the land from which the message of love and peace first went forth to the world. Your support will help us endure this critical and perilous moment in our history.

In the town of Taybeh—its municipality, institutions, and residents—we deeply value and appreciate the solidarity and cooperation you have shown us in the past, and we express our sincere gratitude for it. Today, we once again place our hope in your support. We pray that it may reach us without delay, enabling us to remain steadfast, continue our presence, and carry out our responsibilities in this historic and cherished town.

May the bells of our churches continue to ring across the heavens, reminding us each day that justice remains the only path toward true peace—the peace of Christ.

**Mr Suleiman Elias Khourieh
is the Mayor of Taybeh**

Maundy Thursday: Taybeh

REFLECTION AND PRAYER

SAMIA KHOURY

Maundy Thursday has always been a very meaningful day for me throughout my journey of faith. However, as the Israeli military occupation of the Palestinian territories in 1967 became more and more entrenched, and further justified by the abuse of Biblical texts, our faith has been challenged. But thankfully, the liberation theology movement has helped us deal with this dilemma and enabled us to hold on to our faith.

As Palestinians, whether we are Christians or Muslims, we all suffer under the boot of the Israeli military occupation. However, very often Israel pretends to be favoring the Christians more, so as to drive a wedge between the Palestinians. Unfortunately, some unaware people sometimes fall into this trap, but I would like to seize this opportunity to emphasize the fact that all of us Christians are part of the Palestinian people suffering under the Israeli occupation.

The peaceful Christian town of Taybeh lies north of Jerusalem and is referenced in the Bible as Ephraim, which Jesus visited on his way to the home of Lazarus. It is the home of one of the oldest churches, "St. George." Only



recently, the town has been targeted by settlers who are rampaging the area, burning olive yearly income of oil and olives. Israel would like to see the Holy land without any Christians so it would turn the conflict into a Muslim Jewish one.

Over and above its biblical significance, Taybeh became a popular name on the international scene a number of years ago due to its brewery producing Taybeh Beer which became very well known on the international scene. However, the yearly beer festival, a very popular event which had attracted many tourists as well as Palestinians stopped taking place with the war on Gaza. Wine, cheese and honey are other local products of that charming town.

Father of the Oppressed,
we lift our prayers to you during these very difficult times when the whole region is suffering because of the world's injustices. We specially ask you to protect the peaceful little town of Taybeh on the hills around Jerusalem and spare its people from the raids of the illegal Israeli settlers under the protection of the Israeli army of occupation that has turned this holy land into anything but holy. In Jesus' name, amen.

**Samia Khoury is a leading Palestinian
Jerusalemite social activist**

Good Friday: Beit Sahour

FACTS ON THE GROUND

Dr ELIAS ISEED

The Ush Ghurab area, located east of the city of Beit Sahour, is one of the last remaining lands available for the city's future



development and public services. For decades, the area has been subject to military control and restrictive policies that have limited its use.

After serving as a military site for many years, the camp was evacuated in 2006. However, the land remains classified as Area C, which continues to impose severe restrictions on development and civilian projects.

Despite these limitations, the Municipality of Beit Sahour has worked to preserve parts of the area for public benefit, establishing Ush Ghurab Park and community spaces that serve residents and protect the land as a shared public resource.

Today, as the city's last remaining land reserve, any loss of this area would severely limit Beit Sahour's ability to expand housing, develop public infrastructure, and create green and community spaces for its residents. Such a development would place increasing pressure on the city's social and economic stability and could accelerate the

displacement of local families, particularly younger generations.

The situation has become more urgent following the establishment of a settlement outpost adjacent to the Ush Ghurab area at the end of 2025. This escalation threatens public land, environmental balance, community security, and the future stability of Beit Sahour.

Beit Sahour also holds a unique and symbolic place in the Holy Land as a predominantly Christian city, home to one of the largest Christian communities in Palestine. Threats to its land therefore carry broader implications for preserving the living Christian presence, heritage, and identity in the region.

