Patriarch Pizzaballa on Pentecost: “Jerusalem is a house of prayer for all peoples”

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JERUSALEM – On Saturday, May 22, 2021, H.B. Patriarch Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, presided over Pentecost vigil prayer and intercession for justice and peace, which he had called for in the name of the Catholic Heads of Churches, and in collaboration with the Episcopal Committee for Male Religious, and the Union of the Women Religious. The vigil was held at the Basilica of Saint Stephen of the Dominican Fathers in Jerusalem.

Concelebrating the prayer, which was celebrated in light of the difficult conditions the Holy Land has been witnessing, were Bishop Boulos Marcuzzo, Latin Patriarchal Vicar of Jerusalem, Fr. Hanna Kildani, Latin Patriarchal Vicar of Nazareth, and several other Latin Patriarchal priests, in the presence of many Religious Men and Women, Mr. René Troccaz, Consul General of France in Jerusalem and others who are carrying out their service in the Holy Land.

In his homily, the Latin Patriarch focused on the importance of praying for peace, justice and the end of violence and war in our Holy Land. “Above all, we are united in prayer with the families of those killed during these past days, with those who lost their homes, with those who are left alone and without any hope in their lives. We pray for our small community of Christians in Gaza, bewildered by this umpteenth wave of violence, but also for all its inhabitants who have for many years been humiliated, deprived of freedom, dignity and basic rights,” said the Patriarch Pizzaballa.

The Bishop of Jerusalem highlighted the significance of the Holy City of Jerusalem, which from the beginning was called “a house of prayer for all peoples” (Is. 56:7). He added: “Jerusalem is for all: Christians, Jews and Muslims, Israelis and Palestinians. All with equal rights and dignity, all equal citizens. Any exclusion or imposition, wounds the identity of the City and this cannot remain silent nor ignored.”

He concluded by praying to the Holy Spirit to “give us courage to defend justice without compromising the truth. May it enable us to forgive,” and to Mary our Mother to watch over her earthly homeland, cover it with special protection and dispel the darkness of error, where the Eternal Sun of Justice had shone.

On the day of Pentecost, Sunday, May 23, the Patriarch presided over the annual solemn Mass at the Dormition Abbey in Jerusalem. Concelebrating were Bishop Boulos Marcuzzo, Fr. Bernard Maria Alter, abbot of the Benedictine Monastery of the Dormition Abbey, and several other Benedictine brothers and Latin Patriarchal priests. Several religious communities were present to celebrate the Holy Mass, in addition to the faithful.

In his homily, and in light of the Gospel of John (Jn 20: 19-23), the Patriarch talked about the Easter evening when Jesus appeared to His disciples and gave them His Spirit. “Pentecost definitively reveals the mystery of man: on Easter evening, through the breath of Jesus, God makes us a new creature, called to hold together the natural and divine life, the flesh and the Spirit, the earth and the sky. Only then is man complete.” Patriarch Pizzaballa added: “On Easter

evening Jesus gives the Spirit to the disciples gathered together and recreates them as a community of brothers. The Church is born.”

The Patriarch noted that “the work of the Spirit is an event of communion, it creates a fraternity, composes differences, makes unity possible. In other words, it is at the origin of the Church. The new life of the Spirit is a life no longer lived in the solitary search for one's own fulfillment, but in the encounter with the brother with whom life is shared: it cannot be lived if it is not in turn communicated, shared, given, because this very life, in itself, is nothing but a gift. If we hold it back and if we possess it, the Spirit is extinguished, and we return to death.”

His Beatitude concluded his homily by praying to the Lord to “forgive our infidelities, make us in turn capable of mutual forgiveness and support us in our common desire to become operators of the action of the Spirit and builders of unity and peace in the world.”

Source: Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.