

Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf

Province of the Episcopal Church in
Jerusalem and the Middle East



The Right Reverend Sean Semple

Sixth Bishop of the Diocese of
Cyprus and the Gulf

Beloved in Christ

Grace and peace to you in the name of our crucified and risen Lord Jesus.

This Easter our Diocese gathers in the shadow of war—a conflict that wounds our compatriots, livelihoods, political alliances and creation itself. Holy Week and Easter services in Jerusalem have been cancelled; the Holy Sepulchre indefinitely closed—spiritual wounds inflicted on the Christians of the Land of the Holy One, and all pilgrims.

And yet we defiantly declare on this Easter Sunday, as we do every Easter Sunday: “Christ is risen. He is risen indeed!”

The Resurrection is not a denial of suffering in the world, as we can see in the wounded body of the risen Christ. He is not unmarked but bears the scars of crucifixion. As Rowan Williams has written, the risen Jesus stands among his disciples not as one who has forgotten suffering, but as one who has transformed it. His wounds are not signs of defeat, but of a love that has gone to the uttermost and has not been overcome.

The Middle East continues to be wounded by this conflict. But wherever the Church cares for someone in need, rejects hatred, resists despair and embodies, however imperfectly, the sacrificial and reconciling love of Christ, then the stone from the tomb is rolled away, suffering is transformed, wounds begin to heal, and God’s new creation emerges from the rubble.

In a time of war, every act of love is an act of resistance. Every refusal to participate in what is dehumanising and destructive is a proclamation of the Resurrection. Every whispered prayer is a participation in the life of God.

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed!

Yours in Christ

Bishop Sean

2 Grigori Afxentiou CY1096

PO Box 22075 CY1517

Nicosia, Cyprus

+357 22671220

Visit the Anglican Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf at

www.facebook.com/DioceseOfCyprusAndTheGulf

www.cypgulf.org

www.youtube.com/@cyprusandthegulf