



We proclaim a crucified Christ

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Letter to Clergy and Laity of the Archdiocese of Melbourne

My dear friends,

Greetings to you, in Christ Jesus, Prince of Peace.

As we approach the first anniversary of the 7 October terrorising and evil attack by Hamas on Israel, we have seen from a distance the frightening and destructive consequences that have unfolded, involving many countries and more importantly, many peoples – families, the elderly, the young, the displaced.

The lands of Israel, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories are our Holy Lands, and it is heartbreaking to see where Jesus walked, talked, died and rose, once again on the precipice of an abyss.

Recently, I met with Cardinal Pizzaballa, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. His wise words remain with me: a “solution to conflict does not equate with peace”. Rather, peace comes through the speaking of truth and the fostering of trust.

Similar thoughts were expressed in this year’s Social Justice Statement, of the Australian Bishops:

All of this points to a crisis of truth which creates in turn the crisis of trust lying at the heart of the world’s current convulsions; because without trust there can be no peace... We say: speak truth to build trust and build trust to make peace.

In the conflict zones hatred is obscuring truth and hindering peace. This is something we can never give oxygen to in our own country. No to war, and no to the hatred of peoples. Whilst we might feel helpless at what is unfolding overseas, we can ensure that we live truthfully, and work for dialogue and reconciliation at home. As Christians, peace among people, and respect of peoples, must be our choice.

I join with Pope Francis and my brother Bishops in calling for a day of prayer, fasting and reconciliation for Peace this coming Monday, 7 October, the memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary. I encourage you to take up this call in your family and localities. I also ask that our faith communities give expression in prayer to this call during our worship this Sunday, rather than protest in anger.

May our prayers be offered in earnest to Blessed Mary, Mother of Hope and true Lady of Israel, of Palestine and of Lebanon, so that through her intercession the God of all mercy and consolation will bring about a reconciled world.

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli
Archbishop of Melbourne