



ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΘΥΑΤΕΙΡΩΝ & Μ. ΒΡΕΤΑΝΙΑΣ
ARCHDIOCESE OF THYATEIRA & GREAT BRITAIN

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My Dearly in the Risen Lord,

Once again, we celebrate the Sacred Passion and Glorious Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ from the dead.

His Resurrection is the cause of our being rebaptised in Faith, just as were the Myrrh-bearing Women and the Apostles who were the first to hear the Good News and experience the Mystery of the Salvation of the Human Race, which message these holy men and women then spread to the ends of the earth with courage and great sacrifice.

This joy and the putting into action of faith and hope in Christ, always reminds us of these Holy Days of Christianity, which celebrated and proclaimed with sacred dignity teach us that Christ suffered, was buried and rose from the Tomb on the third day "as from a bridal chamber", to remind the Human Race of the divine love which was sacrificed in order to give resurrection and eternal life to man and all God's Creation.

Needless-to-say, in these days of celebration, we must not forget to pray for refugees, immigrants, the weak, those who are poor, the sick and suffering, for the peace of the whole world, and for the welfare of the Holy Churches of God and the unity of all the Faithful.

I pray that Christ, risen from the dead, will grant to you all the joy of the Apostles and of the Myrrh-bearing Women who were the first to meet the Lord, King of Glory and Victor over death and decay, risen from the Life-Giving Tomb.

Christ is Risen, my brothers and sisters, and peace be to all, and I remain, with warmest greetings and love in the Lord and honour.

Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain

Gregorios
Archbishop of Thyateira
and Great Britain



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Ἰθαυκεὶ μὲς ἐν Κυρίῳ

Εορτάζουμε και φέτος τα Ἅγια Πάθη και την εκ νεκρῶν Ἀνάστασιν του Κυρίου ημῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Θα αναβαπτισθούμε και μείς, ὅπως οι Μυροφόρες και οι Ἀπόστολοι οι οποίοι πρωτάκουσαν και εβίωσαν το Μυστήριον της σωτηρίας του Ἀνθρωπίνου Γένους, το οποίον οι Ἱεροὶ εκείνοι ἄνδρες μετά παρρησίας και πολλῶν θυσιῶν μετέφεραν στα πέρατα του Κόσμου.

Αυτὴν την χαρά και αυτό το βίωμα της εν Χριστῷ πίστεως και ἐλπίδος, μας θυμίζουν πάντοτε οι Ἅγιες αυτές ημέρες της Χριστιανοσύνης, η οποία ιεροπρεπῶς και γιορτάζει και διακηρύσσει και διδάσκει ὅτι ο Χριστὸς ἐπάθεν, ἐτάφη και τριήμερος ἀνέστη εκ του τάφου, «ως εκ παστάδος προελθῶν», δια να υπενθυμίζει στο ἀνθρώπινο Γένος την θεϊαν ἀγάπην η οποία εθυσιάσθη για να δωρίσει στον ἄνθρωπο και σ' ὅλη την Δημιουργία Του την Ἀνάσταση και την Ἀθανασία.

Γιορτάζουμε την Ἡμέραν και προσευχόμεσθε για τους πρόσφυγες, τους μετανάστες, τους αδυνάτους, τους φτωχοὺς, τους αρρώστους, για την ειρήνην του σύμπαντος κόσμου και την ευστάθεια των Ἀγίων του Θεοῦ Εκκλησιῶν.

Ο Νεκρاناσημένος Χριστὸς να χαρίσει σ' ὅλους την χαράν των Ἀποστόλων και των Μυροφόρων Γυναικῶν, οι οποίοι πρώτοι συνάντησαν τον εκ του Ζωηφόρου Τάφου Ἀναστάντα Κύριον της δόξας και Νικητὴν του θανάτου και της φθοράς.

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη ἀδελφοί και ειρήνη πάσι και διατελῶ μετά θερμῶν ευχῶν και της εν Κυρίῳ ἀγάπης και τιμῆς.

† Διονύσιον και μ.β. Γρηγόριος

Ο Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Θυατείρων και
Μεγάλης Βρετανίας Γρηγόριος

✠ B A R T H O L O M E W
By God's Mercy Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome
and Ecumenical Patriarch
To the Plenitude of the Church
Grace, Peace and Mercy from Christ, who has Risen in Glory

Beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord,

We wholeheartedly address you from the See of the Ecumenical Patriarchate with the joyous greeting "Christ is risen!" The resurrection of Christ is the center of our Orthodox faith. Without the resurrection, our faith is "in vain" (1 Cor. 15:14). Through His resurrection, the divine Word rendered humanity – created in the image of God but wounded and stained by sin – incorrupt and deified, granting us once again the possibility of achieving divine likeness, of which we were deprived through disobedience.

