

MAGNIFICAT

An Occasional Paper of Nazareth House-catholic Worker, Philippines

Fourth Sunday in Eastertide, 2026

Good Shepherd Sunday

Alleluia! Christ is risen! Happy Easter! A blessed Good Shepherd Sunday to all!

As an Easter people, it is our duty of affirm life (Dt. 30:19) in a world racked by wars, genocide, and social injustice. It is our responsibility to speak out against- and resist non-violently- forces of death, and principalities and powers that cause human diminishment and ecological destruction. We are heartened by the recent pronouncements of Pope Leo XIV, and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I which we are reprinting here.

Reflection of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV at the Prayer Vigil for Peace (April 11, 2026)

Dear brothers and sisters,

Your prayer is an expression of that faith which, according to the words of Jesus, moves mountains (cf. Mt 17:20). Thank you for accepting this invitation to gather here at the tomb of Saint Peter and in so many other places around the world to pray for peace. War divides; hope unites. Arrogance tramples upon others; love lifts up. Idolatry blinds us; the living God enlightens. My dearest friends, all it takes is a little faith, a mere “crumb” of faith, in order to face this dramatic hour in history together — as humanity and alongside humanity. Prayer is not a refuge in which to hide from our responsibilities, nor an anesthetic to numb the pain provoked by so much injustice. Rather, it is the most selfless, universal and transformative response to death: we are a people who are already risen! Within each of us, within every human being, the interior Teacher teaches peace, urges us toward encounter and inspires us to make supplication. Let us rise from the rubble! Nothing can confine us to a predetermined fate, not even in this world where there never seem to be enough graves, for people continue to crucify one another and eliminate life, with no regard to justice and mercy.

In the context of the 2003 Iraq war crisis, Saint John Paul II, a tireless advocate for peace, said with deep emotion: “I belong to that generation that lived through World War II and, thanks be to God, survived it. I have the duty to say to all young people, to those who are younger than I, who have not had this experience: “No more war” as Paul VI said during his first visit to the United Nations. We must do everything possible. We know well that peace is not possible at any price. But we all know how great is this responsibility” (*Angelus*, 16 March 2003). I make his appeal my own this evening, relevant as it is today.

Prayer teaches us how to act. In prayer, our limited human possibilities are joined to the infinite possibilities of God. Thoughts, words and deeds then break the demonic cycle of evil and are placed at the service of the Kingdom of God. A Kingdom in which there is no sword, no drone, no vengeance, no trivialization of evil, no unjust profit, but only dignity, understanding and forgiveness. It is here that we find a bulwark against that delusion of omnipotence that surrounds us and is becoming increasingly

unpredictable and aggressive. The balance within the human family has been severely destabilized. Even the holy Name of God, the God of life, is being dragged into discourses of death. A world of brothers and sisters with one heavenly Father vanishes, as in a nightmare, giving way to a reality populated by enemies. We are met by threats, rather than the invitation to listen and to come together. Brothers and sisters, those who pray are aware of their own limitations; they do not kill or threaten with death. Instead, death enslaves those who have turned their backs on the living God, turning themselves and their own power into a mute, blind and deaf idol (cf. *Ps* 115:4–8), to which they sacrifice every value, demanding that the whole world bend its knee.

Enough of the idolatry of self and money! Enough of the display of power! Enough of war! True strength is shown in serving life. With evangelical simplicity, Saint John XXIII once wrote: “The benefits of peace will be felt everywhere, by individuals, by families, by nations, by the whole human race.” And echoing the incisive words of Pius XII, he added: “Nothing is lost by peace; everything may be lost by war” (Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, 116).

Let us, therefore, unite the moral and spiritual strength of the millions and billions of men and women, young and old, who today choose to believe in peace, caring for the wounds and repairing the damage left behind by the madness of war. I receive countless letters from children in areas of conflict. In reading them, one perceives, through the lens of innocence, all the horror and inhumanity of actions that some adults boast of with pride. Let us listen to the voices of children!

Dear brothers and sisters, there are certainly binding responsibilities that fall to the leaders of nations. To them we cry out: Stop! It is time for peace! Sit at the table of dialogue and mediation, not at the table where rearmament is planned and deadly actions are decided! Yet there is a no less significant responsibility that falls to all of us — men and women from all over the world. We are an immense multitude that rejects war not only in word, but also in deed. Prayer calls us to leave behind whatever violence remains in our hearts and minds. Let us turn to a Kingdom of peace that is built up day by day — in our homes, schools, neighborhoods, and civil and religious communities. A Kingdom that counters polemics and resignation through friendship and a culture of encounter. Let us believe once again in love, moderation and good politics. We must form ourselves and get personally involved, each following our own calling. Everyone has a place in the mosaic of peace!

