

*The Evangelical Lutheran Church
in Jordan and the Holy Land*



الكنيسة الإنجيلية اللوثرية
في الأردن والأراضي المقدسة

A Message of Comfort and Assurance

From Bishop Sani Ibrahim Azar

**Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy
Land**

26 March 2020

Jesus Stills a Storm

Mark 4:35-41

On that day, when evening had come, he (Jesus) said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side.' And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

These are challenging times.

But we have been through challenging times before.

Palestinians have been through challenging times, as have Christians from the time of Jesus until now.

As we all struggle to adapt our lives to this new reality of churches and schools being closed, quarantine, medical and economic difficulties, we are all finding ways not only to survive but to thrive.

*The Evangelical Lutheran Church
in Jordan and the Holy Land*



الكنيسة الإنجيلية اللوثرية
في الأردن والأراضي المقدسة

One of the ways we will thrive is through caring for one another. We know that Scripture tells us “They will know we are Christians by our love.” (John 13:35) Indeed, this is not a time to turn inward but to look outward—even from our own homes—considering how we can care for one another. Calling our friends and family, praying for one another, sharing resources as we are able: this is what we are called to do as followers of Jesus, who shared His love with us all the way to the cross.

Another way we will thrive during this crisis is by looking to Jesus, our defender and our comforter. We have read how, when the disciples were weathering a terrible storm in Tiberias, Jesus was with them in the boat, though He was sleeping. The disciples worried that Jesus wasn’t doing anything about the situation, and therefore everything was on their shoulders.

But soon, Jesus woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace! Be still!’ Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, ‘Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?’

Yes, these are hard times. But we have lived through hard times before. This storm, too, shall pass. We will not give up faith in God, and we will not give up on one another. Do not be afraid—God is with us.

From Jerusalem, the city of the Resurrection, the city where God showed the world that life is always stronger than death, I pray for each of you. I pray for your strength, for your health, for your faith, and for the church of Jesus Christ in the Holy Land and throughout the world.

May the peace of God keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.