However, what does the feast of Pascha signify as the victory of life over death in a world of violence and war, especially in the name of religion and God?

Many philosophers endeavored to find a solution to the problem of death and to overcome death with various theories. We Orthodox Christians celebrate the resurrection of Christ from the dead and boldly declare the destruction of death. We know that it is the Word of God who bestows life and in whom "was life" (John 1:4). We have the joyful experience of the Church, that death was conquered through the resurrection of Christ. "All things have been filled with joy, having received the experience of resurrection." This faith brightens all expressions of church life and culminates in the divine Eucharist. The fact that, in the Christian world, it is especially the Orthodox Church that preserved the divine Eucharist as the center of its life and spirituality is inseparably related to the fact that the resurrection is the nucleus of our faith, worship and ecclesiastical ethos. For this reason, the Eucharistic liturgy is always festive, joyous, and primarily linked with the Lord's day as the day of the resurrection.

The most striking expression and interpretation of the resurrection as well as of its regenerative power is the image of the descent of our Lord Jesus Christ to Hades, as this is wonderfully depicted at the Chora Monastery in Constantinople. The Lord of glory descends to the depths of Hades, destroying its gates, arising victorious and resurrecting Adam and Eve in Himself, and in so doing resurrects the entire human race from beginning to end. "Now, all things have been filled with light, heaven and earth and all things beneath the earth." Creation rises from the dark realm of death to the heavenly kingdom, whose light has no evening. The faithful, as participants in the resurrection, are called to declare the Gospel of freedom in Christ "to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The Mother Church, which lives the mystery of the cross and the resurrection simultaneously, today invites us "to approach with lit candles" "and together to celebrate the salvific Pascha of God."

Through the resurrection of our Savior, all of humanity has become one people, united in one body. Through His cross and resurrection, Christ definitively destroyed all existing hatred. Thus, the Orthodox Church, as the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, is the

Church of the reconciliation of all, the Church of love toward all, friends and enemies. Reconciled, filled with new life, filled with true life, we all become fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God (cf Eph. 2:15-20).

Unfortunately terrorism, war, and bloodshed continue to this day. The lament and agony of victims, particularly as these are rapidly disseminated through modern technological means, tear the world apart and break our heart. This is why the world's leaders – political, religious and church – are obliged and compelled by love to do everything that is possible to avoid such unacceptable conditions.

In the midst of this modern “irrational world,” we Orthodox Christians are called to offer a positive witness of love and sacrifice to our fellow human beings.

For us as Orthodox faithful, Pascha is not a fleeting moment of escape from the ugly reality of evil in the world; it is the unwavering conviction that Christ, who trampled down death by death and rose from the dead, is with us “always, to the close of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

Beloved brothers and sisters, such is once again this year the message of the resurrection from the most holy Apostolic and Patriarchal Ecumenical Throne, the sacred center of Orthodoxy, to all people: that Christ has risen and the power of death was abolished; the authority of the powerful over the weak has been destroyed. “Life reigns” and the nurturing love, profound mercy, and endless grace of the risen Christ cover the whole world, from one end to the other. It is sufficient for us to realize that Jesus Christ is the true light, that in Him is life, and that this life is the light of all people (cf John 1:3-4). This is our message to all political and religious leaders of the world.

Therefore, approach and receive the light from the unfading light of the Phanar, which as the light of Christ and the light of love shines upon all; in Him “there is no darkness” (cf 1 John 1:5). Let us hear this Gospel of joy and light; and let us Orthodox alleviate the pain of today's world with our own love and sacrifice.

Glory be to Him who bestows life, who has shown the light and love and peace to the world as well as to each one of us. Glory to Jesus Christ, the king of glory, the conqueror of death and champion of life.

At the Phanar, Holy Pascha 2016

Your fervent supplicant before the risen Christ,

✠ **BARTHOLOMEW**
Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome
and Ecumenical Patriarch

† Β Α Ρ Θ Ο Λ Ο Μ Α Ι Ο Σ
ΕΛΕΩΙ ΘΕΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ
ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΕΩΣ - ΝΕΑΣ ΡΩΜΗΣ
ΚΑΙ ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΣ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΗΣ
ΠΑΝΤΙ ΤΩΙ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΙ ΤΗΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ ΧΑΡΙΝ, ΕΙΡΗΝΗΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΛΕΟΣ
ΠΑΡΑ ΤΟΥ ΕΝΔΟΣΩΣ ΑΝΑΣΤΑΝΤΟΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ

Αδελφοί και τέκνα εν Κυρίω αγαπητά,

Όλοκαρδίως σᾶς ἀπευθύνομεν ἀπὸ τῆς ἑδρας τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου τὸν χαρμόσυνον χαιρετισμὸν «Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη!». Ἡ Ἀνάστασις τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἶναι τὸ κέντρον τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Πίστεώς μας. Χωρὶς τὴν Ἀνάστασιν ἡ πίστις ἡμῶν εἶναι «κενή» (Α΄ Κορ. ιε΄, 14). Ὁ Θεὸς Λόγος μὲ τὴν Ἀνάστασιν Του ἀφθαρτοποιήσε καὶ ἐθέωσε τὸν τετραυματισμένον καὶ ἀμαυρωμένον ἀπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν κατ' εἰκόνα Θεοῦ πλασθέντα ἄνθρωπον, καὶ ἔδωκεν εἰς αὐτὸν καὶ πάλιν τὴν δυνατότητα τοῦ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν, τοῦ ὁποίου ἀπεστερήθη διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς.