At this critical moment, the Municipality of Beit Sahour calls directly upon churches, faith leaders, and the international community to move beyond statements of concern and take immediate and meaningful action. We urge you to stand in active solidarity with the people of Beit Sahour, raise your voices in defense of justice and human dignity, and demand accountability for actions that undermine peace and international law.

We also call on you to advocate for the protection of Ush Ghurab and to support the urgent development needs of the city. Your engagement, advocacy, and protective presence are essential to safeguarding this land and ensuring a sustainable future for Beit Sahour and its people.

**Dr. Elias Iseed serves as
Mayer of Beit Sahour**

Good Friday: Beit Sahour

AN APPEAL TO CHURCHES AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

ADV. DALIA QUMSIEH

New Settlement in Beit Sahour: What It Means for Palestinian Christians

Beit Sahour, a town to the East of Bethlehem, is known for being the place where the Angel appeared to the shepherds to deliver the joyous announcement of the birth of Jesus Christ. This year, shortly after Christmas, Beit Sahour was the receiver of very gloomy announcement; Israel is advancing a new settlement on its lands.

Today, as Easter approaches, the Israeli government has advanced its plans for a new settlement, "Yatziv", which has become a material fact, resided by Jewish-Israeli



settlers who are already claiming the space with 30 caravans (so far) and invoking a divine right, as brazenly expressed by Head of the Gush Etzion Regional Council, who said

during the inauguration of the new settlement on 20 January 2025: "I think that the establishment of the settlement here, right on the outskirts of the city of Bethlehem,

reminds us that returning home will only be possible if we return to the city of Bethlehem.

From there we were displaced 2,000 years ago, and from there we were displaced 30 years ago." The formerly abandoned Israeli military base has been now turned into a civilian settlement, one that serves to ensure a ring of connectivity among all the settlement that encircle and choke the Bethlehem governorate.

While, unfortunately, and as a result of Israel's chronic culture of impunity, news of illegal settlements expanding in occupied Palestine have become 'regular', merely invoking 'condemnations' at best. There is very little understanding of the level of devastation and erasure that settlements bring to the life of a community in general – and in the case of Beit Sahour, the first Palestinian Christian community and the largest remaining one in the West Bank.

It is imperative to understand settlements for what they really are, beyond the illegal land grabs and buildings: A multidimensional system of displacement, replacement and inevitable annexation. Settlements are, by design, tools of controlled displacement of Palestinians. Settlements operate through a combination of legal, military, economic, and

spatial mechanisms that gradually erase Palestinian existence.

Land confiscation is often accompanied by prohibitive movement restrictions, bypass roads that choke Palestinian communities. Settlements are accompanied by buffer areas, expanding along with the expansion of the settlement, at the expense of more Palestinian lands. They destroy vital sectors, including rural economies, and deprive Palestinians from their resources and any development potentials.

At the same time, the construction of settler infrastructure and services actively facilitates the transfer and permanence of a new population, the settlers, a state-sponsored, calculated tool of expediting Palestinian forced displacement through systematic terror directed against Palestinians without accountability and under the protection and accompaniment of Israeli forces, and who are already making their presence felt and visible in Beit Sahour, terrorizing the local population.

However, in the case of Beit Sahour, what is at stake goes well beyond this. The new settlement poses an immediate threat to the very fabric of the remaining Palestinian Christian life, at the doorsteps of the birthplace of Christ. As recent as it is, the new settlement and its settlers have already created a coercive, restricting and dangerous environment that leads to the displacement of Beit Sahour residents and, with it, delivering a detrimental blow to the

remaining Palestinian Christian population, which now stands at less than 1%, mostly centered in Beit Sahour. This is the frontier where our homes become a memory with no address.

