



Bishop of the Diocese of George

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02 March 2026

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ

In these days we witness with deep concern the escalation of conflict in the Middle East, and the increasing involvement of powerful nations, particularly the United States and Israel, in actions that have further destabilised an already fragile region. The suffering of civilians, the destruction of homes and livelihoods, and the widening threat of violence weigh heavily upon the conscience of the world and upon the heart of the Church.

As Christians, we do not look at war merely through political lenses. We look at it through the cross of Christ.

Scripture does not romanticise conflict. From the earliest pages of the Bible, we see how violence fractures human community. Cain raises his hand against Abel, and the ground itself cries out. The prophets speak repeatedly against those who “*devise evil*” and “*shed innocent blood.*” They remind us that God’s desire is not destruction but justice, not domination but righteousness, not humiliation but restoration.

Our Lord Jesus Christ stands at the centre of our theological reflection on war. He refuses the sword in Gethsemane. He teaches us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us. He declares peacemakers to be blessed and calls them children of God. On the cross, He absorbs violence rather than returning it. In His resurrection, He proclaims that life, not death, has the final word.

This does not make us naïve about the realities of evil, nor indifferent to injustice. The biblical witness affirms that God cares deeply about justice and the protection of the vulnerable. Yet Scripture consistently calls the people of God to be a distinct community, one that resists hatred, refuses vengeance, and embodies reconciliation even when the world chooses escalation.

At such a time, we must also remember that many from our own region serve and practice their trades in the Middle East. They are teachers, artisans, engineers, health workers, domestic workers, and professionals who contribute faithfully to societies far from home. We hold before God their safety and well-being, and the anguish of their families who wait anxiously for news. Their vulnerability makes this conflict not distant, but personal.

What then is our biblical mandate?

First, we are called to pray, not casually, but earnestly. Prayer is not an escape from responsibility; it is participation in God’s redemptive work. We pray for the cessation of violence. We pray for the protection of civilians. We pray for wise and restrained leadership. We pray for those who mourn. We pray for the softening of hardened hearts.

Second, we are called to think theologically about conflict. We must resist simplistic narratives that reduce complex human suffering to slogans. Our allegiance is not to national powers, but to the Kingdom of God. We measure every action, of any nation, against the character of Christ. Where there is aggression, we name it. Where there is injustice, we grieve it. Where there is suffering, we stand in solidarity with the afflicted.

Third, we are called to embody peace in our own context. It would be hollow to pray for peace in the Middle East while nurturing division, bitterness, or injustice at home. The Church must be a sign of another way, a community where reconciliation is practiced, dignity is honoured, and mercy is lived.

Finally, we are called to hope.

Christian hope is not optimism about political outcomes. It is confidence in the sovereignty and faithfulness of God. The same Lord who reconciled the world to Himself in Christ continues to work in ways unseen. History is not finally governed by military might, but by the purposes of God. The Prince of Peace reigns, even when the world trembles.

I ask that in every parish of our Diocese, intercessions be offered for peace in the Middle East in the weeks ahead. I encourage families to include these intentions in their daily prayers. Let us teach our children that the Christian response to war is not indifference or rage, but faithful, informed, and compassionate witness.

May the God of justice guard the innocent.

May the God of mercy comfort the grieving.

May the God of peace turn hearts from violence.

And may we, His Church in the Diocese of George, remain steadfast in faith, courageous in truth, and constant in love.

Yours in Christ

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