Τί σημαίνει, ὁμως, ἡ ἐορτὴ τοῦ Πάσχα, ἡ νίκη τῆς ζωῆς κατὰ τοῦ θανάτου, μέσα εἰς ἓνα κόσμον βίας καὶ πολέμων, ἐν ὀνόματι μάλιστα τῆς θρησκείας καὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ;

Πολλοὶ σοφοὶ προσεπάθησαν νὰ ἐξεύρουν λύσιν εἰς τὸ πρόβλημα τοῦ θανάτου καὶ νὰ τὸ ὑπερβούν διὰ διαφορῶν θεωριῶν. Ἡμεῖς οἱ Ὁρθόδοξοι Χριστιανοὶ ἐορτάζομεν τὴν ἀνάστασιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν καὶ κηρύσσομεν εὐθαρσῶς τὴν κατάργησιν τοῦ θανάτου. Γνωρίζομεν ὅτι χορηγὸς τῆς ζωῆς εἶναι ὁ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἐν τῷ Ὁποίῳ «ζωὴ ἦν» (Ἰωάν. α΄, 4). Ἐχομεν τὴν χαρποῖον ἐμπειρίαν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ὅτι ἐνίκηθη ὁ θάνατος διὰ τῆς Ἀναστάσεως τοῦ Χριστοῦ. «Χαρὰς τὰ πάντα πεπλήρωται, τῆς ἀναστάσεως τὴν πείραν εἰληφότα». Αὕτῃ ἡ πίστις καταυγάζει ὅλας τὰς ἐκφάνσεις τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ζωῆς, συμπυκνοῦται δὲ ἐν τῇ Θείᾳ Εὐχαριστίᾳ. Τὸ γεγονός ὅτι εἰς τὸν χριστιανικὸν κόσμον κυρίως ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία διέσωσε τὴν Θείαν Εὐχαριστίαν ὡς κέντρον τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τῆς πνευματικότητός της εἶναι ἀρρήκτως συνδεδεμένον μὲ τὸ ὅτι ἡ Ἀνάστασις εἶναι ὁ πυρὴν τῆς πίστεως, τῆς λατρείας καὶ τοῦ ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ ἠθους. Διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦτον ἡ εὐχαριστιακὴ λειτουργία εἶναι πάντοτε πανηγυρικὴ καὶ χαρμόσυνος καὶ συνδέεται πρωτίστως μὲ τὴν Κυριακὴν, τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς Ἀναστάσεως τοῦ Κυρίου.

Ἡ πλέον συγκλονιστικὴ ἔκφρασις καὶ ἐρμηνεία τῆς Ἀναστάσεως καὶ τῆς καινοποιητικῆς δυνάμεώς της εἶναι ἡ εἰκὼν τῆς καθόδου τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς τὸν Ἄδην ὅπως τὴν θαυμάζομεν εἰς τὴν ἐνταῦθα Μονὴν τῆς Χώρας. Ὁ Κύριος τῆς δόξης κατελθὼν μέχρις Ἄδου ταμείων καὶ συντρίψας τὰς Πύλας αὐτοῦ, ἀναδύεται νικηφόρος συνανιστῶν ἑαυτῷ τὸν Ἄδὰμ καὶ τὴν Εὐάν, ὀλόκληρον δηλαδὴ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον γένος ἀπ' ἀρχῆς καὶ μέχρι τῶν Ἐσχάτων. «Νῦν πάντα πεπλήρωται φωτός, οὐρανός τε καὶ γῆ καὶ τὰ καταχθόνια». Ἡ κτίσις διαβαίνει ἀπὸ τὸ ζοφερὸν βασίλειον τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὸ ἀνέσπερον φῶς τῆς Βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ὁ πιστός, Ἀναστάσεως κοινωνός, καλεῖται νὰ κηρύξη τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ἐλευθερίας «ἔως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς» (Πράξ. α΄, 8).