The Rosary, like other ancient forms of prayer, has united us this evening in its steady rhythm built on repetition. Peace gains ground in the same way: word by word, deed by deed, just as a rock is hollowed out drop by drop, or fabric woven stitch by stitch. These are the slow rhythms of life, a sign of God’s patience. We must not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by the pace of a world that does not know what it is chasing. Rather, we must return to serving the rhythm of life, the harmony of creation and healing its wounds. As Pope Francis taught us, “There is also a need for peacemakers, men and women prepared to work boldly and creatively to initiate processes of healing and renewed encounter” (Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti*, 225). There is, indeed, “an ‘architecture’ of peace, to which different institutions of society contribute, each according to its own area of expertise, but there is also an ‘art’ of peace that involves us” (*ibid.*, 231).

Dear brothers and sisters, let us return home having made a commitment to pray without ceasing and without growing weary, a commitment to a profound conversion of heart. The Church is a great people at the service of reconciliation and peace. She advances without hesitation, even when rejecting the logic of war may lead to misunderstanding and scorn. She proclaims the Gospel of peace and instills

obedience to God rather than any human authority, especially when the inherent dignity of other human beings is threatened by continuous violations of international law. “Throughout the world, it is to be hoped that every community become a ‘house of peace,’ where one learns how to defuse hostility through dialogue, where justice is practiced and forgiveness is cherished. Now more than ever, we must show that peace is not a utopia” (*Message for the LIX World Day of Peace*, 1 January 2026).

Brothers and sisters of every language, people and nation: we are one family that weeps, hopes and rises again. “No more war, a journey with no return; no more war, a vicious cycle of grief and violence;” (Saint John Paul II, *Prayer for Peace*, 2 February 1991).

Dear friends, peace be with you all! It is the peace of the Risen Christ, the fruit of his sacrifice of love on the cross. For this reason, we raise our prayer to him:

Lord Jesus,
you conquered death without weapons or violence:
you shattered its power with the strength of peace.
Grant us your peace,
as you did to the women filled with doubt on Easter morning,
as you did to the disciples who were hiding in fear.
Send forth your Spirit,
the breath that gives life and reconciles,
that turns adversaries and enemies into brothers and sisters.
Inspire in us to trust in Mary, your mother,
who stood at the foot of your cross with a broken heart,
firm in the faith that you would rise again.
May the madness of war cease
and the Earth be cared for and cultivated by those who still
know how to bring forth, protect and love life.
Hear us, Lord of life!¹

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Patriarchal Encyclical on the Occasion of Holy Pascha 2026

† B A R T H O L O M E W
BY GOD’S MERCY
ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE – NEW ROME
AND ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH
TO THE ENTIRE PLENITUDE OF THE CHURCH:
GRACE, PEACE, AND MERCY FROM CHRIST, RISEN IN GLORY
* * *

¹ From: <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/homilies/2026/documents/20260411-rosario-pace.html> Accessed April 15, 2026

Most honourable brother Hierarchs and blessed children in the Lord,

Having arrived, through fasting, prayer, and solemnity, at the radiant and all-festal day of Holy Pascha, we hymn and glorify the world-saving Resurrection of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, which marks the manifest victory of life over death, renews all creation, and opens to humanity the way of deification by grace. The Church of Christ preserves the paschal experience in her liturgical life, in the labours of the Saints and Martyrs of the faith, in the eschatological impulse of monasticism, in the proclamation of the Gospel “to the ends of the earth,” in theology and the ecclesial arts, in the good witness of the faithful in the world, in the culture of love and solidarity, and in the immovable certainty that evil does not have the final word in history.

The Resurrection of the Lord is lived as a Christ-bestowed freedom, which inspires, nourishes, and strengthens the creative powers of the human person and the good struggle for “whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable,”[1] while reminding us all that the journey toward the Resurrection is inseparably bound to the Cross. The joy of the Cross and the Resurrection has preserved the people of God from identifying themselves with the spirit of this world, while at the same time safeguarding them from barren insularity and a spirituality devoid of dynamism and hope-bearing breath. The life of the faithful, in the crucified and risen Christ “for us men,” still today refutes every alien narrative of Christian ethos as a “morality of the weak,” supposedly embodied in humility, forgiveness, sacrificial love, asceticism, the Lord’s saying “but I say to you, do not resist the evil one,”[2] and other principles and dispositions that belong to the very core of our identity. Nothing could be further from the truth than this reading of the ethos of Christianity — of sacrificial love that “does not seek its own,” a love interwoven with courage, boldness, and existential authenticity. Pascha is a hymn to this freedom, to faith “working through love,”[3] which is not our own achievement but grace and a gift from above, and which is lived in the holy Sacraments of the Church and in the “mystery” of service to one’s neighbour. Indeed, “love for God does not in any way tolerate hatred toward one’s fellow human being.”[4]

The Church of Christ — the “salt of the earth,” the “light of the world,” the city “set on a hill,” the lamp placed “on the lampstand”[5] — bears active witness in the world, before the signs of the times, about the grace that has come and “the hope that is in us.”[6] The message of the Cross and the Resurrection resounds today as a Gospel of peace, reconciliation, and justice. War, hatred, and injustice stand opposed to the fundamental Christian principles for whose realization and establishment the people of God pray and labour each day. In the light of the Resurrection, we beseech the Lord on behalf of the victims of wartime violence, the orphans, the mothers who mourn their children, and all those who bear in body and soul the effects of human cruelty and callousness. “Christ is risen” is a denial and condemnation of violence and fear and an invitation to a life of peace. War brings forth lamentation and death; the Resurrection conquers death and bestows incorruptibility.

