

CHURCH OF THE G.O.C. OF GREECE

HOLY SYNOD

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To be read in Church

Protocol no. 2578

RESURRECTIONAL (PASCHAL) ENCYCLICAL FOR 2017

“Let no one bewail his falls; for forgiveness hath dawned forth from the Tomb!”

Beloved Children in the Risen Lord:

The Resurrection of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ is the greatest and crowning cause of joy, since life no longer ends irrevocably with death; rather, death has been overcome and the prospect of eternity has been opened up.

Sin made us slaves of the Devil and death. However, our All-Good Lord took part in “flesh and blood,” in order, by means of His death upon the Cross, to destroy the Devil, who has the power of death, and thus to deliver men, “who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (see Hebrews 2:14-15).

Through the Resurrection of our Savior Christ, death and its concomitants, sin and the Devil, were trampled underfoot, and remission and freedom were bestowed upon those in guilt and servitude, upon all who groaned in the fetters of Hades and the bitter slavery of sin.

Our Lord shed His All-Holy Blood “for the remission of sins” (St. Matthew 26:28), and after His life-bearing Resurrection He gave His Apostles and their successors the authority to forgive sins (see St. John 20:22; St. Matthew 16:19, 18:18) where there is repentance, since Divine Love prevails, sanctifies, and saves.

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However, in order for us to be forgiven, it is indispensable that we forgive: "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (St. Matthew 6:12). We ought to overcome evil with good (see Romans 12:21) and always to forgive out of love, as did our Lord and God Jesus Christ (cf. Colossians 3:13).

For this reason, we chant constantly throughout the Paschal period: "Let us forgive all things in the Resurrection!"

Insofar as the present life is most assuredly the antechamber of eternity, where Divine Grace, peace, and love reign, it is self-evident that it is not possible for one who has not lived here in accordance with the Resurrectional ethos and the principles of the "new creation" and the "other life" to attain thither, to the Heavenly, Resurrectional reality.

All bitterness and evil, everything not transformed by the light of the Resurrection, which poured forth from the life-receiving Tomb, will destroy and drag to perdition whoever makes it a part of his existence. Hence, the unconditional verdict of our Lord in the Apocalypse is very clear: "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Revelation 22:15).

Contrariwise, those who repent, all who forgive, who receive Grace and are illumined by the "light of the Resurrection," already have a foretaste of the eternal joy of redemption, being freed from sorrow, lamentation, and the shame of guilt.

The sure ripening of this joy comes about through the furnace of struggle, tears, toil, self-sacrifice, self-offering, and the Cross.

The Resurrectional hymns summon those who keep the Feast to an abundance of joy: "A Pascha whereon let us embrace one another in joy. O Pascha, ransom from sorrow!" (Stichera of the Praises at Pascha).

The Divine Chrysostomos provides us with triumphant assurance: "Let no one lament his poverty; for the universal Kingdom hath been revealed. Let no one bewail his falls; for forgiveness hath dawned forth from the Tomb. Let no one fear death, for the Death of the Savior hath set us free!"

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Beloved Children in the Risen Lord:

Let us become partakers of this joy, rejecting the grievous bonds of sin, renouncing the Devil, his pomp, and his worship, and abhorring especially egotism, the very source of all evil. Let there not prevail in our resurrected existence passionate human volitions, delusions, obstinacy, schisms, and prejudices, which hold many that are hostages and prisoners of their errors in a state of un-forgiveness.

The innovating and heretical ecumenists of our day are walking steadfastly and openly along their path toward apostasy. May all those who with good intention are walled off from them discover and enter the haven of the Genuine Orthodox Church of Christ, unto the fulfillment of their God-pleasing

Confession. As for all those, on the other hand, who belong to the self-styled Genuine Orthodox Old Calendarists but who persist in the erroneous judgments and mistakes of the more remote or the recent past, may they reflect on the magnitude of their responsibility and return in humility and love to unity with the canonical Holy Synod, so that we might rejoice together in the spirit of the Resurrection, taking a common stand against the unprecedented challenges of our apocalyptic days.

May the Divine forgiveness and joy of the Resurrection of Christ our Savior inundate all of the children of our Most Holy and Martyric Church, as a foretaste of the future and unending joy in the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!

Holy Pascha, 2017

THE HOLY SYNOD

The Archbishop

† KALLINIKOS of Athens

The Members

† 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

† DEMETRIUS of America

† AMBROSE of Philippi and Maroneia

† CYPRIAN of Oropos and Phyle

† AMBROSE of Methone

† SILVANO of Luni

† KLEMES 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