In light of this grave development, and contrary to expectations of governments that fail to act against the manifest illegality of the Israeli settlement enterprise and unlawful occupation, the expectation from Palestinian Christians towards their fellow Christians and churches is very different. Churches are called to realize their power and leverage in action, with a full understanding that statements don't stop bulldozers, condemnations don't restore stolen lands and resources, and prayers alone cannot restore families who were uprooted from their ancestral lands. Only solid action will.

As funds pour into this settlement and others like it, each new housing unit, each new road for settlers, each terrorizing settler crime, and each military order that follows delivers a crippling blow to the Christians of Beit Sahour. Churches must, at the very least, move urgently towards severing any relations with the settlement's enterprise, divesting from trading in goods and services and sanctioning any dealings with the entirety of the settlement enterprise. This is the bare minimum position that aligns with humanity and morality first, the core of Christianity and international law, and it is a feasible measure. Any more delay in taking this minimum measure has very serious ramifications of dispossession and

displacement on the ground, and on the very legacy of the Church.

This is an urgent call: This Easter, Churches across the globe must immediately use their leverage strategically, amongst their own institutions and with their own governments, before there is no meaningful Palestinian Christian presence left to celebrate the resurrection in the land where it happened. The tomb is empty. We fear that soon, so too will be our homes, if the world still fails to act.

**Advocate Dalia Qumsiah is
Founder/Director
of Balasan Initiative for Human Rights**

Good Friday: Beit Sahour Prayer

HIND SHRAYDEH

O Lord, in Palestine we live in a state of great frustration and deep abandonment.

All the human rights and the international system in which we once believed have not done us justice; instead, they have continued to lash



against us. You know,

Lord, the truth of these feelings, for you experienced them when Peter denied you, when Judas handed you over, and when you

were scourged and crucified on the cross. Our hearts are filled with fear; our hearts weep just as you wept in the Garden of Gethsemane. In Palestine, we cannot plan for tomorrow. “Give us this day our daily bread.” We do not know whether tomorrow will even dawn upon us.

Israeli checkpoints, deliberate killing, martyrs, arrests, settler attacks, and the ongoing theft of land. We may leave our home, our car may break down, and we suddenly become an easy target for soldiers of the occupation or for an armed settler who has decided to kill us without anyone holding him accountable. Lord, we suffer from the

absence of all points of reference; sometimes we feel like orphans, with no one to represent us. Yet amid all this, we return to the beginning—to you, O Jesus. You are the beginning and the end.

Lord, we know that you warned us and told us that in this world we will face hardship. Yet today we pray to you for steadfastness and resilience. The solutions of this earth have truly come to an end; we cling only to your intervention, O Lord.

Lord, we turn to you in times of sorrow and distress—perhaps late, but now we realize that

you are our destination. You are the way, the truth, and the life. Receive our prayer, O Jesus.

We pray, Lord, that you would fill our hearts with hope and assurance during the difficult and painful times through which our land is passing. Grant us patience and hope so that we may continue our resistance and remain steadfast on this land. Now more than ever, we insist on choosing the path of love and resisting the temptation to fall into sin amid the hatred, revenge, and

hostility directed against every Palestinian because of their identity. For it is always harder to love our enemies. This is our responsibility as Christians and as children of this land.

We pause before the story of Saul of Tarsus in the Holy Scriptures—a persecutor and killer of Christians whose heart was filled with hatred and resentment. Yet on his way to Syria, in the midst of a military mission to continue the bloodshed against Christians, the You appeared to him, touched his heart, opened his eyes, and transformed him from within. He became Saint Paul the Apostle, who preached and wrote many of the letters in the Holy Gospel.

Lord, we pray that you would use us for your peace. May every one of us work for the glory of your name in our own lives and in the lives of others, so that people may see your image and likeness in us.

May we become witnesses to the awakening of many consciences who will eventually realize the truth of what is happening in Palestine. We pray for many more transformations like Saul’s among the Zionists and the followers of Christian Zionism—so that many more “Pauls” may emerge, and many awakenings may take place.

