



## The Easter Procession A Unique Witness of the Resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ



The traditional, historic Easter Procession marched through the streets of the Old City of Peshawar on Easter Morning, at dawn.

The Procession started from the historic All Saints Church of Peshawar, in the early morning at 4:00 am, led by the Rev. S.P. Asghar, accompanied by Rev. Eric Walter, Rev. Fayyaz M. Channa and Rev. Shahid Younas.

The Christians of Peshawar participated in this procession from all walks of life and denominations/churches in Peshawar. This year the participants' number reached more than 5000.



The Procession participants were holding candles while singing Easter Songs, and Bible passages were read out aloud at different Squares (Chowks) using National, and local languages of Peshawar, thus preaching the good news. This was a great witness exhibited by the Christian Community of Peshawar in a predominantly Muslim state. Especially when suicide bombing is a normal routine.

Usually, the other religions are not allowed to openly preach, but this Easter parade is an exception, the state machinery provides full protection and cooperates in all aspects

regarding the procession.

The Good news about the resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ is spread and thousands of participants march through the streets, the sound of singing songs/psalms and reading passages from the Holy Bible echoed through the streets of the most ancient living city of the South Asia, this in itself is a unique testimony for a unique celebration, which happens nowhere else, but in Peshawar, only.



Later, the participants assembled again in the premises of the Church, they were served breakfast, organized by the All Saints' Church Parish. Every body exchanged Easter greetings, and by then, it was time for the 'Morning Service' of the Easter, some stayed there to attend the church, whereas, people from other denominations left to attend the worship services at their respective churches.



It was a good and a blessed morning and a day to celebrate!

### Easter Celebrations

Thank God that by His grace, all the Easter Services and Programmes were held nicely and peacefully in our Parishes and Institutions. The Easter Processions held in various towns of the Province, they marched peacefully while singing Religious Songs and Psalms, thus keeping the Church identity alive in Pakhtun (Pathans) dominated area.

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## Thanksgiving & Prayer Requests



Diocese of Peshawar is grateful to God for His blessings and Mercies and also to the Partners for their financial and prayer support.

### **Please also Pray for;**

1. The War on Terror is still going on, kindly pray for those who are determined to eradicate this menace for good.
2. We need your prayer support for those who are living in hostile areas of NWFP, especially the Pakistani Christians and their institutions.
3. The Diocesan Relief Work in Pateka, Balakot. May God help the Diocese to work more effectively for the development of the Earthquake victims.
4. Construction work of the following churches is in progress:  
Church of the Holy Name, Bannu; Christ Church, Nowshera; St. Xavier Church, Thandiani.

### **Special Prayer requests;**

1. Please remember Pakistan and especially the minorities as they are facing the daily scarcity of flour and other food commodities; the prices have gone extremely high.
2. Military operation against the Taliban in South Waziristan is at its full swing. Thousands of people have evacuated the area and are getting themselves registered as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in D.I. Khan and Bannu.

(courtesy 'The News Int'l', April 20, 2010)

### **24 die in two Peshawar blasts Bombers mows down 23 at JI rally; schoolchild killed in another blast**

Peshawar: Twenty-four people were killed and around 50 others sustained injuries Monday as the city was rocked by two explosions less than five hours apart including a devastating suicide bombing soon after a Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) protest rally against electricity loadshedding in the historic Qissa Khawani bazaar.

Deputy superintendent of Police (DSP) Gulfat Hussain and JI Peshawar deputy head Haji Dost Mohammad alias Haji Gul were among the 23 people killed and over 40 wounded in the suicide blast that took place at around 5:30 pm. There were reports that the death toll later rose to 27.

The first incident on Monday was a low-intensity bomb explosion outside the Police Public School & College on the busy Jamrud Road that killed a young student, Taimur, son of a police sub-inspector Gulmash Khan. Two brothers of Taimur sustained injuries in the blast, caused by two kilos explosive planted in the shop near the school gate. Two vehicles, a car and a jeep were damaged in the explosion.

Eight persons, including seven schoolchildren, were injured by the blast at around 1:30pm when students were coming out of the school at closing time. Parents rushed to the school to enquire about their children as soldiers and cops took positions at the school gate after the explosion.