Phanar, Holy Pascha 2026
† Bartholomew of Constantinople
*fervent supplicant for you all
to the Risen Lord²*

² From: https://archons.org/patriarchal-encyclical-pascha-2026/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=dhfacebook&utm_content=null Accessed April 15, 202

Community News

With the US and Israel launching an unjust war against Iran, this has deleterious effects on the world. The Philippines is the first country to declare a national energy emergency since the supply of oil resources is disrupted. 90% of its oil comes from the Middle East.³ According to the Ibon Foundation, "Prices will soar with inflation doubling or even tripling in the months to come- market-driven pricing and corporate profits are protected...Relief is still just a trickle- it self-limits to inadequate budgets, and refuses to raise revenues from the rich. The message of the Marcos Jr. administration is clear: the burden of adjusting is on the poor and ordinary Filipinos".⁴ The Philippine Government, mired in corruption, is not adequately protecting its vulnerable citizens... In the meantime, on April 22, 2026, the International Criminal Court (ICC) reaffirmed its jurisdiction to try former President Rodrigo Roa Duterte for crimes against humanity- in relation to his War on Drugs (Oplan Tokhang) that claimed thousands of lives.⁵ The following day the ICC also confirmed the charges, and he will now be tried.⁶ We are happy that the ICC trial will begin soon. May justice prevail!

Nazareth House

Right after the Christmas holidays, two of our roommates departed because they were able to attain independent housing. While we miss them, we are happy that they reached their goals. There are only three of us left. "A" continues to work full-time at a call center. While we don't have monthly Mass anymore, we do have weekly Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament led by "A"... "B" continues his part-time counseling work... "N" continues to split his time between the USA to care for a family member who was diagnosed with cancer (now in remission) last year, and the Philippines. In December 2025 to March 2026, "N" continued visits to political prisoners in the Philippines. While in the USA, N communicates with the political detainees by snail mail. N was able to have contact with Mary Jane Veloso, and has established regular communication with her... A new person, "J", was supposed to come and live with us in January, but, tragically, we heard he took his own life right around Christmas. He was struggling with depression because of familial rejection due to his HIV status. We were shocked to find out about his untimely demise as we were preparing for his arrival. We pray for the repose of his soul.

We celebrated our ninth year in December with a Mass and a party. We look forward to our tenth year, God willing. Our house has always been small, but more so lately. Because there is not enough people in the house to do the work, it has been decided that new roommates would not be admitted for now. We will simply maintain providing shelter to our current number of roommates. However, to compensate, we will give out limited monthly rental support to a family of four to prevent homelessness. We will also continue to provide school subsidies (tuition, allowance) to about ten economically disadvantaged children and youth. Because of the economic downturn due to the Middle East war, we will also

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/24/world/middleeast/philippines-national-emergency-high-fuel-prices.html>

⁴ <https://www.ibon.org/ed-on-energy-emergency/>

⁵ <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/icc-appeals-chamber-confirms-jurisdiction-duterte-case>

⁶ <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/icc-pre-trial-chamber-i-confirms-all-charges-against-rodrico-roa-duterte-and-commits-him-trial>

continue- in our limited ways- to provide food assistance to some PLHIV/AIDS. We wish we can do more. However, we believe what Dorothy Day said: With each one of us doing something out of love, such small acts will tilt the moral scale of the world from hate to love.



Christmas Party (2025), Correctional Institution for Women, Mandaluyong City, Philippines where “N” participated in a visit to political prisoners.



Christmas Eve (2025), Nazareth House, Blessing of the Creche, “A” leading the guests in prayer and blessing.

Nazareth House (Bahay Nazareth) is an ecumenical house of hospitality rooted in the spirit of the worldwide Catholic Worker Movement founded by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in 1933. We seek to embody the Gospel ideals of unceasing prayer, corporal and spiritual works of mercy, which include acts of non-violent peace and justice, solidarity with the poor, radical hospitality, and life in community. Located in Manila, Philippines, we are not a social service or a registered charitable institution, nor a not for profit corporation but simply a group of Christians who feel called to an apostolic ministry of providing shelter to persons living with HIV or AIDS who do not have adequate financial means for housing, and who are unable to secure assistance from any source. We are LGBTQI friendly. Email: bahaynazareth@gmail.com