We offer a costly prayer—one that is difficult for those who suffer injustice: that every darkened soul may find salvation; that you, Lord, may enter their

hearts and touch them so they may recognize the horror of what they are doing, repent, feel the bitterness and boundless pain of this sin, and willingly submit themselves to your judgment. May they accept your just and righteous heavenly justice, be held publicly accountable, seek forgiveness from you



and from those they have wronged, and—like Saul—be transformed to become fierce defenders of all

Palestinian rights: the right of return, the right to freedom from occupation, the right to life, and the preservation of the dignity of every human being in Palestine, regardless of color, religion, or gender.

Lord, we pray for the prisoners in the prisons of the occupation, who are witnessing a silent annihilation and living amid darkness—crimes of torture, starvation, and violation carried out by those who have chosen to stand against life and who grant themselves the right to violate everything without accountability.

We remember how five Zionist prison guards were acquitted after physically assaulting a Palestinian prisoner despite the crime being documented by prison cameras, and how the Israeli prosecution chose to bury both the crime and the case.

Our prisoners endure every form of suffering in prison—even according to the testimony of Israeli organizations that issued the report “Welcome to Hell.”

They are tried before racist military courts that are unjust and complicit in the system that lashes against us daily—through administrative detention without a clear time limit except the whim of a regional officer. The enforced disappearance of people from Gaza. The imprisonment of children such as the child Qais Aql from the Christian town of Aboud. Women such as Layan Nasser from the town Birzeit. And young men such as Rami Fadail, who remains under continuously renewed administrative detention while prison authorities even prevent him from having access to the Holy Bible. Alongside them are thousands more.

We pray for all our prisoners—nearly 9,500 men and women held in prisons—that you may grant them strength, patience, and consolation. Sustain them in their suffering, and comfort their families who endure the pain of their absence and the uncertainty of their fate. Fill their hearts with consolation and remind them that the end of death is resurrection, and that this injustice will come to an end. Promise them all a freedom that is near, for the glory of your name, O Jesus.
Amen.

Hind Shraydeh
is a Jerusalem-based journalist
and a founding member of
Mahd al Mashriq Initiative

Holy Saturday: GAZA CITY FACTS ON THE GROUND

NADER ABU AMSHA

***Is this not the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undue the thongs of the yoke...
Is it not to share your bread with the
hungry, and bring the homeless poor
into your house; when you see the
naked, to cover them, and not to hide
yourself from your own kin?***

Isaiah 58:6-7



We fast, especially during the season of Lent, in pursuit of repentance, drawing nearer to God and following the example of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We fast in solidarity with the poor, the needy, the broken-hearted, and the oppressed. Fasting gains an added depth of meaning when those who fast are themselves the afflicted, brokenhearted—those deprived of even the most necessities of life.

In Gaza, we have sisters and brothers who remain steadfast in fasting and prayer, holding firmly to a rich Christian heritage that traces back to the very origins of Christianity. They have kept the covenant and preserved the faith, while enduring

every form of persecution including the harshest imaginable. The Christians in Gaza continue to hold fast to the beatitudes delivered by Jesus on the mountain, to His call that they are the salt of the earth, and to His promise that He came to grant them life, life in abundance.

Like all Palestinians in Gaza, the Palestinian Christians who have survived the genocide are living a life that can hardly be called living. This is not only because their psychological and emotional suffering is unprecedented, nor only because, like the Son of Man, “they have nowhere to lay their heads,” nor because their children have no access to education and they themselves endure hunger, illness, and a lack of proper clothing. It is also because of the existential threat of genocide and apartheid imposed upon them by the State.

After attempts to forcibly displace them through every possible means—starvation, the killing of dozens among them, the bombing of their churches and homes, and the offering of so-called “voluntary” migration—fewer than half remain. Yet they continue to hold that

Christian heritage established since the time of the early Church. They pray for endurance to the very end, for the coming of God's Kingdom. Their consolation remains that "the one who endures to the end will be saved."

