

## Despite Security Threats, Easter Procession continues



The Sun-rise Easter Procession of the All Saints' Church, Peshawar has become a traditional activity of the Easter in Peshawar. And people from other denominations/churches also look forward to participate in this historical march. The Procession passes through the streets of the old walled city of Peshawar. During the procession, religious songs & hymns are sung loudly, thus witnessing the glorious resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ.

Every year thousands of Christians gather at the All Saints' Church at dawn, and in a form of procession march through the streets, while holding candles and singing the Christian songs. They also recite passages from the Holy Bible regarding the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a great witness of the Christian Faith seen in this part of the World.

This year the organizers of the procession changed and shortened the route of the procession, because of the tensed law and order situation.

The procession stopped in the mid of the famous & historical Qissa Khawani Bazaar and recited the passages from the Holy Bible. The Priests delivered sermons regarding the good news that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. His glorious victory over death and Satan is for the Salvation of all mankind. On this occasion, special prayers were also offered for the peace, prosperity and solidarity of the country.

The Parish Committee of the All Saints' Church served breakfast to all the participants of the Procession on their return to the Edwards High School, Peshawar City, which is next door to the All Saints' Church, Peshawar.

## Handling Security Concerns on Easter



Throughout the holy week, and at the Easter time, the Bishop, the Diocese, and the community were all worried and concerned about the security situation of all the churches and Christian institutions of the Province. In this regard, special meetings were held with the high ups of the Law & Order Institutions, and with the top governmental officials of the Province.



The final meeting in this connection was held at the Diocesan Centre, Peshawar on 19 April, 2011, in which the Bishop himself, along with all the Diocesan Officers, Priests and representatives of the Parishes participated. The most senior and responsible police officials in the meeting, i.e. District Coordinator Officer (D.C.O) Peshawar, Senior Superintendent of Police (S.S.P.) Peshawar, Superintendent of Police (S.P.) Peshawar, assured the Bishop that security for the Christian community is their top priority. Thus they will do everything possible in their powers to make the Christian festival a happy memory for the community.

The Bishop thanked the police and security agencies for their cooperation and sincerity to apply all kinds of protective measures to make sure the Christian community enjoys their Festival without fear of any untoward incident.

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### Contact us at

[frontiernews@peshawardiocese.org](mailto:frontiernews@peshawardiocese.org)  
[diocese.org](mailto:diocese.org)  
[commdeskdp@gmail.com](mailto:commdeskdp@gmail.com)

**Christian School attacked over desecration incident**

Gujranwala: Police on Saturday arrested several stone-wielding demonstrators who smashed up a Christian school and attempted to attack a church following protests against the alleged desecration of the Holy Quran in Gujranwala.

A crowd of around 500 gathered after two burnt pages of the Holy Quran were recovered from a Christian graveyard in Gujranwala, police said. At least 10 persons, including police officials, were injured in the police-protesters clashes. Police arrested 25 people for involvement in the disturbances. Among those arrested were three Christians, including a priest. Moreover, police are now patrolling the area.

People accused Farrukh, son of Mushtaq, a B.Com student to be behind the act of desecration. Police arrested the accused and his father for questioning.

Local clerics blamed the Christian community for the incident and used speeches at mosques on Saturday morning to inform others and call a protest against the alleged blasphemy.

In the afternoon, more than 500 rock and stone carrying demonstrators marched towards a church and attempted to attack it after smashing a Christian missionary school, police said. "They entered the school and broke the furniture there. They tried to march towards a Church but we have dispersed them," Ghulam Mubashir Mekan, senior police officer in Gujranwala told AFP by telephone. "We have arrested several protesters, the situation is still tense," he said.

Nadeem Anthony, a social activist who visited the area, confirmed the incident. "Several Christian families have left the area," he told AFP. Residents said around 2,500 Christians are living there.

Meanwhile, Central Executive Committee of the All Pakistan Minorities Alliance (APMA) strongly condemned attacks on the Church and school. All Christians respect all the Prophets, Holy Books and scriptures.

In a meeting in Islamabad, the committee said such types of incidents are just a conspiracy to destabilize the country. Such elements are great threat to inter-faith harmony and should be countered.

**Prayer Service held for Mr. Bhatti at Islamabad**



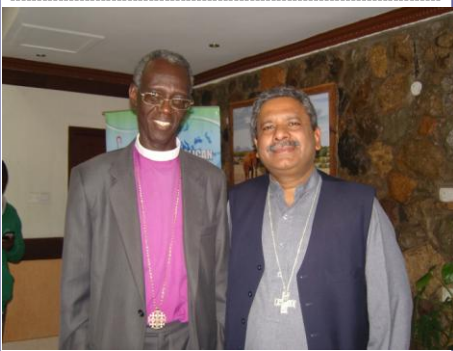
On the 40<sup>th</sup> Day, of his death (Mr. Shahbaz Bhatti), a special memorial service was held in front of the Parliament House, Islamabad. Various religious and political personalities across the board participated in this service and consoled the grieved family of Shahbaz Bhatti. The Christian members of the Parliament, and various Church leaders also participated in this service.

The political leadership of the country paid rich tributes to Mr. Bhatti's efforts for the rights of the minorities in Pakistan. The Service lasted for four hours.



The Rt. Revd. Humphrey S. Peters, Bishop of Peshawar along with a delegation from the Diocese of Peshawar also participated in this Memorial Service. In his speech, **the Bishop said, "In this critical and tense situation, the Christian community should be united in Pakistan, and together, we can achieve more"**. "Mr. Shahbaz Bhatti was a great leader and an asset for the Christian community in Pakistan, and his death is a great loss", the Bishop added.

Bishop Humphrey also led the closing prayer and benediction at the end.



**Bishop Humphrey Peters, Diocese of Peshawar with The Most Rev. Dr. Eliud Wabukala Archbishop, Anglican Church of Kenya in Nairobi**

**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 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. Kindly pray for the Christian community of Gujranwala, and for the Coptic Christians of Egypt, as both are passing through hard times.
3. The Diocesan Relief Work in Pateka, Balakot, Earthquake victims (2005), and for the Flood victims (2010) in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.
4. Pakistan, minorities and Inter-faith harmony in the region.

**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. Kindly pray for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in D.I. Khan and Bannu.

## The St. Luke's Church, Abbottabad



**St. Luke's Church, Abbottabad** is a treat for the eyes. It is a Gothic Victorian structure, a popular landmark, standing tall, right in the heart of the town; thus, adds grace to the tranquility of the town.

The Garrison city of Abbottabad lies in the foothills of the mighty Himalayas. It is a small, but most valuable city in the entire mountainous belt of Haripur, Hazara in the North of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province under the pastoral and Episcopal care of the Diocese of Peshawar, Church of Pakistan. In addition the **famous Silk Route journey starts from Abbottabad**, as it is situated on the cross-roads towards all the hill stations/cities in the region, including Kashmir leading to China.

Abbottabad, a hill station, known for its pleasant weather, quality educational institutions, friendly people, but, now a days, notoriously famous all over the world for the wrong reasons. **Osama Bin Laden was captured and killed by the American elite forces in the neighborhood of the 'Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul', the location is only two kilometers from the St. Luke's Church's vicinity.**

Abbottabad city is named after its founder, Sir Abbot, a Captain in the British Army in the nineteenth century. In fact, wherever the East India Company went (read invaded), their first priority used to be to build Cantonments, which was followed by the construction of the Churches, that is why most of the old Churches are located in the Cantonment areas.

**The St. Luke's Church, Abbottabad is an excellent example of the 'Labour of love' by the East India Company engineers and local builders. And together they built this state of the art building.**

The total construction cost of this huge Victorian structure was huge as well, i.e. Fifteen thousand Indian rupees. Nevertheless, ten thousand rupees were raised by the employees of the Company,

whereas, the remaining five thousand rupees were donated by a British philanthropist.

Eventually, the construction work started in 1830, both, European technology and local methods/material was used & applied. They used large carved stones, and glued them together with limestone powder mixed with mud and pulses, plus pieces of sack were used to provide extra reinforcement. Pulses were also used by the great Mughals to construct monumental/mega structures. This material takes time to dry-up, unlike cement. Perhaps that's why it took 17 – 20 years to complete this project. The wood for construction and for the Church's furniture was obtained from the local 'Pine Tree Forest', which has always been an expensive commodity.

The Church has seating capacity for 250 – 300 people. One of the gates of the Church is named after **Queen Victoria; the locals say that Her Majesty also paid a visit to the Church**, but one cannot find the evidence in the Church's records.

Although, the casual worship services at the St. Luke's Church started in 1850, but the formal Consecration and Inauguration Ceremony was held on October 18, 1864, by the blessed hands of The Rt. Honorable The Most Revd. George Edward Lynch Cotton, D.D., Lord Bishop of Calcutta, and Metropolitan of India. He was also authorized to supervise Anglican work in all of India, Ceylon, Burma, Mauritius and Australasia.

In those days, there were no blacktop metallic roads, and the only traditional means of transport were donkeys and horses, especially for the rugged mountainous regions. The Bishop somehow crossed the challenging Himalayan terrain via Kashmir, but it took him six long months to reach Abbottabad. Hats off to him!

The formal consecration ceremony was held on St. Luke's Day, and for this reason it was named the 'St. Luke's Church', and it has always been an Anglican Church.

In the year 1970, the Anglican Church was merged into the Church of Pakistan, hence the St. Luke's Church, Abbottabad became part of the 'Church of Pakistan', run by the Diocese of Lahore.

In 1980, the Diocese of Peshawar was formed, and now it is an integral part of the Diocese. The Rt. Revd. Humphrey S. Peters, Bishop of Peshawar is the chief patron of the Church, whereas, the Revd. Riaz Mubarak is the Priest In-charge. At the moment, the Church has one hundred families as its permanent members, and the number of congregation is increasing gradually. Needless to add that St. Luke's Abbottabad is one of the thriving parishes of the Diocese of Peshawar.

Every Sunday, two main services are held at the Church, one for the locals in Urdu, and **the English Service is held for the ex-patriots who are working for the earthquake victims of 2005**, in Mansehra district (17 miles from Abbottabad).



Revd. Riaz Mubarak with Bishop Humphrey

The two main buildings, i.e. the Church and the Vicarage are surrounded by huge beautiful gardens, total area of the premises is 38 Canals, and it is rather an uphill task to keep it maintained, but the Peshawar Diocese, with the cooperation of the local Christian community has been carrying on the job successfully.

The huge gardens are also utilized for religious Seminars and Conventions, and the local congregation uses those gardens for wedding parties and receptions as well. Recently one of the grounds has been developed for sports by the Priest in-charge, which promotes healthy habits among the Youth.

In the year 2005, the Church building was partially damaged during the unforgettable earthquake in the region. The Peshawar Diocese with the help of its friends and partners renovated the Church on priority basis, as it is a National heritage and a vivid expression of the Body of Christ's presence right in the middle of the city. **It stands as a symbol of hope, unity, joy, and also reminds the Inter-faith harmony in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.**

Do keep the Abbottabad Christian Community specially the St. Luke's Parish, Abbottabad in your prayers.

## Shahbaz Bhatti's Memorial Service



April 8, 2011: Memorial Service of Mr. Shehbaz Bhatti was held at the St. John's Cathedral, Peshawar.

Mr. Shehbaz Bhatti was the only Christian Federal Minister for Minority Affairs and was voice of the minorities in general, and of the Christian community in particular. He was assassinated in broad daylight in Islamabad. His murder was condemned not only by minorities, but by the Muslim majority as well. To pay a tribute to his gallant leadership, Peshawar Diocese held a special service in his memory at the St. John's Cathedral, Peshawar. People from all walks of life (the Christian community) participated in this service and prayed for his departed soul and for the peace of heart of his family members.

At the service, Mr. Yousaf Masih Yad, a well known local Christian scholar in his speech condemned his murder, and mentioned that the whole Pakistan feels sorry over this unpleasant incident. Even the President, Prime Minister, the Parliament, plus all the political parties condemned his murder. He was declared a martyr, and the government of Pakistan announced three days mourning over his death.

Mr. Yad said that Mr. Bhatti was a hero of the minorities in Pakistan, as he was campaigning for the rights of the minorities and wanted to stop the misuse of the Blasphemy law in Pakistan.

The Revd. Salamat Masih while paying tribute to Mr. Bhatti, said, "It's an honour for me to pay a tribute to Mr. Bhatti, as he was a great leader and champion of the rights of the minorities. His death is a great loss". He added.

Mr. Asif Bhatti, a local Christian leader, and a member of the Provincial Assembly said that some of my colleagues say that all laws are misused in Pakistan, then why so much hue and cry over the blasphemy law. But I tell them that section 295 – C is different than ordinary law, rather it's

an extra ordinary law. I condemn the murder of Mr. Shahbaz Bhatti, thus ask the government to take stringent action against his murderers.

The Venerable S. P. Asghar, Arch-Deacon, Diocese of Peshawar, also prayed for Mr. Bhatti's family members and paid rich tribute to the brave leadership of Mr. Shahbaz Bhatti. He also mentioned that Peshawar Diocese, and the Rt. Revd. Humphrey S. Peters also highly condemned Mr. Bhatti's murder, and this memorial service is also to pay tribute to the fearless leadership of his. Even the youth, and Peshawar's congregation recorded a peaceful protest in front of the Peshawar Press Club, in reference to Mr. Bhatti's murder and for the rights of the Christians in Pakistan.

On this occasion, the Arch – Deacon also prayed for Pakistan, and for the regional peace and stability.

The Rt. Revd. Humphrey S. Peters, Bishop of Peshawar in his Sermon quoted the reference from John 7:20.

In reference to Mr. Shahbaz Bhatti, the Bishop said, "He knew that one day he'll be assassinated but he never gave up". The Bishop further said, "We do not want to repeal the blasphemy law/section 295-C, but we want to stop its misuse". Because, when ever this law is misused, it rings death toll for Christians in particular, and for other minorities in general". He added.

The Bishop said that we need to tackle this problem through peaceful social, and political actions. "We need to discipline our lives, only then we'll be able to bear fruit of our lives. We are a seed that needs to be planted in the right soil", He said. "We have to be good patriotic Pakistanis, so that others may follow our example", the Bishop added.

The Rt. Revd. Humphrey S. Peters further stated "What Shahbaz Bhatti said yesterday, everybody is saying the same thing today". "We in Christ need to become role models, and God will bless us all in abundance". He added.

In the end, the Holy Communion was led by the Bishop himself.

After the service, the participants were served with tea and refreshments.

## Bishop's Easter visits



During the Holy Week and on Easter, the Rt. Revd. Humphrey Peters visited various Parishes of the Peshawar Diocese.

On Wednesday, 20 April 2011, the Bishop went to D.I. Khan Parish and participated in the Evening Service held at the St. Thomas' Church. The Revd. Rasheed Nazir, Diocesan Secretary also accompanied the Bishop, there he delivered a sermon regarding lent season and the holy week.

After the Service, a prize distribution ceremony was held, and the Bishop distributed prizes among the winners of the Badminton Tournament, in D. I. Khan Parish.

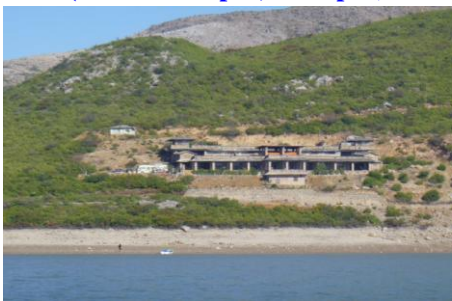


The Next Day, on the Maundy Thursday, the Bishop led a Confirmation Service at the St. John's Church, D.I. Khan. About 70 youngsters received the Confirmation Sacrament and joined the Union in the Body of Christ. After the Confirmation Service, the Junior Church (Sunday School) children presented a Drama, in which they acted on the events of the temptations of Jesus, the Royal Entry of Jesus in Jerusalem, the Last Supper and the Crucifixion of Jesus.

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## Vision Realized

**A humble Developing Initiative for His Kingdom**  
(Jubilee Campus, Khanpur)



A View of the Jubilee Campus, Khanpur

Peshawar Diocese was formed/established in 1980. Before that, it was the Lahore Diocese who used to run all the Faith and Order affairs in the N.W.F.P, (now called the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province).

After becoming an independent Diocese, the Peshawar Diocese then had a challenge to develop its community through various Health & Educational institutions/programmes, and through a number of welfare projects for the social, spiritual and economic uplift of the Christian community.

First of all, a new Diocesan Secretarial was built to carry forward the missionary work, new schools, clinics and colleges were established, the old but renowned health and educational institutions were also revived. **It was an uphill task, but the newly born Peshawar Diocese with the help of its friends at home and abroad succeeded in developing new institutions.** In some cases the centuries old buildings were totally demolished and reconstructed, for example, the famous Mission Hospital of Bannu, also known as Pennell Memorial Hospital, and Pennell High School, Bannu are excellent examples of making old a real gold. Talking about Bannu, the Church of the Holy Name was also totally reconstructed, it's beautiful architecture and all the different names of God inscribed on the building bear a unique witness.

The Edwards College School was established in mid eighties, and it soon earned a reputation as one of the top schools of the province, where elite classes of the Muslim majority prefer to send their children, and they pay for that, as gold cannot be bought

with pennies. Nevertheless, the **Christian students are given high concessions, and/or their expenses are adjusted/paid through Diocesan scholarships** extended for the Christian community only. It is worth mentioning that **the School has its four branches now, which are called wings, and the School has become a System.**

The School's administration and the Diocese together bought a piece of land in Harripur district, near Khanpur Dam, a beautiful scenic place; and an up-to-the-mark 'Retreat Centre' was erected in 2005. **It has dormitory, conference hall, toilets and room for accommodating upto 150 persons at-a-time.**



Youth, during Discussion Time in Campus

Initially, this place was built for Edwards College School pupils, for their recreational and educational activities in a natural environment. But, another reason or objective to build this retreat centre was to use it for the Clergy of the Diocese for their in-service trainings and retreats. Before the establishment of this Retreat Centre, Peshawar Diocese used to utilize the Murree Retreat & Renewal Centre of the Lahore Diocese, and other facilities of different Christian organizations on payment.



A Trainee Priest enjoying the view at Campus

But now the Peshawar Diocese has its own place where Clergy, Students of schools, Youth & Women leaders and visitors of the **Diocese can enjoy holding Retreats and Seminars without paying.** Of course, it's a big achievement and special Blessing of God.

This place was selected and developed by the present Bishop of Peshawar, the Rt. Revd. Humphrey S. Peters, it was his vision. Today, when Retreats, Students Camps and Leadership Training Programmes, Hiking and other activities are organized there, everybody highly appreciates the facilities and the exotic beauty of the spot.



Road towards the Entrance of the Campus  
The building was named 'Jubilee Campus', because it was inaugurated on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the Peshawar Diocese.

So far, this facility has not been utilized for commercial purposes, like the Murree Retreat & Renewal Centre, or like the NCCP's facility in Khanspur, Ayubia. But, this place certainly has potential.



Tea Time at the Jubilee Campus

At the moment, it is situated away from the main town and main road, but in the days to come, the Khanpur Lake will be developed for Boating, Gliding and Wind surfing, hence it will become a big tourist attraction. Then, perhaps the Peshawar Diocese may start renting it out to other Christian denominations and organizations, and that could generate good funds, which could then be utilized to further develop and/or to initiate new programmes and projects for the Christian Community's social and economic uplift. **As development of the community is development of the Faith as well.**

### Activities in Nowshera Parish

**Convention:** The Nowshera Parish is one of the important parishes of our Northern Deanery, a large parish in terms of area. It covers Nowshera, Pabbi, Jahingira, Akora Khattak, and Khairabad.

During the Lent Season, the Revd. Salamat Masih, and the Parish committee organized a Christian Convention, held at the Christ Church Nowshera. Theme of the Convention was "Importance of Fasting". The Revd. Rukhsar from Gujranwala and Revd. Samson Anwar from Peshawar were the guest speakers. After the programme, the audiences confessed that they received the spiritual blessings during the Convention.



**Confirmation Service:** A graceful Confirmation Service was held on 10 April, 2011, at the Christ Church, Nowshera. The Rt. Revd. Humphrey S. Peters, Bishop of Peshawar led the service. At this occasion, about 80 youngsters, belonging to different areas of the Nowshera Parish received the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The Bishop, in his message encouraged the young people to study in depth the Holy Bible in order to strengthen their faith in Lord Jesus Christ.

### Christian Convention at Tank

Tank is bounded by the districts of Lakki Marwat to the northeast, Dera Ismail Khan to the east and southeast, and South Waziristan to the southwest, west, and northwest.

The Tank Parish, under the supervision of the Revd. Razak Barkat, Priest In-charge, organized a three-days Convention at the Tank Church, on 15 – 17 April 2011. A large number of Christians from Tank and D.I.Khan participated in this convention. The topic of this Convention was "Spiritual Awareness". The Revd. Jerold Mall from Karachi was the keynote speaker.

The Participants enjoyed the Biblical teachings and the Spiritual atmosphere. Even the Junior Church members learnt different passages by heart from the Holy Bible. A competition was also held, in which the children participated

with joy and won prizes.

The Tank Parish also conducted House Group meetings during the Lent Season, the Priest and his team arranged house worships in every single household of the congregation.

### Easter Celebrations

The Christian community in Peshawar rarely gets a chance to socialise publicly, and religious festivals are the only time to break the dead lock of isolation.



On this Easter, two major 'Fairs' were organised in Peshawar, one by the All Saints' Church Parish committee, at the Edwards High School, Peshawar City, on the Easter day. The other Fair was organised by the Diocesan Youth Council, at the premises of the Edwards College School (Wing – II), Peshawar Cantt., on Easter Monday.

A large number of people, including children, women, and old people participated in these Easter Fairs, and everybody enjoyed a day out. The people enjoyed tea, cold drinks and the fast food sold at various food & drink stalls.

Most of the people highly appreciated the courageous efforts of the organisers for providing an opportunity to the fun loving Peshawaries, even in the tensed situation of the region.

Thank God, all went well, without any untoward incident.

### Easter Worship Services in Jails

On every Christmas & Easter, the Diocese of Peshawar organises special Prayer Services for the Christian prisoners in both the major Jails of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Province. So that the message of hope could also reach to the people in captivity, and blessings of our Lord be shared.

The Revd. Rasheed Nazir, Diocesan Secretary and Prison Chaplain visited the Haripur Jail and led a Holy Communion Service on Wednesday, 18 April 2011. Some members of the congregation from Peshawar also accompanied the Prison Chaplain. After the Service, a Lunch was served and the Easter gifts were also distributed among the Christian prisoners. There are only 5 Christian foreigner prisoners in Haripur Jail.

The same kind of Worship Service was also held in Peshawar Jail by the Prison Chaplain, on Thursday, 19 April 2011. Mr. Safdar Massey, the Vice President (Laity), DoP and Mrs. Reena Patrick, the Women Coordinator also accompanied him. Two separate services were held for male and female prisoners. Later, the Easter gifts were distributed among the Christian prisoners, and a Lunch was also served. There are 30 Christian prisoners in the Peshawar Jail.

(Continued from Page 4, Col.3)

### Bishop's visits on this Easter (Bishop announces Housing Scheme)

After the Service, Bishop announced a 'Housing Scheme' for the D. I. Khan congregation, through which the land-plots will be given to the Christians of D.I. Khan on nominal price and easy installments.

The Bishop attended the Good-Friday Service at the Church of the Holy Name, Bannu, attended sermons regarding the Seven-words of Jesus on Cross, the Bishop himself delivered sermon on the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> Word.

The Bishop also participated in the Sun-rise procession and the Sun-rise Service at the Christ Church, Nowshera. The Bishop in his sermon said that Jesus gave His life to save us, and His Resurrection gives us a new life, and in abundance. "We should rejoice by having this new life and serve the Lord and His people". He said.

The Bishop led the Holy Communion during the main Easter Service at the St. John's Cathedral, Peshawar. After the service, he exchanged Easter greetings with the congregation.

**We are thankful to God that He protected us through His mighty hands during all the Lent Season and the Holy week. Halleluia!**