### **Militants attack US Consulate in Peshawar**

Grenade and suicide attacks on the US Consulate in Peshawar and on a rally of the Awami National Party in Timergara killed 51 people and injured over 120 others on Monday. April 13, 2010: The resident editor of the 'News Int'l Peshawar', in his article wrote, **"The US consulate in Peshawar neither issues visas nor does it perform any other useful work and one wonders if it won't be a good idea to close it until the situation becomes normal. This would deprive the militants of a tempting target and ease the burden on the over-worked and tense law-enforcement agencies protecting the citizens of Peshawar."**

(courtesy 'The News Int'l', April 20, 2010)

## **Militancy in Malakand**

### **Swat girls' schools the biggest casualty**

Islamabad: In the militancy battered Malakand division, Swat district has emerged as the biggest victim of Fazlullah-led radicals attacks on the government's educational institutions.

Of the 427 completely and partially damaged schools and colleges in the division, 276 (171 completely damaged and 105 partially damaged) are in Swat and around two-thirds of the i.e. 167 are of girls, says an Asian Development Bank and World Bank study.

According to the study whose findings are obtained by The News, the repairing or rebuilding of these educational institutions will cost the government over Rs1.8 – 1.23 billion for completely damaged buildings and Rs566.11 million for partially damaged structures.

Like Swat, the other Malakand districts too witnessed destruction of schools and colleges by militants. Dir Lower has 29 completely and 28 partially destroyed educational facilities; Dir Upper 22 and seven; Buner nine and 27, and Shangla six and 23.

In all, militants destroyed 237 schools and colleges (149 of girls) completely and 190 (66 of girls) partially in Malakand Division. And the cost to repair or rebuild them has been estimated at Rs2,696 million.

### **SOS, call from Parachinar**

Employees of the Town Committee, Parachinar have not been paid their salaries for the past three years. As a result, their families are literally starving.

Most of the Christian families of Parachinar are employees of the Town Committee, and are severely hit by the scarcity of funds crisis. It's an SOS call from the Christian Community of Parachinar.

Kindly pray for this situation.

**The Bishop's Visits**  
(During the Holy Week)

**Wednesday Lent Service:**



Bishop Humphrey S. Peters was invited by the Bannu Parish on 31 March 2010, to lead the Lent Service on Wednesday Evening, in the Church of the Holy Name, Bannu. His Sermon was about the importance of the Lent Season for spiritual growth.

Needless to mention that Bannu is his birth place.

**Maundy Thursday:**

Bishop Humphrey Peters visited the Charsadda Parish and led the Worship Service of the Maundy Thursday and delivered a Sermon as well.

**Good Friday:**

The Bishop of Peshawar was also invited by the Risalpur Parish for the Good Friday Service, there he delivered two sermons on the Word of Jesus on the Cross, the congregation felt motivated and listened with interest.

**Easter Sun-rise Procession:**



Bishop Humphrey Peters led the Sun-rise Procession at the St. John's Cathedral, Peshawar Cantt. A large number of people participated in this procession and shared the good news of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The crowd, while holding candles sung the religious songs of praise, hence preaching the Gospel. The passages from the Holy Bible regarding

the Easter were recited with short intervals during the procession.

The Bishop also led the Morning Service at the St. John's Cathedral, and in his Easter sermon he shared the Concept of the New Birth, and its importance in Christianity.

**Easter Service:**

Bishop Humphrey S. Peters was invited to Mardan Parish on Easter Day to lead the main Easter Service, he led the service as desired by the Parish and shared the Word of God. After the Easter service, there was an Easter Fair (Mela), organized by the Mardan Parish, and the opening ceremony was conducted by the Bishop. During the Fair, the Bishop socialized with the people and shared the joys of Easter with them.

**Global Peace through Music**

A Christian songs CD was Launched by the National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP) in a ceremony on Friday, March 26, 2010, at the St. Mary's School Auditorium, Peshawar.

The Rt. Rev. Humphrey S. Peters, Bishop of Peshawar was the Guest of Honour on this occasion. Mr. Mian Iftikhar Hussain (Minister for Information, Govt. of NWFP), Mr. S. Aqil Shah (Minister for Sports & Culture, Govt. of NWFP) and Mr. Anwar Khyal (famous Pushto Singer) were the other prominent Guests, who attended this graceful ceremony.