Nader Abu Amsha
is Director of the Middle East Council
of Churches (MECC) Department of
Service to Palestinian Refugees

Where do we stand in relation to this reality, this almost miraculous scene? What message do we send to them during this Lenten season? What vision do we draw upon to justify our Christianity? Is this not a test that places burning coals upon our lips as we address ourselves, our churches, and our leaders? Does not our failure to confront injustice amount to a betrayal of our fasting and our prayers? Does not our silence in the face of the complicity against this people make us complicit in the crime of their slaughter, their destruction, and the uprooting of the last living witness in the land that Jesus Christ once walked?

Our question in this Lenten season is this: Does God accept our fasting while we close our eyes to the existential threat facing those whose ancestors lived on this land with Christ, witnessed His call to salvation, saw His suffering, crucifixion, death, and glorious resurrection, and went forth proclaiming the message of salvation to the whole world?

HOLY SATURDAY: GAZA CITY
APPEAL: BETWEEN SUFFERING AND HOPE
FELEEP KHALIL JAHSHAN

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4)

With this verse we begin our reflection on the human being who does not live by the body alone, but also by dignity, security, and hope. In Gaza today, the Christian community is living through a harsh reality beyond description. Homes belonging to most Christian families have been destroyed, infrastructure is nearly nonexistent, electricity and water are frequently cut off, and life in all its aspects has come to a standstill. Hardly a stone remains untouched by pain, and hardly a heart that has not endured fear and loss.

During the severe period of war that we endured, we remember with deep sorrow the passing of nearly 59 members of the Church to their heavenly glory. Their loss did not come from a single cause. Some died due to the lack of medicine and food, while others were killed as a result of the direct targeting of the church in which they had sought refuge for safety.

This loss is not merely numbers; it represents lives, souls, and families that were part of the authentic Christian presence in Gaza. Perhaps speaking about this suffering will not change much

in a world already filled with pain, yet it remains our human duty to remember and to bear witness to what this small community has endured—one that still clings to its faith and to its land.

Today, the Christian presence in Gaza lives in a state of profound uncertainty, torn between the painful reality of forced migration and the fear of a slow death in a context that lacks the basic necessities of life after the war—or what we believe to be the aftermath of war. Many have left their churches and returned to their homes under the weight of fear and destruction, yet we still feel distant from genuine attention and care.

Thoughts now revolve largely around opportunities for migration and departure—not out of a desire to leave, but under the pressure of harsh circumstances that push many to consider abandoning beloved Gaza, which has long been and remains a homeland of faith, memories, and deep roots.

We pray for the repose of the souls of the victims, and we hope that the voice of humanity will remain present, and that what remains of the Christian presence in Gaza will receive the attention and care it deserves, so that this land may continue

to bear witness to a long history of life and faith.

The Christian community of Gaza has lost much: loved ones, memories, and a sense of stability that had endured for years. Some of its members possess travel visas to Australia and other countries and are waiting for the crossing to open so they can emigrate in search of safety, while others have no option to leave but are no longer able to cope with the struggles of the post-war reality. The experience of death is no longer merely distant news—it has become a reality that many have lived through in all its painful details.

The anticipated future for Gaza appears bleak. Reconstruction is not merely about repairing stones; it is about rebuilding a human being who has been exhausted by trauma. Churches, despite their spiritual and humanitarian role, cannot alone sustain the steadfastness of this community in the face of escalating economic, psychological, and social challenges. Today, the need goes beyond emergency relief toward a comprehensive vision that safeguards presence, preserves dignity, and restores hope.

We therefore issue a sincere call for solidarity with the Christian community in Gaza—a call addressed to every person of living conscience, and to international, church, and human rights institutions—to work together to help people remain on

their land, to support their resilience, and to ensure the conditions for a dignified life. Preserving this authentic component of Gaza's social fabric is also a way of preserving pluralism, the message of coexistence, and the hope that life, despite everything, is stronger than destruction.

