

EASTER GREETINGS IN SPRING 2023

HUNGARIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE – ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN HUNGARY

“PEACE BE WITH YOU!” (John 20:19)

The first words of the risen Jesus to his disciples were: “Peace be with you!” Is there a more timely gift we could be given by Jesus at Easter 2023? Hardly any.

After the Crucifixion on Good Friday, the disciples returned to their homes with the bitter feeling that everything was lost. They might have even blamed themselves for what had happened. But on the third day, the risen Lord greeted them saying “Peace be with you!”

This message calls us to reconcile with God. God turns to us mercifully as our loving Father, inviting us to fellowship with Him. Forsaking our sins, and through Jesus, whom we crucified, we now seek to live in communion with him. This is the only way we can know His peace.

Jesus' greeting, “Peace be with you!” invites us to reconcile with our fellow human beings. It is an everyday experience of life that opinions clash or interests conflict. Neither these nor the hostility between peoples or nations can be regarded as natural. Jesus encourages us to reconcile with each other while we are on the road. Only this is worthy of Christ's disciples. Neither anger, nor revenge, nor unfair advantage can be acceptable to a Christian. Wrath, war and the destruction of human lives is a crime against individuals and nations.

Jesus' words “Peace be with you!” call us to inner reconciliation, to the acceptance of our own personhood. Many of our contemporaries are unable to reconcile with themselves, with their endowments or capabilities. Jesus accepts us all just as we are with our human values and shortcomings, in order to enrich us with himself and make us new human beings. May the risen Christ give us strength for this at Easter 2023!

<i>Bishop Dr. András Veres</i> President Hungarian Catholic Bishops' Conference	<i>Bishop József Steinbach</i> Reformed Church, President Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary	<i>Rev. Dr. Vilmos Fischl</i> General Secretary Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary
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