During the ceremony, people enjoyed listening to the songs on peace and harmony and appreciated it a lot. The ceremony, and the environment was a witness of **Inter-faith harmony**, as people from other faiths and communities were also present in the ceremony.

Bishop Humphrey Peters in his speech put emphasis on Inter-faith, inter-cultural peace & harmony, and solidarity & peaceful environment leading to Global peace.

**Inter-Denominational Initiative**

A fellowship dinner was arranged on Easter Monday for all the clergymen of the Diocese, and Heads and Priests from other denominations, at the Diocesan Centre Peshawar. The Bishop and his family arranged this Special Dinner to promote inter-denominational harmony.

**Easter Worships held in Prisons**



On Easter, special Worship Services were organized at Haripur and Peshawar Jails, by the Prison Ministry of the Peshawar Diocese.

Rt. Rev. Humphrey S. Peters, Bishop of Peshawar led the Holy Communion Service in Haripur Jail.

The Bishop, the Prison Chaplain, the Women Coordinator and Priest In-charge St. Luke's Church, along with other members from the congregation visited the prisons and held the worship services, especially organized for the Christian foreigner prisoners in both the major Jails of the province.

At this occasion, special Easter gifts were distributed among the prisoners and fellowship lunches were also arranged by the Diocese, the prisoners also got a chance to share their problems and other needs with the Bishop, and were assured of the Diocesan help.

Separate Worship Services were also arranged for the women prisoners, led by Mrs. Reena Partic, the women coordinator, DoP.

Diocese organizes the special worship services for the prisoners, this exhibits the love of our Lord Jesus Christ for the people in captivity. The message to them is that they are not forgotten, neither by Jesus and nor by His Church.

At this occasion, prisoners get a chance to talk about their problems, whereas, the Peshawar Diocese tries it's utmost to provide them with moral and legal support they need.

The prison management also cooperates with the church people, and participates in their joys.

## **Bishop Humphrey S. Peters paid a Courtesy Call on the Khyber-Pakhtunkwa ( NWFP) Governor**



### **Bishop Humphrey meets the Archbishop of Canterbury**

April 2010: Rt. Rev. Humphrey S. Peters met the Archbishop of Canterbury at the Lambeth Palace England. This was his first meeting with the Archbishop, after becoming the Bishop of Peshawar.

The Archbishop, the Most Rev. Rowan Williams congratulated Bishop Peters on his becoming the 4<sup>th</sup> Bishop of the Peshawar Diocese. The Archbishop also showed his concern over the tense situation of the Khyber - Pakhtunkhawa Province (NWFP) of Pakistan and about the Christian Community of Pakistan.

Bishop Humphrey shared with the Archbishop about the efforts made by the Diocese to look after the IDPs and to secure rights of the minorities in Pakistan. The Archbishop was also informed about the moral and legal support extended by the Peshawar Diocese. Bishop Humphrey Peters also shared various projects run by the Diocese for the Community Uplift, and were appreciated by the Archbishop.

Matter relating Interfaith, Faith & Order of the Church were also discussed during this meeting.

### **The Bishop's Courtesy Call on the Pakhtunkwa (NWFP) Governor**

March 3, 2010: The newly elected and consecrated as the 4<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Peshawar Diocese, Rt. Rev. Humphrey S. Peters paid a courtesy call/visit to the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Mr. Owais Ahmad Ghani at Governor's House, Peshawar on Saturday.

The Governor congratulated the new Bishop of Peshawar Diocese and wished him success in coming up to the expectations of his community.

### **Khyber - Pakhtunkwa**

**The North West Frontier Province (NWFP) has got a new name**



The NWFP province was created in 1904, and ever since, its geographical location has been used as its name, which means 'the north-western frontier province.

The capital of the NWFP, Peshawar has been abode to many cultures and

civilizations including Gandhara. It remained under the sway of different influences and rulers like Mauryans, Greeks, Scythians, Kushans, Sasanians, White Huns, Hindu Shahis, Ghaznavids, Slave Dynasty, Ghorids, Suri Afghans, Mughals, Durrani Afghans, Sikhs and British before the creation of Pakistan. Infact, during the 'British Raj' this was the last frontier of the empire, a far flung area of historical importance, all the invaders who came to the sub-continent marched through the Khyber-pass, even Alexander the Great.