**Feleep Khalil Jahshan
is a journalist in Gaza**

HOLY SATURDAY: GAZA CITY

REFLECTION AND PRAYER

ARCHBISHOP THEODOSIOS ATALLAH HANNA

We are currently in the sacred season of the Great Lent, a spiritual journey of faith through which we prepare ourselves to receive the glorious Feast of the Resurrection, one of the most important Christian feasts. In our liturgical language it is described as the Feast of Feasts and the Season of Seasons.

During these days we fast. Fasting in our Church is not merely abstaining from food or drink. Rather, it is a return to the divine embrace, a time of repentance, prayer, and supplication.



In earlier Christian centuries, when believers fasted, they would save part of their money and undertake acts of compassion, reaching out to those in need, the suffering, and the afflicted.

A true Christian is one who turns toward his fellow human being who is suffering, oppressed, and in pain. Here in this Holy Land, over the past two years, we have witnessed a horrific genocidal war against our people in the Gaza Strip, not to

As Christians, we cannot remain silent, indifferent spectators in the face of these injustices inflicted upon our Palestinian people. The Palestinian Christian initiative Kairos Palestine has carried this message: to defend our people and to express the authentic and principled Christian position that calls for justice and true peace in this land, and for the fulfillment of the hopes and aspirations of our people.

In the Feast of the Resurrection, we see and proclaim that the power of life has triumphed over the power of death, and that the power of good has overcome the power of evil. The Lord Jesus Christ did not remain hanging on the cross, nor did He remain in the tomb; on the third day He rose victorious over death, and His resurrection is a resurrection for all humanity.

Inspired by this great feast, we affirm that our Palestinian people deserve life, freedom, and dignity. Whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ—crucified for our salvation and risen from the dead—must speak the truth that must be spoken in this world, a world filled with brutality, savagery, and bias toward the oppressors at the expense of the oppressed.

On the glorious Feast of the Resurrection, we raise our prayers with fervor for the Land of the Resurrection, so that justice may prevail in it and true peace may also reign. We are advocates of peace, but peace must be built upon the freedom, dignity, safety, and security of our Palestinian people. Peace cannot be achieved without justice and the full freedom that our people deserve, a people who have lived for many long years under tragic and catastrophic conditions.

O Lord,
in these holy days we ask You to be with our people in Gaza who are enduring an unprecedented tragedy in modern human history. They lie upon the bare earth and are covered only by the sky. They are in need of Your compassion and mercy in the face of the cruelty and brutality they have endured over the past two years.

We pray for all our Palestinian people, that our oppressed nation may finally enjoy the long-awaited freedom it deserves. The land of peace is thirsting for peace. Inspired by the message of the Resurrection we affirm that we remain steadfast in the values of justice and peace, and we will not surrender to the culture of frustration, despair, and hopelessness.

**A blessed Resurrection to all.
Christ is risen... Truly He is risen.**

**Archbishop Theodosios Atallah Hanna
is Archbishop of Sevastia from the
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of
Jerusalem**

EASTER SUNDAY

CHRIST IS RISEN, TRULY HE IS RISEN. ALLELUIA.

Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabbah

Dear brothers and sisters,

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

(1 Peter 1:3)

The Resurrection is not only a memory of the past, but a power of hope present in our lives today, especially when we are surrounded by hardships and wars. The risen Christ accompanies us in every suffering and transforms hardship—even wars—into a path of life.

**Christ is risen, truly He is risen.
Alleluia.**

With this unfading proclamation, the Church of Jerusalem has lived for two thousand years, and with this steadfast hope we welcome the glorious feast of



Easter in our Holy Land, the land of the Resurrection.

From the empty tomb in Jerusalem the

word of life went forth to the world. From this land, sanctified by the blood of the Redeemer and the tears of the saints, the Church continues to raise a hymn of hope despite the pains and trials she endures in Jerusalem, in Gaza, and in every city and village of Palestine, alongside the war that spread to Iran a few weeks ago and has set the whole region ablaze.

