



Province of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan  
Office of the Archbishop

## Archbishop's Easter Message to the faithful of Sudan

April 2009

*Theme: Jesus died and rose again to reconcile us to God*

*Isaiah 55:1-11*

*Colossians 3:1-11*

*Mark 16:1-8*

I greet you all in the name of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and especially greet all ECS members across the whole Sudan. Halleluiah, Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, Halleluiah! A very happy Easter to you all.

***Isaiah 55, v.3*** – *“Listen now, my people, and come to me. Come to me and you will have life. I will make a lasting covenant with you and give you the blessings I promised to David.”*

***Colossians 3, v.9*** – *“Do not lie to one another for you have taken off the old self with its habits, and you have put on a new self, and you are a new being.”*

***Luke 8, v.6*** – *“Do not be alarmed’, he said. ‘I know you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He is not here. He has been raised from the dead. Now go and give this message to his disciples. He is going to Galilee ahead of you, there you will see him, just as he told you.’”*

St. Paul said that we should accept the risen Christ, and in so doing “put on our new selves”, allowing Christ to live in us so that He can shape us into what we should be.

Lying to one another disrupts unity by destroying trust, and tears down relationships, potentially leading to serious conflict. As Christians we must therefore refrain from this behaviour. We should not exaggerate statistics, or pass rumours, or gossip, or try to build up our own images, but instead tell the absolute truth on every occasion. Christians are not excluded from Christ by barriers of nationality, race, education levels, social standing, wealth, gender or power – Christ breaks down all barriers and accepts all people who come to Him, for Christ died for sins once and for all, for the righteous and the unrighteous.

Christ was put to death in the body, but made alive again by the Spirit. Jesus' resurrection is the key to the Christian faith, as the bodily resurrection of Christ shows us that the living Christ is truly alive as God, and not a failed prophet. Jesus' resurrection makes our own resurrection possible, and we can look forward to our new lives this Easter. Christ's resurrection demonstrates that the divine power that brought Jesus back from the dead is now available to all of us – to bring our spiritually-dead selves back to life.

Resurrection is the basis of the Church's witness to the world, as without Christ's resurrection the Church has no message to give to the world. Through His death and resurrection, Christ has reconciled mankind with God, so that we may enjoy our new

lives in Christ, united through His death and resurrection. Our evil desires, our bondage to sin, and our love of sin died with Christ.

We must be faithful to Christ; and if we are faithful to Christ we must be faithful to the nation, as the nation is a community of united people living in love and peace with one another. The freedom we have today was bought with the lives of 2 million people and the life of the late Dr. John Garang.

But our communities are still not united – they are sick, and we need to uproot the diseases that are infecting them such as tribalism, corruption and nepotism. We are called to be holy because God is holy and Jesus is the Gate of Salvation. Christ offers us His safety and security if we are firm in the faith, love one another, and bring peace to our peoples. Christians must be the light of the world, shining like stars in the darkness, so that we can achieve the goals of our nation. Let us throw away tribalism, corruption and hatred as we the new are born again and put on our new selves.

We have crossed the river. We are the new tribe of God joined together by deep and unchanging loyalty and friendships. There is now no time for compromise – we must strengthen the weak and heal the wounds of the injured. Let us pray for our country. Let us not shame the fallen heroes who sacrificed themselves on our behalf so that we might enjoy and peaceful, free nation. The only gift we can give back to them is peace, justice, equality and unity amongst our people. However, at present the conflicts within our people are delaying the process of peace-building. Quarrelling over land and cattle is causing us to continue fighting in Sudan. This is a betrayal of this land and our heroes who fought for us to enjoy it. We are not safeguarding our country or repaying our heroes, but are continuing to destroy our country.

- I am here by appealing to all Christians in the Sudan to take Christ's words of peace and unity seriously, recognise the Gospel mandate, and to take the lead in bringing peace back to our land. This will be our thanksgiving to God for reconciling us to Him through His only Son's resurrection this Easter.
- We seek to work according to the Grace of God and in the power of the Holy Spirit. I am appealing to our communities that tribalism has become a major concern in our nation, and that if we are not very careful it will destroy the unity of our country. The division of people along ethnic lines is a very dangerous weapon that can be used against our communities by the enemies of peace.
- The urgent priority of the Church is the proclamation of the Gospel message of love and mutual respect for one another as created in God's image, as we affirm our unity in diversity.
- The Church appeals to the Dinka, Nuer, Murle, and Anuak in Jonglei State to stop the unnecessary killing of innocent men, women and children. What you are doing is against God. You are but heaping the burning coals on the heads of yourselves, and in the end you will harvest the result of your actions. We consider your actions against the peace and you to be enemies of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). The people of Southern Sudan will not forgive you for your actions, and we will pray to God that those enemies of Southern Sudan within you are exposed and deal with accordingly by the authorities.

- We appeal to the Dinka Agar, Dinka Gok, and Jur in Lakes State that your quarrelling is delaying the true development of your State and your nation by causing great instability. The Church accuses you to God as responsible if the CPA is not properly implemented because of the insecurity you have created in your State.
- We appeal to the politicians to remember that political power is a gift from God and the people. If you misuse it for your personal gain and cast hatred in the communities you will be responsible before God and the people of His Church.
- We appeal to the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) to address the following problems as the cause of instability in our nation:
  - ◆ Cattle raiding
  - ◆ Excess drinking
  - ◆ Traumatization of our people
  - ◆ Imported cultures
- We appeal the Government of Southern Sudan to allow the religious leaders to be involved in the monitoring of the forthcoming elections and referendum between now and 2011 – for fair and transparent polls that will produce good governance for our people.

*Let us pray to you, the Lord, the Shepherd of my people –  
 We remain without care. Come and rescue the people of Sudan, come and strengthen the weak, heal the sick and bind up the injured. Help us to uncover and revoke those that are destroying the CPA, those that are stealing cattle and those that are abusing their political power and wealth. Lord Jesus, protect this country and let her live in love, peace and unity, for ever and ever.  
 Amen*

I wish you all a most blessed and joyful Easter.

**The Most Rev. Dr. Daniel Deng Bul Yak**  
 Archbishop, Primate and Metropolitan of the  
 Province of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan  
 and Bishop of the Diocese of Juba