Peace to you in the name of the Lord

Greetings from Bishop Suheil Dawani

Dear Friends,

This past month of April we have been celebrating Easter - in Arabic ‘the Great Feast’. It is the Feast of emptying the graves. “Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us. Let us keep the Feast.”

Let us feast. Let us celebrate. Let us renew our commitment to Christ.

This newsletter is full of the joyous occasions where we have celebrated Our Great Feast, with our fellow Christians, of a many denominations, in both the Western calendar and the Orthodox calendar. I have had the pleasure of traveling to Amman, Jordan and celebrating with our Anglican Churches there. It is always wonderful to spread the joy of Easter over many weeks.

Each Easter celebration, with hearts and souls full of hope for the future, supports each Christian in the faith that God's goodness is more powerful than the greatest evil. Easter is our time to celebrate the truth of the power of God to change our hearts from despair to hope, from sorrow to joy and from death to life.

As we look forward to Spring and the new and exciting ventures that God has in store for us, I know it will be a busy but fruitful time. I join with you in prayer for our friends and families as we reflect on where we have been and where we are going on our journey with Christ. I will be traveling and taking our stories to those who gracious support and prayers have continued to help our Diocese in its growth.

Easter is the time to celebrate all that is possible with God, for with God all things are possible.

Salaam,

+ Suheil Dawani
Palm Sunday

St. George’s Cathedral was over following with worshippers on April 1st, as many came to celebrate Palm Sunday. Bishop Suheil, with Canon Hosam Naoum and Fr. Nael Abu Rahmoun, began the Palm Sunday Procession in the courtyard of St. George’s College, blessing the palm crosses and olive tree branches. Once in the Cathedral, a bilingual reading of the Passion took place. After the service, coffee and sweets were had in the Guest House garden.

St. George’s participates in the Palm Sunday Procession in Jerusalem

Many parishioners from St. George’s Cathedral participated in the Annual Palm Sunday Procession from the Bethphage, down the Mount of Olives and through the Lion’s Gate into the Old City of Jerusalem. On a beautiful afternoon, Christians from all over the world, sang and danced praises to our Lord Jesus Christ, as they made their way to Jerusalem. The procession ended at St. Anne’s Church, where the Latin (Roman Catholic) Patriarch Fuad Twal blessed the people with a relic of the sacred cross. This wonderful day ended with a Procession of the Scouts outside New Gate.

Maundy Thursday

Bishop Suheil led the Maundy Thursday Service at St. George’s Cathedral on April 5th. Hymns were sung and readings said, as the Service of Foot Washing began. The congregation was invited to come forward so that Bishop Suheil could wash their feet. This is done, as Jesus did to his disciples, to mark the act of servanthood. As is tradition, after Holy Eucharist, the Altar was stripped and the Passion read, then congregation left in silence and proceeded to follow the cross to the Garden of Gethsemane. As the full moon shone over Jerusalem, prayers were said and the people sang softly, “Were you there when they crucified my Lord?”

Fr. Yazeed Said leads the Anglicans in singing hymns.
Good Friday Stations of the Cross

The Good Friday Procession began at 6am on April 6th in the courtyard of St. George’s Cathedral. Bishop Suheil Dawani, and Bishop Munib Younan, from the Lutheran Church, along with clergy from the Anglican, Lutheran and Church of Scotland churches, led an Ecumenical procession through the Stations of the Cross. The readings and prayers at every station were shared among the different congregations and said in English, Arabic and German. Hymns were also sung in both Arabic and English. The Procession ended with a silent Veneration of the Cross, which took place at the Church of the Redeemer in the Old City.

Good Friday Worship at St. George's Cathedral

Bishop Suheil led the Arab/English congregation in the Good Friday Worship Service at St. George’s Cathedral at noon on April 6th. The worship consisted on hymn, prayers and chants in both Arabic and English, as everyone participated in the Veneration of the Cross. The Passion of John was read in bilingually by volunteers. After a period of silence and prayer the congregation departed the church. Bishop Suheil invited those present to break their Lenten fast with a Good Friday lunch at St. George’s Guest House.