Now, that the N.W..F.P has got a new name, but there are other people also living in this province since centuries, and are not 'Pakhtun's (Pathans), but are inhabitants of the province, and they feel they have been ignored by the new name which presents 'ethnicity', so the people of Hazara and Saraiki-belt D.I. Khan are also asking for their separate province, similarly the people of the South-Punjab are also demanding the status of a separate province.

Ideally we need to have at least 10 – 12 new provinces in Pakistan, and that will empower its people and the federation, thus easily manageable. But the birth of a province has to be on the basis of administrative principles, and not on 'ethnic basis', which can further jeopardize the already delicate state of Pakistan.

## Women Leadership Training Summit

**It was a mega event held in Peshawar for the development and empowerment of the women**

Women Synodical, Church of Pakistan, organized a "Young Women's Leadership Training Summit", from 19 – 20 March 2010, hosted by Peshawar Diocese.



It was a regional level programme, the women participants were from Raiwind, Lahore, Sialkot and Peshawar Dioceses. The purpose of this leadership training was, **"To equip women in the church & society"**. The theme of the Summit was, **"Go to my brothers and tell them"**. (John 20:17)

Among the organizers were Ms. Shunila Ruth, the Coordinator Women Synodical, Church of Pakistan, and Ms. Reena Patrick, Secretary Women Synodical, and Coordinator of the Women Desk, Peshawar Diocese.

Various Sessions and Workshops were held, and led by different resource persons.

Rt. Rev. Humphrey S. Peters, the Bishop of Peshawar welcomed the guests and the participants. In the opening session he emphasized on the 'Empowerment of Women in the Church & Society.'

Mrs. Reena Patrick led the opening devotion, and shared the Word of God regarding the theme of the Programme. Mrs. Beulah Shakir, the Vice President, Women Synodical, welcomed the participants and Ms. Shunila Ruth gave introduction of the programme.

A keynote address was delivered by Prof. Dr. Sarah Safdar, the Director, Institute of Social Development Studies, University of Peshawar. In her address, she suggested 10 simple ideas to empower the women in general; i.e.

1. Value yourself and develop relations/partnerships on the basis of equality.
2. Learn to own your voice and assert your opinions.
3. Identification of words and language, to communicate effectively.
4. Focus on the person instead of appearance.
5. Call attention to the conditions which needs to be focused
6. Learn how to ask and negotiate your requests.
7. Think, plan and prepare yourself for career development.
8. Develop self-reliance and encourage yourself in taking risk towards development.
9. Speak up for your rights positively.
10. Identify your available resources and manage your plans within those.

Following steps were suggested for the spiritual growth of women:

1. Pray for God's direction
2. Prepare a balanced plan
  - a) Start where you are
  - b) Trust God's timing and never move ahead of Him and His provisions
  - c) Use the gifts you have and allow God to provide you the missing pieces.
  - d) Do not make it beyond your reach
3. Seek support from other women in Church.
4. Share your talent in Church.



Ms. Esther Inayat led a session on "Importance of Theological Education.;" Ms. Shunila Ruth led another session on "Mentoring-our contemporary Mothers, Sisters, their strategies & stories.;"

Mrs. Reena Patrick facilitated in a session on **"Violence against Women & Child Abuse."** Mrs. Bimla Yousaf led a session on "Development Skills Workshop".

Plenary sessions were also held and group work and reports were also presented during the programme.



In the last session, Badges and Certificates were distributed among the participants from the Synodical, CoP. Shields were presented to the Speakers/Facilitators. Mrs. S.P. Asghar, the President Women Council, DoP, presented gifts and 'Souvenirs of Peshawar' to the Coordinator and Executive Committee of the Women Synodical, CoP.

It was a mega event/activity held in Peshawar for the development and empowerment of the women. All the participants appreciated the programme and said that they learnt a lot, they also emphasized on organizing more such activities and leadership training programmes for women, more often.

