

To be read by the clergy at the Resurrection Liturgy

**Resurrectional (Paschal) Message
To the Entirety of the Body of Our Church**

*“Yesterday I was buried with Thee, O Christ; today I rise with Thee,
Who art risen; I was crucified with Thee yesterday; do Thou,
O Savior, glorify me together with Thee in Thy Kingdom.”*

Beloved Children in the Lord:

We celebrate yet again the “Feast of Feasts,” the greatest and resplendent Festival of the Resurrection of Christ, which fills all things with its radiant and other-worldly Light.

God, in His love for mankind, once more gives us exceeding joy and exultation: this incomparable delight and gladness.

For our Lord Jesus Christ, One of the Trinity, “the last Adam” (I Corinthians 15:45), the Healer and Savior of the Divinely fashioned human couple, who fell into disobedience and were cast out of Paradise—our Lord, entering into this world “in the form of a servant” (Philippians 2:7), came down to assume, sinlessly, our infirmity, lowliness, and poverty. Thusly, our Maker and Fashioner became also our Kinsman, in order to share in what is ours, and this on *our* behalf. And as St. Gregory the Theologian emphasizes, “he humbles Himself for the sake of the soul bowed down to the earth, that He may raise up with Himself that which inclines downwards on account of sin” (Homily XXXVIII, §14, *PG* 36:328B).

Oh, the utmost love and compassion! He descends from Heaven in a wondrous manner, and He Who is invisible becomes visible; He Who is uncircumscribed becomes circumscribed; and He is made like unto us in all respects, “save sin,” and this, “in order to retrieve the fugitive, to deliver the captive, to show mercy on the insolent, to honor the mocker, and to raise the dead” (Archbishop Isidore of Thessalonica [fourteenth century]).

With this end in view, He accepted voluntary Suffering, “disregarding the shame” (Hebrews 12:2), enduring every pain and every sorrow of both soul and body, “unto the cross and death”; for He truly suffered as man, His Divinity remaining impassible, darkening the sun and causing the earth to quake.

He descended indeed into Hades, so that He might, by His invincible strength, overthrow the tyrannical enemy, the Devil, thrashing him, and ascend in triumph with His glorious “spoils,” in order to seat them “on high,” “bringing back from Hades those who were dead under Hades” (Archbishop Anthony of Larissa [fourteenth century]), namely, Adam and Eve and those believers with them.

Thus, He opened wide the Gates of Heaven, so that there might henceforth be no impediment to our dwelling on high, for this do we men on earth assuredly desire.

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In order that we, too, might partake of the joy of the Resurrection, not just by the hearing of the ear, but in full awareness, it is necessary that we cherish and embrace Christ’s Suffering, the Cross, and the Tomb. To this end, it is requisite that the inner eyes, that is, the noetic eyes of the heart, of the mind, and of the conscience, be opened by the Holy Spirit (*cf.* Ephesians 1:18), that we might be illumined by Grace

and be aware of, and yearn unto death for, the hoped-for good things of the Resurrection.

For Christ is risen from the dead, that He might raise us from the spiritual death of sin and the darkness of the passions, that He might recall and restore us from the sepulchres of our most grievous transgressions; whereas He is risen, we are also risen from our sins unto our healing.

Wherefore, brothers and sisters, let us draw nigh with faith, fear, and love to the Communion of the Body and Blood of our Risen Savior, that we may receive remission of sins and life eternal. The radiant and sublime gifts of the Resurrection are bestowed by Divine Goodness upon those who have previously experienced the acridness of fasting, the reproach of repentance, and the fear of reproof, upon those who have forgiven from their hearts, shown mercy, endured, and kept their bodies unsullied by the filth of sin, with the power of Divine Grace, and have adorned their souls with purity, charity, and prayer; for inner purity and good order accrue to us through the constant ascent of our mind to Sweetest Jesus and through unceasing remembrance of what has been done for us by the Savior.

Let us not forget that we have buried with Christ the hardship of abstinence, and that by turning aside from a passionate worldly outlook we have been crucified with Him, such that, through the Spirit-filled life and joy of Pascha, we might by Divine power and energy rise with Him Who arose for our sake.

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Most Beloved and dearest Children in the Lord:

We belong, by Divine Grace, to the martyric Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians, which has undergone persecution and all manner of tribulations and buffetings, from without and from within. However, she has stood on the rock of the good Confession and is now flourishing, united and growing, leading all of us to the Kingdom that knows no evening. The strugglers who preceded us endured ill-treatment and sorrows, “rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer” (Romans 12:12), and they now enjoy unending bliss in Heaven. We cannot but prove ourselves their worthy successors in Orthodox Faith and virtue, offering a witness of the Cross and Resurrection in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

Shining with Divine light and inspired by holy enthusiasm, come let us exclaim in joy and exultation:

“Christ is risen, and we are delivered from the second and everlasting death; Christ is risen, and the enemy is slain; ...Christ is risen, and the faithful are exalted; ...Christ is risen, and we are freed from the gloom of the passions; Christ is risen, and we are vouchsafed Angelic dignity; ...Christ is risen, and Grace dwells in both women and men; ...Christ is risen, and God judges the earth as the prince of this world takes to flight”! (Isidore of Thessalonica).

To Him that is risen be glory and dominion unto the ages. Amen!

Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!

Holy Pascha, 2015

The Holy Synod

† Archbishop Kallinikos of Athens and All Greece

† Metropolitan AKAKIOS of Attika and Diavleia
† Metropolitan MAXIMOS of Thessalonike and Demetrias
† Metropolitan ATHANASIOS of Larisa and Platamo
† Metropolitan JUSTIN of Evripos and Euboia
† Metropolitan GERONTIOS of Piræus and Salamis
† Metropolitan CHRYSOSTOMOS of Attica and Boiotia
† Metropolitan MOSES of Toronto
† Metropolitan DEMETRIOS of America
† Metropolitan CYPRIAN of Oropos and Phyle
† Bishop GREGORY of Christianoupolis
† Bishop PHOTIOS of Marathon
† Bishop AMBROSE of Philippi
† Bishop AMBROSE of Methone
† Bishop MICHAEL of Nora
† Bishop SILVANO of Luni
† Bishop KLEMES of Gardikion
† Bishop THEODOSIOS of Bresthena
† Bishop CHRISTODOULOS of Theoupolis
† Bishop AUXENTIOS of Etna and Portland

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