



Christian Conference of Asia

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Easter Greetings 2014

"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen."

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

This week, from 13-20 April 2014, is a special week in Asia, when many communities celebrate and hope for the newness of life. The people of Thailand celebrated 'Songkran' festival, also known as 'water festival', which is a New Year festivity that symbolizes the commitment of individuals, families and communities for cleansing and renewal. The same traditional New Year was also celebrated in other countries such as Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal. During the same week, Christian communities around the world and in Asia observe the holy week, remembering the passion and crucifixion of Jesus Christ which culminates in the joyous Sunday morning celebration of Easter, which is the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Mary Magdalene and the other women who came to the tomb of Jesus on Sunday at early dawn, intended to embalm the body of Jesus, whom they loved so much. However, as they got closer to the tomb they were terrified by the dazzling clothes of the angels. They were further stunned by the words of the angels: *"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen."* These words reminded them not to be caught by the power of death, but to look beyond to the power of life.

Death is a horrifying human reality as it refers to the limit of human capacities and capabilities. Many people try very hard to avoid death or to push the line of their human limitation whatever the cost may be. However, it is ironic that instead of promoting the value of life, more and more people, communities and nations compete in destroying life which has led to the death of the people and the whole creation. We notice with a great concern the escalating violence in the lives of many communities in Asia along social, ethnic and religious lines. The spirit of community which is central to Asian way of life has been eroded. The closeness and respect to nature as the creation of God has been violated due to human greed for power and money. Churches which are called to be God's instrument of love and care to all are often trapped in the spirit of factions and divisions.

Easter is a call for hope, that beyond many signs of death in our world today God continues to work for the goodness of all, and we, the church as the body of Christ, are called to be the partners of God. Just as the celebration of traditional new year in many Asian communities symbolizes a commitment to resolve and restore broken relationships in communities, our Christian faith reminds us of the unlimited love of Christ which empowers us to forgive each other, to extend our hand and say wholeheartedly to all: *"salam"* (shalom, peace) which is the sign of our assurance to mend and heal the brokenness in our life and relationships.

Salam Paskah, Happy Easter!

Sincerely

Rev. Dr. Henriette Hutabarat Lebang
General Secretary