The participants and the Women Synodical thanked the Peshawar Diocese for hosting this Summit, and for their cooperation with the Women Synodical. They appreciated the arrangements and said that they enjoyed their stay and hospitality shown by Peshawar Diocese.

**Although the situation in Peshawar is tense due to terrorism, but the womenfolk felt secure and comfortable during their stay in the Peshawar Diocese.**

**The show goes on, despite the Bomb Blasts**

**The Easter Fair**



People enjoying during the Fair

The Diocesan Youth Desk organized an Easter Fair on Easter Monday, at the premises of the Edwardes College School [Wing II ], Peshawar.

The main purpose of this activity was to provide an opportunity to the Christian community in Peshawar to cheer up, as ever since the war against terror started, the suicide bombings and other terrorist activities have restricted the Peshawarities to stay in their homes, thus very rarely people get together --- apart from the marriages ceremonies.

The youth groups arranged various stalls of food and beverages, ice cream and fruit charts, etc. The sports activities, music and swings for the children were also part of the entertainment.

**Around 1:30, in the afternoon, three huge explosions hit the Cantonment area of Peshawar, the US Consulate was attacked, and most of the people left the fair and went to check out about the safety of their near and dear ones, and the organizers thought, "that's it", end of the programme!**

But, after a couple of hours people started coming back again in large numbers and the fair became a huge success. The people of Peshawar proved that they are brave and don't want to miss an opportunity for social gatherings, any ways.

This fair also helped the organizers to raise some funds for the youth activities. The participants were happy and thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and insisted to hold on more programmes of this nature, to enjoy and to make the society socially vibrant, once again.

**Sham-e-Calvary (Calvary Evening)**

To celebrate the Sham-e-Calvary (Calvary Evening), the Diocesan Youth and Women desks organized a joint Worship programme and religious songs singing competition during the Holy Week, at the Diocesan Centre, Peshawar.



Youth presented narrations, songs, and read passages from the Holy Bible to commemorate and to feel the pain and agony of Jesus Christ on the Cross, as He gave His life for us. Different video clips were also shown about Jesus' crucifixion and His stressful time at Gethsemane Garden. Miss Saima Walter, the President, Diocesan Youth Council, led the narrations and Mrs. Reena Patrick, the Women Coordinator, led the programme.

It was a sober and spirit touching evening. The Christian community of Peshawar felt the pain seriously, felt guilty about their sinful life and prayed for forgiveness of their sins from the Lord, our God. A large number of people participated and were blessed by the Holy Spirit.



The competitors of the singing programme sang songs in groups, but the audience also witnessed a few solo/individual performances. The theme of all the songs was about the Lent Season and the Holy Week. Later, the winners were awarded with the prizes.

**Empowering the locals in the Earthquake Affected Areas**

The Community Based Organization (CBO) of Pateka & Shawal (earthquake affected) villages had an important meeting with the Diocesan Development & Relief Sector's Staff.

The CBO members after consulting the Diocesan staff have willingly agreed to takeover and run most of the projects by themselves to become self-reliant with their own community initiatives. However, the Diocesan help and supervision will continue to the CBO, and the Pateka & Shawal areas.

This is a major development in itself, as the outside NGO's and other organizations usually make the communities more dependent and passive recipients, but the Peshawar Diocese has empowered the communities by enabling them to practically run their own affairs, through their own Community Based Organisation (CBO).

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**Inter-Faith Activities**

**Essay Writing Competition**

The 'Faith Friends', an organization, formed by the Diocese of Peshawar, works for the promotion of the Interfaith harmony in the province, hold regular meetings and seminars, their objective is to further strengthen the friendship ties between the minorities and the Muslim majority.

This year the 'Faith Friends' has organized an essay writing competition on 'Inter-Faith Harmony', involving students of various universities and colleges of the province Pakhtunkwa, formerly known as NWFP.

Hundreds of essays have been received on the topic, anyone can write a 4 page essay on 'Inter-Faith Harmony' quoting traceable references.

Results of this competition will be announced next month. First prize is cash Rs.10,000/-, Second prize is Rs.7000/- and Third prize is Rs.5,000/- (PKR).

Needless to mention that the Diocese of Peshawar organised the group of the Faith Friends, and initiated Inter-Faith Activities.