



PATRIARCHATUS LATINUS - JERUSALEM

بطريركية القدس للاتين

Prot. (1) 2035/2025

Jerusalem, September 14, 2025
Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

may the Lord give you peace!

The Jubilee Year is fast approaching its conclusion. It has certainly been a very special year for all of us. Indeed, the grace of the Jubilee has fallen within a context of violence and war that, instead of ending, seems to be increasing evermore.

For us Christians, the Jubilee Year is first and foremost a time of conversion, penance, mercy and forgiveness. It is a time of conversion from our sins, with the possibility of receiving a plenary indulgence. And we really need forgiveness. Indeed, war, violence and the many injustices we face every day can easily contaminate our hearts, hurt our relationships and unconsciously become our ordinary language, our way of thinking and acting, which we then transfer to our families, our institutions and our way of living in the world.

Yet for us too, I would add, perhaps especially for us, it is important to remember that this Year of Grace, whose theme is “hope does not disappoint” (Rom. 5:5), calls us to a special conversion of heart. We are called to return to God, to rediscover our Christian roots and the beauty of our faith. We must heal the relationships we have wounded and rediscover the joy of encountering Christ, the one who fulfills the Jubilee by announcing “the year of the Lord’s favor” (Lk 4:19; cf. Is 61:1-2). Yes, for us too, despite the weariness of war, the Jubilee can become a year of grace in which it is possible to return to God with joy. Perhaps it is precisely the dramatic situation in which we live, with its serious consequences for the lives of all our families and institutions, that allows us better than others not to lose ourselves in petty and short-sighted considerations, but to focus on the essentials of life in our relationship with God and in the life of the world.

It is a reminder of the dignity of every person, created in the image and likeness of God.



It is a never-ending path of conversion which finds its fullness in the Communion of Saints, but which this year has sought to find new impetus. And it cannot only be a personal journey. Our whole community, as a community, must find itself again in the encounter with Christ. Deciding for Christ, in fact, means rediscovering oneself as Church. And a Church that decides for Christ rediscovers its brothers and sisters and is renewed and reinvigorated.

I believe, however, that it would be too little to limit the meaning of the Jubilee to a special conversion of heart, to an exclusively spiritual and interior journey. The Jubilee must also be an opportunity to promote and demand justice, equity, and, above all, solidarity

This is why we have been asking ourselves in recent months how we can give concrete expression to this desire for change, for renewal, for a return to God and to our brothers and sisters. In the various discussions of the diocesan councils, we have thought about a possible gesture of solidarity that would also mark the jubilee concretely in the life of the diocese.

In ancient times, during the biblical jubilee, the remission of debts was one of the many gestures called for. We also find this spirit in the New Testament. We see it in the Gospel parable of the servant who asks for forgiveness but does not know how to forgive (Mt 18:23-35). Indeed, the return to God, the forgiveness of sins and the restoration of our relationship with God can never be separated from the restoration of human relationships.

Together with the Patriarchal Vicars, after listening to the opinion of the Directors of the Schools, we understood as a diocese that we too must do our part through a concrete sign. Therefore, we have decided to forgive all debts of all the families to the schools of the Latin Patriarchate for the years prior to the Jubilee, that is, up to and excluding the 2024-2025 school year.

This was not an easy decision to make because of the costs involved. As you can imagine, the various administrative offices did not fail to raise their legitimate concerns. Nevertheless, we feel it is necessary to make this gesture and to once again trust and rely on God and His Providence.

We hope that this gesture will make life easier for many of our families in need and help them to regain confidence and hope.

However, it is important to remember that the Jubilee is not only a time of forgiveness and grace, but also a time of responsibility. The forgiveness of debt means that everyone commits to changing their lives and taking responsibility for their obligations. The forgiveness of these debts therefore does not release anyone from their responsibilities, not even families, in their obligations to schools. It is a special time which, precisely



because it is so, remains a unique moment that involves us as a Church and requires everyone to take their responsibilities seriously.

I therefore ask all directors of our schools to implement and communicate this decision immediately, and our administrators to update our books in accordance with the decision made.

May the cross of Christ that we celebrate today illuminate this new pastoral year that is about to begin and give us all the strength to walk in its light.

With the Lord's blessing,

+Pierbattista Pizzaballa

+Pierbattista Card. Pizzaballa
Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem



Cc:

Patriarchal Vicars of Palestine, Israel and Jordan

Directors of the Central Offices of the LPJ schools of Palestine, Israel and Jordan

Directors and heads of schools of the Latin Patriarchate

LPJ Administration Managers