

That no mother should shed tears any more ...

The message of the leaders of the member churches of the Estonian Council of Churches for Mothers' Day on 8 May 2022

Christians believe that God takes care of people as a loving father of his children. In Our Lord's Prayer, we turn to God as Father. Speaking of the fate of the holy city of Jerusalem, however, Jesus compared himself to a hen that shelters her brood with her wings. Jesus said: *"How often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing."* (Matthew 23:37)

Jesus's words are a metaphor for God's care. The Old Testament psalmist also prays: *"Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me, for in you I take refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed."* (Psalm 57:2)

All sons and daughters have sought shelter in their mother's bosom. A child seeking solace would bury its tearful face into the mother's lap. Under the cover of the mother's arms – like wings – a child would hide from a unknown and looming danger. A mother would blow on its hurting spot. The mother's caress is a child's greatest comfort. When fleeing from violence and threat, the mother would seek the safest place of refuge for her kids. Mothers, grandmothers and godmothers are indefatigable intercessors for their children and family. Mother is the symbol of home. Home is a place of peace where everyone feels secure, for it is ruled by unconditional love. Where mother is, there is home. The greatest gift for a mother is peace at home.

Throughout human history, mothers have experienced much distress, heartache and grief. Godly Simeon foretold Mary that she would grieve: *"And a sword will pierce your own soul too."* (Luke 2:35) With soul-stabbing pain, Mary accompanied Jesus to Calvary. The Mother suffered with the Son. Any mother who has seen her child off to a deadly peril would understand such a pain, just like those mothers whose sons have fought for peace and freedom, home and family in the numerous wars through human history. Every war shatters hearts and souls, splits and severs families, leaves permanent and painful scars.

In anticipation of Mothers' Day and all the days that follow, we appeal, on behalf of all pain-stricken mothers and their sons and daughters, to everyone who has sway over ending the war and attaining a fair peace in Ukraine. We urge you in the name of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ: *Stop the war and strive for peace! Do not do to anyone what you do not want to be done to your mother. We call on everyone in Estonia: Avoid unrest and strife in our common home. We can be peacemakers so that no mother should shed tears any more ...*

Let us stand united: let us pray for peace and unity, thank our mothers for their love, concern and care and put our hope in God, for *"the Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace."* (Psalm 29:11)

Archbishop of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church **Urmas Viilma**

Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church of Estonia **Stephanus**

Metropolitan of the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate **Eugene**

Roman Catholic Church Apostolic Administrator of Estonia, bishop **Philippe Jourdan**

Bishop of the Armenian Apostolic Church in the Baltic countries **Vardan Navasardyan**

Bishop of the Estonian Christian Pentecostal Church **Alur Õunpuu**

President of the Union of Free Evangelical and Baptist Churches of Estonia, pastor **Erki Tamm**

President of the Estonian Conference of Seventh-Day Adventist Churches, pastor **Andres Ploompuu**

Superintendent of the Estonian Methodist Church, pastor **Robert Cherenkov**

Priest of the Charismatic Episcopal Church of Estonia **Thomas Eriste**

On the eve of Mothers' Day, Tallinn, 5 May AD 2022