

Pope Contrasts Easter Joy With Suffering Humanity

Addresses Peoples of the Middle East, Northern Africa, Japan

VATICAN CITY, APRIL 24, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- In his Easter message, Benedict XVI contrasted the joy of the Resurrection with the sufferings and "painful situations" that continue to afflict mankind, such as natural disasters, poverty, illness and war.

Before imparting his blessing "urbi et orbi" (to the city of Rome and the world), the Pope noted that at Easter "the hosts of angels, saints and blessed souls join with one voice in our exultant song. [...] But alas, it is not so on earth!"

"Here, in this world of ours," he said, "the Easter alleluia still contrasts with the cries and laments that arise from so many painful situations: deprivation, hunger, disease, war, violence."

The Holy Father said that his message for Easter was directed in particular to those "peoples and communities who are undergoing a time of suffering," and he mentioned in particular the Middle East, Northern Africa and Japan.

"May the splendor of Christ reach the peoples of the Middle East," he stated, "so that the light of peace and of human dignity may overcome the darkness of division, hate and violence."

With regard to Libya, the Pontiff expressed a desire that "diplomacy and dialogue take the place of arms and may those who suffer as a result of the conflict be given access to humanitarian aid."

And for the Ivory Coast, he urged "peaceful coexistence" and a "path of reconciliation and pardon, in order to heal the deep wounds caused by the recent violence."

"In the countries of northern Africa and the Middle East," Benedict XVI added, "may all citizens, especially young people, work to promote the common good and to build a society where poverty is defeated and every political choice is inspired by respect for the human person."

The Pope also made a specific reference to Japan and other countries that have been "tested by natural disasters, which have sown pain and anguish," expressing a desire that they "find consolation and hope."

"May heaven and earth rejoice at the witness of those who suffer opposition and even persecution for their faith in Jesus Christ," the Pontiff added. "May the proclamation of his victorious resurrection deepen their courage and trust."

"The risen Christ is journeying ahead of us towards the new heavens and the new earth, in which we shall all finally live as one family, as sons of the same Father," the Pontiff concluded. "He is with us until the end of time. Let us walk behind him, in this wounded world, singing Alleluia.

"In our hearts there is joy and sorrow, on our faces there are smiles and tears. Such is our earthly reality. But Christ is risen, he is alive and he walks with us. For this reason we sing and we walk, faithfully carrying out our task in this world with our gaze fixed on heaven."

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