Holy Saturday Easter Vigil

Bishop Suheil led the congregation and pilgrims in the celebration of the Easter Vigil on the evening of April 7th. The Holy Fire was lit in the courtyard of St. George’s Cathedral and the candle lit procession followed the Paschal Candle into the church. The glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ was celebrated with readings and hymns. After the service, a humble reception was held in the Guest House for all.
Easter Sunday at St. George’s Cathedral

The bilingual Easter Sunday Service was led by Bishop Suheil at St. George’s Cathedral on April 8th. Beautiful flowers decorated the altars and trumpet music declared that Christ is Risen. The Lord is Risen Indeed. Alleluia! The Gospel was read in both Arabic and English and there was joyous music and hymn singing by a huge congregation. All in attendance were treated to a wonderful selection of postludes on the organ by Maha Ateek. Coffee hour was held in the Bishop’s Hall where everyone enjoyed coffee, wine, chocolate eggs and special Easter cookies.

Easter Greetings

Bishop Suheil met with His Beatitude Theophilos III, Greek Patriarch on Tuesday morning, April 10th, exchanging Easter Greetings and enjoying refreshment in the Bishop’s Hall. Bishop Suheil also went earlier that day to visit His Beatitude Patriarch Fuad Twal and other Heads of Churches at the Latin Patriarchate, where they exchanged Easter greetings according to the Gregorian calendar.

Orthodox Maundy Thursday

Bishop Suheil participated in the Armenian Foot Washing Service at St. James Cathedral in the Armenian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem on Orthodox Maundy Thursday, April 12th. The Service was led by the Patriarchal Vicar, Nourhan Manoogian. Bishop Suheil was invited to read the Gospel for this day and was honoured to have the Gospel held by two Bishops while he read the Word of the Lord. This celebration is part of the Orthodox Holy Week.
Easter Vigil in Amman, Jordan

Bishop Suheil celebrated the Easter Vigil on April 14th at The Church of the Redeemer in Amman, Jordan on Saturday evening. In accordance with an agreement among the churches in Jordan, all the Christian Churches celebrated Easter on the same calendar date.

Celebrating at the Easter Vigil with Bishop Suheil were The Revd Fadi Diab, The Revd Canon Hanna Mansour, The Archdeacon Luay Haddad, and the Revd Khalid Freji. The Holy Fire was lit outside and then the congregation processed into the church behind the Pascal Candle. The church was full of the faithful and the choir sang beautifully proclaiming the glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Chocolates and goodies were shared by the congregation after their worship.

Easter Sunday in Amman, Jordan

Bishop Suheil celebrated the Western Easter on April 8th in Jerusalem and the Eastern Easter on April 15th in Amman, Jordan. The Church of the Redeemer held two services on their Easter Sunday, at 9:00 am and 11:00 am. The Revd Fadi Diab celebrated with Bishop Suheil at both services, along with The Revd Lex McQueen at the 11 am service. The church was full to capacity with over 300 people attending the 11 am service.

The Choir sang at all three of the Easter services, the Easter Vigil and the Sunday morning services, making the Celebration of the Resurrection truly joyous.
Bishop Brings Easter Greetings to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and the Orthodox Coptic Church

Bishop Suheil went on Tuesday, April 17th, with other Heads of Churches and their delegations, to visit the Greek Patriarch, His Beatitude Theophilos III. Each of the Heads of Churches brought Easter Greetings. Bishop Suheil wished everyone a Blessed and Joyous Easter in Arabic. Bishop Suheil Dawani, was joined by The Revd Canon Hosam Naoum, Canon Pastor to the Arabic/English Congregation of St. George’s Cathedral, and The Revd Dr. Graham Smith, Dean of St. George’s College.

Bishop Suheil Dawani and The Heads of Churches then processed through the Old City of Jerusalem to visit Archbishop Anba Abraham at the Coptic Orthodox Church. Bishop Suheil brought Easter Greetings from St. George’s Cathedral and our Anglican community.

Bishop's Visit to Nazareth

Bishop Suheil visited Christ School in Nazareth on Thursday, April 19th. He met with the school staff and students and was extremely impressed with the contribution and hard work given by the administration and teachers. Bishop Suheil praised them and encouraged them to continue to keep up the good work.

While in Nazareth, Mrs. Shafeeqa Dawani attended the Women Coordinators Meeting where they discussed planning, strategy and visioning of the future for the women of the Diocese.

Bishop Suheil also met with some clergy in the Galilee to discuss some pastoral matters.
The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, a diocese of the worldwide Anglican Communion, extends over five countries, including Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Israel, within the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East. There are 27 parishes that minister to the needs of their communities, centered on the Cathedral Church of St. George the Martyr in Jerusalem. The church supports 33 institutions, which include hospitals, clinics, kindergartens and schools, vocational training programs, as well as institutions for the deaf, the disabled and the elderly, reaching out to interfaith neighbors in mutual respect and cooperation.