The word “Easter” means passage—the passage from death to life, from darkness to light. The Lord Jesus lived this passage through the way of the Cross where, in the eyes of humanity, evil appeared to have triumphed and violence to have overcome love. But God the Father raised Him from the dead, proclaiming that the final word does not belong to death but to life, not to injustice but to justice, not to hatred but to love, not to war or settlement, but to the dignity of every people in its own land.

In these days when our land and the peoples of our region suffer the calamities of war, violence, and destruction, the sufferings of the Cross seem close to our daily lives. We see tears in the eyes of mothers, fear in the hearts of children, and anxiety in the souls of many. Some may ask: Where is God amid these sufferings? And where is hope in the midst of such darkness?

We are a believing people, and our faith assures us that God does not stand far from human suffering. Rather, He entered fully into it through His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, who shared in humanity's wounds, bore its sorrows, and walked with it to the depths of death. Therefore, every human pain finds an echo in the heart of God, and no tear is lost before Him. As the psalmist says: *"This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles"* (Psalm 34:6).

In this Easter message we address our appeal to all our brothers and sisters throughout the world who celebrate the glorious feast of Easter. We ask them to pray with us for the Land of the Resurrection, that it may overcome death with Jesus Christ risen from the dead. Pray wherever you are for your rulers who are involved in igniting this war in our countries, that God may guide them to wisdom and that they may cease bringing death to us—cease their plans of new death, settlement, and new partition in our region.

Pray with us and raise your voices with ours, so that together we may speak the word of truth and the word of life to all the powerful of this earth. May every people and every person remain free and dignified in their land and in their homes, where God has called them to live their lives and raise their prayers to Him.

May the risen Christ dispel the forces of evil in the hearts of the rulers of this earth, near and far, and open their hearts and minds to the ways of life in which there is no death.

Our faithful brothers and sisters in this Holy Land: always hear the words of the



Lord Jesus who says to you: *"Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid. Take courage; I have overcome*

the world" (John 16:33). And the Apostle Paul says to you: *"Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain"* (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Brothers and sisters throughout the world, pray with us, work with us, strive and speak to your leaders so that they may revere this land which God has made holy, and know that God has willed our land to be a land of redemption and new life for us and for the whole world.

Christ is risen, truly He is risen.

A blessed Easter to all.

**Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabbah is
the former Latin Patriarch of
Jerusalem and the chair of Kairos
Palestine**



**Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.**

Psalm 85:10

Kairos Palestine II: Faith in a Time of Genocide

Kairos Palestine II was born in the rubble of Gaza, in refugee camps, at checkpoints, and in grieving homes. It is both lament and proclamation, mourning what has been destroyed and affirming our common mission to resist oppression, uphold life and proclaim justice.

Kairos II insists that faith cannot be neutral. Faith demands truth-telling, courageous action, and solidarity that costs something. Please, read it again. Study it. Then join us.

- **Name the Reality Truthfully**

- Genocide, settler colonialism, apartheid and ethnic cleansing
- Neutral language perpetuates injustice.

- **Advocate for Accountability and International Law**

- Press governments, churches and institutions to:
 - Hold Israel accountable under international law.
 - Impose sanctions, boycotts and arms embargoes

- **Reject Theologies that Justify Oppression**

- Christian Zionism and all theologies that suggest that racism, supremacy, and/or genocide are the will of God must be rejected.

- **Practice Costly Solidarity**

- **Support Creative, Nonviolent Resistance**

- Participate in the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, as well as other nonviolent strategies grounded in love and justice.



Share this Alert—as a whole or in its many parts—wherever you can: with church leaders, in your faith community, on social media.

Kairos Palestine Vision

“We look toward the day when we shall live free in our land, together with all the inhabitants of the earth, in true peace and reconciliation—founded upon justice and equality for all God’s creation, where ‘mercy and truth meet, and righteousness and peace kiss each other (Psalm 85:10).’

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