



## PATRIARCHATUS LATINUS - JERUSALEM

بطريركية القدس لللاتين

Prot. N. (1) 580/2026

February 11, 2026

### **Lenten Letter to the Diocese of Jerusalem**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

May the Lord give you peace!

With the beginning of Lent, the Church invites us to set out on a shared journey of prayer, penance, and conversion, a journey that will lead us to the beating heart of our faith: the solemnity of Easter. This time of grace is a precious opportunity to purify our hearts, renew our faith, and reorient our lives toward God. It is not merely a time of abstinence, but a call to rediscover the true meaning of our existence, to return to that first love who embraced us at Baptism.

In our diocese, and particularly in Jerusalem, the city that preserves the living memory of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, this spiritual journey gains a unique and deeply felt meaning. In the Holy Land, where the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, we are called to retrace with steadfastness the footsteps of the Savior, so we can enter more fully into the mystery of His redeeming love, and respond to His invitation to walk after Him

### **The Passion of Christ: Path of Conversion and Mercy**

Lent is the fitting period to fix our gaze upon the supreme sacrifice of Jesus, who gave His life for our salvation. As the Gospel of John reminds us: "He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end" (Jn. 13:1). This love, which went so far as the total giving of Self, is the foundation of our hope. During Lent, we are called to meditate on the depth of this love that knows no limit. To follow Jesus means to accept His call: "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (Mt. 16:24). The cross is not only a symbol of suffering, but the way through which we experience true life.

In this context, we are all earnestly invited to rediscover the Sacrament of Reconciliation, through which we encounter the tangible face of the Father's mercy; it is an encounter of healing and love. Let us prepare ourselves with a serious examination of conscience, asking the Lord to illuminate the dark areas of our hearts. Let the grace of Christ, obtained at a great price on the wood of the Cross, here in our land, renew within us the beauty of our Baptism, making us freer and more joyful witnesses of His peace.

### **Prayer: Breath of the Soul**

Prayer is the soul of the Lenten journey. It is through prayer that, like Jesus in the desert (cf. Mt. 4:1–11), we find the strength to overcome temptations and remain faithful to the Father. In this time of grace, we are encouraged to nourish personal and communal prayer with greater diligence. Let us set aside moments of silence, like Jesus in Gethsemane, to entrust our struggles, our hopes, and our desires for good to God.

May the prayer of the Rosary also become our daily compass, expressing our longing for heaven. Through the mysteries of the Rosary, we journey together with Mary through the life of Jesus and rediscover the source of our salvation.

Let us pay special attention to pray for peace. From the Holy Land, a crossroads of peoples and faiths, let us raise to God an insistent plea for reconciliation, for an end to all violence, and for the gift of a just and lasting peace for all the inhabitants of this beloved and wounded land. Each day, in our churches and in our homes, let us pray that the Lord may hear the cry of those who suffer and grant peace. The Apostle exhorts us to “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17), and we respond with all our hearts.

### **Fasting and Charity: Two Wings of the Same Offering**

According to our tradition and the norms of the Church, Lenten fasting has two important and obligatory days: Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent, and Good Friday. During this penitential period, abstinence from meat is also required on Fridays. It is also recommended to observe abstinence on the Wednesdays of Lent, as many of the faithful in the Holy Land usually do. Fasting is an ancient and fruitful practice of inner purification. It helps us detach ourselves from what is superfluous in order to seek what is essential: God and His Kingdom. As Jesus cautions us, fasting must not be shown off, but lived in the secrecy of the heart, with humility and sincerity (cf. Mt. 6:16–18). Yet the true fast that God desires goes beyond abstaining from food; the prophet Isaiah reminds us that it “releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking off every yoke?” (Is. 58:6).

Our fasting must be accompanied with active charity. Lent is the time when conversion to God also opens our eyes to the poor and to charity. In every parish and community, it is good to organize special Lenten collections for the poor of the parish and for those in need. The money saved thanks to our sacrifices - one less meal, a small daily offering - should become tangible help for families in difficulty, the unemployed, lonely elderly people, and suffering children. Let us visit those who are alone and share our time with the sick. Let us not allow our penance to remain sterile, but transform it into love that becomes closeness, especially toward the most vulnerable in our society, often marked by much anxiety. In them we encounter the face of Christ who tells us: “You did it to Me” (Mt. 25:40).

### **The Holy Land: Vocation to Peace and Reconciliation**

The Holy Land, the land of Redemption, preserves the history of revelation, the promises of God, and above all the promise of peace. Yet it continues to experience the wounds of conflict. In this land sanctified by the blood of Christ, we are called above all to be workers for peace. May our Christian witness be known through respect, sincere dialogue, and an untiring search for justice. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Mt. 5:9). May our prayers and works of charity, offered to all without distinction, be the most eloquent sign of our commitment to reconciliation and peace.

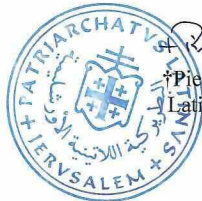
### **With our gaze fixed on the Resurrection**

Brothers and sisters, Lent is not a journey without a destination. It is a pilgrimage toward Easter, toward the invincible light of the morning of the Resurrection.

Every step we take, every sacrifice we make, every act of charity we perform is illuminated by the hope of the Resurrection. If Christ had not risen, our faith would be in vain (cf. 1 Cor. 15:14); but He has truly risen! And this certainty gives us the strength to walk forward, to convert our hearts and to love without reserve, looking ahead to the joy that awaits us.

I accompany you with my prayer on this holy journey. Let us live this Lent as a true “Kairos” moment, a favorable time of grace. Through sincere confession, with perseverance in prayer, and generous charity, let us renew our Baptismal vows, our covenant with God, and our fraternal commitment in our beloved Holy Land.

I wish you all a fruitful Lenten journey!



*Pierbattista Pizzaballa*  
† Pierbattista Card. Pizzaballa  
Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem