



AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS EASTER MESSAGE TO CONGREGATIONS AND COMMUNITIES

A Message of Renewal, Hope and Decisive Action



03 APRIL - 05 APRIL 2026



Our human compassion binds us the one to the other - not in pity or patronisingly, but as human beings who have learnt how to turn our common suffering into hope for the future" Former President Nelson Mandela

***Programme Director,
Leadership of the Church,
Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
Fellow South Africans,***

We are truly humbled to stand before you during this sacred Easter period, a time that calls on all of us to reflect deeply on faith, sacrifice, renewal, and the enduring power of hope.

Easter reminds us that no matter how dark the night may be, morning will come. It reminds us that suffering is not the end of the story. It reminds us that through faith, perseverance, and love, life triumphs over death, and hope triumphs over despair.

This message is not only spiritual, it is also deeply relevant to our lives as a people and as a nation.

South Africa has known suffering. Our people have endured injustice, dispossession, inequality, and struggle. Yet through unity and resilience, we overcame apartheid and built a democratic society founded on unity, dignity, equality, and freedom. Like the story of Easter, our history teaches us that even the most difficult conditions can be overcome. But as we gather here today, we must speak honestly and with humility.

The journey of our struggle is not complete. Many of our people still face hardships, poverty, unemployment, inequality, crime, and the daily struggles of making ends meet continue to affect families and communities across our country.

These are not just economic challenges but are also moral challenges. They test our humanity, our compassion, and our commitment to one another as humanity.

Easter calls on us not to turn away from these realities, but to confront them with courage and with renewed determination.

As the African National Congress, we approach this Easter guided by a clear understanding of the moment we are in. Through our recent National General Council, January 8 message and the Makgotla processes we go through internally, we have reflected deeply on the state of our movement and our country. We have listened to our people, we have debated honestly, and we have emerged with a clear message: renewal is not optional, it is necessary.

We are confronted with a choice, one that was clearly articulated in our organisational reflections that we must renew or we risk losing the very mission we have dedicated our lives to.

This is not just about the ANC but also about the future of our country. It is about whether we will continue to build a society based on justice, equality, and shared prosperity, or whether we allow inequality, division, and despair to define our future.

Easter reminds us that renewal is always possible and it requires committed action to be achieved.

It is for this reason that we have declared this year as a year of decisive action to fix local government and transform the economy. This means that the work of renewal must be seen in our communities. It must be felt in the water that flows, the electricity that works, the roads that are maintained, the clinics that function, and the opportunities that are created for our people.

The National General Council reminded us that the ANC must be an effective instrument of the people, not just in words but through tangible actions. We are called to ensure that the decisions we make lead to real improvements in people's lives. There is no better time to implement changes and improve people's lives than now.

The right to vote, which places power in the hands of the people, was earned through immense sacrifice, including by the courageous youth of 1976 who stood against injustice. We therefore call on all South Africans not to take this right for granted. As the ANC, we urge congregants – particularly young people between the ages of 18 and 40 – to register to vote in the upcoming 2026 local government elections, mindful that the future of our country rests in their hands.

At the same time, we recognise that renewal must begin within ourselves. Easter is a time of spiritual renewal, a time to reflect on our own actions, our own conduct, and our own responsibility to one another. As leaders, we must lead with integrity, humility, and accountability. We must rebuild trust by ensuring that our actions reflect the values we speak

about. We must reject corruption, dishonesty, and self-interest, and instead place the people at the centre of everything we do.

The renewal of the ANC and the renewal of South Africa must go hand in hand.

Brothers and Sisters,
Easter also teaches us about compassion and solidarity. The teachings of Christ remind us that we are called to care for one another, especially the poor, the vulnerable, and those who are suffering. In a society where inequality remains high, we must strengthen the spirit of Ubuntu, Botho. We must reach out to those in need, share what we have, and ensure that no one is left behind. A caring society is not built by government alone. It is built by communities, by families, and by individuals who choose compassion over indifference.

At the same time, we must confront the challenges that threaten the safety and dignity of our people. Gender-Based Violence remains one of the greatest injustices in our society. It is a violation of the dignity of women and children, and it undermines the very foundation of our communities. Our organisational processes and our government have recognised this crisis as a national priority requiring urgent and decisive action.

Easter calls on us to build a society rooted in love, respect, and dignity. It calls on us to reject violence, to protect the vulnerable, and to restore the moral fabric of our communities.

As we move during this Easter period, we also call on all South Africans to take responsibility on our roads. Too many lives are lost due to reckless and preventable behaviour. Let us



drive with care, avoid distractions, and ensure that every journey ends safely. Every life is precious.

Brothers and Sisters,

The message of Easter is also a message of unity.

South Africa is a diverse nation, and our strength lies in our ability to live together in peace and mutual respect. The work of nation-building and social cohesion remains central to our mission and is at the core of the founding of the African National Congress in a church in Bloemfontein in 1912.

We must reject division, intolerance, and hatred. We must build a society where all people, regardless of race, gender, or background, feel valued, respected, and included. The National General Council has reminded us that the future of our country depends on our ability to unite society behind a common vision of transformation and a better life for all.

This requires all of us in government, communities, faith-based organisations, and civil society to work together.

We also take this opportunity to encourage active citizenship. Democracy is strongest when people participate. We call on all South Africans, especially young people, to register to vote and to take part in shaping the future of our country. Your voice matters and your participation matters in deciding the future of our nation and your own future.

Beyond our borders, the spirit of Easter calls on us to stand for peace and justice in the world. We continue to call for the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the middle east and for solidarity with all those who are oppressed. We believe

that a better world is possible where there is peace and friendships, in a world built on justice, cooperation, and shared humanity.

As we reflect on this holy period, we are reminded that the journey of renewal is not easy. It requires courage. It requires honesty. It requires action.

But we are also reminded that we have come far. As has been reflected in our organisational discussions, the progress made since 1994 in expanding access to housing, education, healthcare, and basic services has improved the lives of millions of our people. This gives us hope. It reminds us that change is possible. Our task now is to ensure that this progress reaches every community, every household, and every person.

Easter teaches us that after the cross comes the resurrection. After hardship comes renewal. After struggle comes victory.

Let this Easter renew our spirit as a nation. Let it strengthen our commitment to serve, to care, and to act. Let us leave here not only inspired, but committed to building stronger communities, committed to restoring hope, and committed to creating a South Africa that truly belongs to all who live in it, black and white.

We wish you and your families a peaceful, safe, and blessed Easter.

Thank you.

