

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

On this day we gather here to kneel before the Holy Cross and to embrace Jesus, Living and Holy, who was crucified for our salvation.

On this day the entire creation send up thanksgiving to the creator because through the Cross and from the Cross, He made it return to Paradise to enjoy again the tree of life, the Eucharist, bread of life and salvation.

On this day we live in Church the mystery of God's love for us and so, we the Church, on our earthly pilgrimage, we renew ourselves by witnessing this love that culminated on Holy Friday when the Son of God was uplifted on the cross to make us return to the father from our exile, the death where we were.

On this day we enjoy the grace of forgiveness from the Cross, source of forgiveness and from the expiatory altar that reconciles man with God and with one another.

It is the day of compassion at which we are called to forgive as the Father forgave us in His Son Jesus, otherwise our prayer and our adoration remain very superficial and do not change anything in the faith and in our commitment to the plan of the Cross. "Neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will they worship the Father. The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for that's how the Father wants those who worship him"(John 4: 21,23).

Indeed from Jesus side on the cross, there ran water and blood. This is the beginning of the church that is born from this mystery of love and salvation. The Church continues its mission proceeding towards the fulfillment of the kingdom of heaven, inviting all to faith, to the renewal of faith, because faith at a personal, community and church level always feels the duty to proclaim the faith in Jesus the Savior of the world, the giver of life.

The Church is nourished by the blood of the New Testament, by the Eucharistic banquet that brings salvation down here to every human reality and with every community that lives the mystery here and now. We truly believe in the living God, in Christ who calls us to participate in the heavenly banquet, in the Holy and life-giving Spirit that realizes in us the heavenly feast.

The Church that is born from the Cross could not be Church away / out of the sense of universal brotherhood that embraces everyone. Currently in Cyprus we need to see this kind of brotherhood expressed in solidarity with the approach of others, especially those most in need in the Cypriot society. We are in the middle of a crisis that is not only economic but moral and spiritual.

Here justice is sought through the truth in order to ensure a more stable future for the younger generations. However, also examined, is the consciousness about the

behavior of many, I would say of a system where many have lost the meaning of life and life is for them only food and drink, pleasures without meaning, purpose and substance. We see in some cases a relevant modern paganism/ atheism even if someone thinks that he lives some religiosity, this is not Christian faith. He lives not realizing the way of practical atheism, despite whichever religious feelings he might have which sometimes are enough or practiced to prove a religiosity or a nationality that is not enough for the faith in the Living and Resurrected Christ. Let's not forget that Cyprus is the land of the Apostles Paul and Barnabas, the land of principles and values, of spirituality, of cultures, of suffering, of human and spiritual wealth. All this is clear to one part of our society.

This year's Holy Friday is a Friday that should put us before ourselves, before the truth, and before the challenges we face with great faith in Jesus who triumphed over death by His death, giving us the greatest gift, the eternal life. To Him be glory and praise forever and ever. Amen

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† Youssef Soueif

Maronite Archbishop of Cyprus