

**CHURCH OF THE GENUINE ORTHODOX
CHRISTIANS OF GREECE**
The Holy Synod

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To be read in Church

Protocol no. 2351

**RESURRECTIONAL (PASCHAL)
ENCYCLICAL FOR 2016**

“Thou dost grant resurrection to the fallen”

Dear and Beloved Children in the Risen Lord:

Filled with joy and gladness, all Orthodox Christians celebrate, today, the Holy Resurrection of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ, the wellspring and cause of our ineffable exultation and jubilation. For Christ, He Who is “free among the dead,” the Liberator of the dead, “Who granteth resurrection to the fallen,” is risen!

He Who wore the most ignominious crown of thorns now wears the diadem of victory over death. He Who was crucified for us, as proof of His mighty love, now pours forth liberation from bondage to the enemy: a return to the Heavens and life eternal!

When the Devil, the author of evil, apostatized, he dragged mankind with him into fallenness. He deceived our ancestors, enticing them into disobedience, and they were cast out from the Paradise of delight, finding themselves, not in a land flowing with milk and honey, but in a vale of weeping, sown with thorns and thistles.

The Lord our God made man “upright” (Ecclesiastes 7:29), that is, virtuously good, for the contemplation of God and for communion with Him; we were created “unto good works” (Ephesians 2:10), but His workmanship turned to works of wickedness.

We were deluded, we erred, we fell, we were blinded, we became crippled, and we succumbed to death! Who would raise us up?

He, the God-Man, the Son and Word of the Father, Who shed His precious Blood for our sake, in order to redeem us from sin:

He “Who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification” (Romans 4:25).

The immeasurable love of our Lord for mankind and the abundance of His tender mercies triumph over human sin and wickedness, as long as man confesses his sins and weaknesses and seeks forgiveness and remission.

Wherefore, let us not despair! Let us not lose the hope of our salvation!

The Apostle Peter denied the Lord three times before a servant-girl; yet he repented, wept bit-

terly, and received forgiveness, retaining his Apostolic dignity.

Sin is a heavy and great evil, the only thing that is truly dreadful and destructive, though not incurable, since it is easily healed through genuine repentance (St. Cyril of Jerusalem).

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Children in the Risen Lord:

“Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept” (I Corinthians 15:20).

The Lord rose in order to bestow the common resurrection on our kind, for we shall all be resurrected at His Second Coming and shall receive bodies that are eternal, though not alike. The righteous will receive heavenly bodies, so as to live eternally in the Heavens with the Holy Angels. Sinners will receive unsightly and darksome bodies, to their eternal shame!

Hence, let us take pity upon our bodies; let us make them temples and sanctify them in the Holy Spirit, by means of the holy virtues and the Divine Mysteries, that we might cleanse them of the filth of sins and that they might become receptacles of Divine Light.

Come, let us preserve our spiritual treasury unsullied and let us not be perturbed by the menace encompassing us and the disorder of this world. Rather, let us offer a helping hand, to the best of our ability, to those in turmoil and distress, both in soul and in body.

Our Risen Lord is with us even now (*cf.* St. Matthew 28:20), hearing, seeing, knowing, and searching all things. May He guard our souls, so that we might preserve unchanged our hope in Him. May He raise us from the languor of sin and grant us His Heavenly Kingdom. May He record our names in the book of those saved and never blot them out, for the names of many are blotted out, be they the names of all who forsake the true Faith or of all who sin without repentance.

May we await with vigilance Him Who will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead!

Unto Him be glory and dominion unto the ages. Amen!

Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!

Holy Pascha, 2016

THE HOLY SYNOD

The Archbishop

† KALLINIKOS of Athens

The Members

† AKAKIOS of Attica and Diauleia

† ATHANASIOS of Larisa and Platamon

† JUSTIN of Euripos and Euboea

† GERONTIOS of Piraeus and Salamina

† CHRYSOSTOMOS of Attica and Boeotia

† GREGORY of Thessalonica

† PHOTIOS of Demetrias

† MOSES of Toronto
† DEMETRIOS of America
† CYPRIAN of Oropos and Phyle
† AMBROSE of Philippi
† AMBROSE of Methone
† MICHAEL of Nora
† SILVANO of Luni
† CLEMENT of Gardikion
† AUXENTIOS of Etna and Portland
† THEODOSIOS of Bresthena
† CHRISTODOULOS of Theoupolis

[signed and sealed as a BONA FIDE COPY]

The First Secretary of the Holy Synod

† Photios of Demetrias