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Easter 2026: “May we be transformed by the peace of Christ”

On Easter Sunday, Pope Leo XIV delivered his Urbi et Orbi message from St. Peter's Basilica, proclaiming Christ's resurrection as “the beginning of a new humanity.” He called on the world to be transformed by the peace of the Risen Christ and to reject the growing “globalization of indifference” to war and suffering.

04/05/2026

Brothers and sisters,

Christ is risen! Happy Easter!

For centuries, the Church has joyfully sung of the event that is the origin and foundation of her faith: “Yes, Christ my hope is arisen / Christ indeed from death is risen / Have mercy, victor King, ever reigning” (*Easter Sequence*).

Easter is the victory of life over death, of light over darkness, of love over hatred. It is a victory that came at a very high price: Christ, the Son of the living God (cf. Mt 16:16), had to die — and die on a cross — after suffering an unjust condemnation, being mocked and tortured, and shedding all his blood. As the true immolated Lamb, he took upon himself the sin of the world (cf. Jn 1:29; 1 Pet 1:18–19) and thus freed us all — and with us, all creation — from the dominion of evil.

But how was Jesus able to be victorious? What is the strength with which he defeated once and for all the ancient adversary, the prince of this world (cf. Jn 12:31)? What is the power with which he rose from the dead, not returning to his former life, but entering into eternal life and thus opening in his own flesh the passage from this world to the Father?

This strength, this power, is God himself for he is Love who creates and generates, Love who is faithful to the end and Love who forgives and redeems.

Christ, our “victorious King,” fought and won his battle through trusting abandonment to the Father’s will, to his plan of salvation (cf. Mt 26:42). Thus he walked the path of dialogue to the very end, not in words but in deeds: to find us who were lost, he became flesh; to free us who were

slaves, he became a slave; to give life to us mortals, he allowed himself to be killed on the cross.

The power with which Christ rose is entirely nonviolent. It is like that of a grain of wheat which, having rotted in the earth, grows, breaks through the clods, sprouts, and becomes a golden ear of wheat. It is even more like that of a human heart which, wounded by an offense, rejects the instinct for revenge and, filled with compassion, prays for the one who has committed the offense.

Brothers and sisters, this is the true strength that brings peace to humanity, because it fosters respectful relationships at every level: among individuals, families, social groups, and nations. It does not seek private interests, but the common good; it does not seek to impose its own plan, but to help

design and carry out a plan together with others.

Yes, Christ's resurrection is the beginning of a new humanity; it is the entrance into the true promised land, where justice, freedom, and peace reign, where all recognize one another as brothers and sisters, children of the same Father who is Love, Life, and Light.

Brothers and sisters, through his resurrection, the Lord confronts us even more powerfully with the dramatic reality of our freedom. Before the empty tomb, we can be filled with hope and wonder, like the disciples, or with fear like the guards and the Pharisees, forced to resort to lies and subterfuge rather than acknowledge that the one who had been condemned is truly risen (cf. Mt 28:11–15)!

In the light of Easter, let us allow ourselves to be amazed by Christ! Let

us allow our hearts to be transformed by his immense love for us! Let those who have weapons lay them down! Let those who have the power to unleash wars choose peace! Not a peace imposed by force, but through dialogue! Not with the desire to dominate others, but to encounter them!

We are growing accustomed to violence, resigning ourselves to it, and becoming indifferent. Indifferent to the deaths of thousands of people. Indifferent to the repercussions of hatred and division that conflicts sow. Indifferent to the economic and social consequences they produce, which we all feel. There is an ever-increasing “globalization of indifference,” to borrow an expression dear to Pope Francis, who one year ago from this loggia addressed his final words to the world, reminding us: “What a great

thirst for death, for killing, we witness each day in the many conflicts raging in different parts of the world!” (Urbi et Orbi Message, 20 April 2025).

The cross of Christ always reminds us of the suffering and pain that surround death and the agony it entails. We are all afraid of death, and out of fear we turn away, preferring not to look. We cannot continue to be indifferent! And we cannot resign ourselves to evil! Saint Augustine teaches: “If you fear death, love the resurrection!” (*Sermon* 124, 4). Let us too love the resurrection, which reminds us that evil is not the last word, because it has been defeated by the Risen One.

He passed through death to give us life and peace: “I leave you peace; I give you my peace. Not as the world gives it, I give it to you” (Jn 14:27). The peace that Jesus gives us is not

merely the silence of weapons, but the peace that touches and transforms the heart of each one of us! Let us allow ourselves to be transformed by the peace of Christ! Let us make heard the cry for peace that springs from our hearts! For this reason, I invite everyone to join me in a prayer vigil for peace that we will celebrate here in Saint Peter's Basilica next Saturday, April 11.

On this day of celebration, let us abandon every desire for conflict, domination, and power, and implore the Lord to grant his peace to a world ravaged by wars and marked by a hatred and indifference that make us feel powerless in the face of evil. To the Lord we entrust all hearts that suffer and await the true peace that only he can give. Let us entrust ourselves to him and open our hearts to him! He is the only one who makes all things new (cf. Rev 21:5).

Happy Easter!

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