Ἡ Μήτηρ Ἐκκλησία, βιοῦσα τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ σταυροῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνα-στάσεως συγχρόνως, μᾶς καλεῖ σήμερον νὰ «προσέλθωμεν λαμπαδηφόροι» καὶ νὰ «συνεορτάσωμεν Πάσχα Θεοῦ τὸ σωτήριον».

Διότι, διὰ τῆς Ἀναστάσεως τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἐγίναμεν ἕνας λαὸς ἢ ἀνθρωπότης ἡνώθημεν εἰς ἓν σῶμα. Μὲ τὸν Σταυρὸν καὶ τὴν Ἀνάστασιν Του ὁ Χριστὸς ἐθανάτωσεν ὀριστικῶς τὴν ὑπάρχουσαν ἐχθραν. Τοιοῦτοτρόπως, ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία μας, ἡ Μία, Ἀγία, Καθολικὴ καὶ Ἀποστολικὴ Ἐκκλησία, εἶναι ἡ Ἐκκλησία τῆς συμφιλιώσεως τῶν πάντων, ἡ Ἐκκλησία τῆς ἀγάπης πρὸς πάντας, φίλους καὶ ἐχθρούς. Ὅλοι συμφιλιωμένοι, πλήρεις νέας ζωῆς, ζωῆς ἀληθινῆς, γινόμεθα συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων καὶ οἰκείοι τοῦ Θεοῦ (πρβλ. Ἐφ. β', 15-20).

Ἀτυχῶς, σήμερον ἡ τρομοκρατία, οἱ πόλεμοι καὶ γενικώτερον ἡ ἀφαίρεσις τῆς ζωῆς ἀνθρώπων συνεχίζονται. Ὁ θρήνος καὶ ἡ ἀγωνία τῶν θυμάτων, διαδιδόμενοι μάλιστα ταχύτατα διὰ τῶν συγχρόνων τεχνολογι-κῶν μέσων, διασχίζουν τὴν ἀτμόσφαιραν καὶ σπαράσσουν τὴν καρδίαν μας. Διὰ τοῦτο οἱ ἡγέται τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος, πολιτικοὶ καὶ πνευματικοὶ καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικοὶ, ἔχομεν καθήκον καὶ χρέος ἀγάπης νὰ ἐνεργῶμεν πᾶν ὅτι ἐνδείκνυται διὰ τὴν ἀποφυγὴν αὐτῶν τῶν ἐκρῦθμων καταστάσεων.

Ἐν μέσῳ αὐτοῦ τοῦ σημερινοῦ «κόσμου τοῦ παραλόγου», ἡμεῖς οἱ Ὁρθόδοξοι χριστιανοὶ καλούμεθα νὰ δώσωμεν τὴν καλὴν μαρτυρίαν τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς προσφορᾶς πρὸς τὸν συνάνθρωπον, ἀγάπης καὶ μόνον.

Τὸ Πάσχα δὲν εἶναι διὰ τοὺς Ὁρθοδόξους πιστοὺς μία στιγμιαία ἀπόδρασις ἀπὸ τὴν στυγνὴν πραγματικότητα τοῦ κακοῦ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, εἶναι ἡ ἀκλόνητος βεβαιότης ὅτι ὁ θανάτῳ θάνατον πατήσας καὶ ἀναστὰς ἐκ νεκρῶν Χριστὸς εἶναι μεθ' ἡμῶν «πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος» (Ματ. κη', 20).

Αὐτὸ, τέκνα καὶ ἀδελφοί, εἶναι καὶ ἐφέτος τὸ ἀναστάσιμον μῆνυμα τοῦ Ἁγιωτάτου Ἀποστολικοῦ καὶ Πατριαρχικοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Θρόνου, τοῦ Ἱεροῦ τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας Κέντρου, πρὸς ὅλους τοὺς συνανθρώπους μας: ὅτι ἀνέστη Χριστὸς καὶ κατήργηται τὸ κράτος τοῦ θανάτου ἡ τὸ κράτος τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ ἰσχυροῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀδυνατοῦ καὶ ὅτι μόνον «ζωὴ πολιτεύεται» καὶ ἀγάπης θαλπωρὴ καὶ ἐλέους ἄβυσσος καὶ Χάριτος ἀκενώτου τοῦ Ἀναστάντος Χριστοῦ, ἡ ὁποία καλύπτει πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην, ἀπ' ἄκρου εἰς ἄκρον ἄρκει οἱ ἄνθρωποι νὰ κατανοήσωμεν ὅτι ὁ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἶναι τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινὸν καὶ ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων (πρβλ. Ἰωάν. α', 3-4). Αὐτὸ εἶναι τὸ μῆνυμα ἡμῶν πρὸς πάντας τοὺς πολιτικοὺς καὶ πνευματικοὺς ἡγέτας τοῦ κόσμου τούτου.

Δεῦτε, λοιπόν, λάβετε, φῶς ἐκ τοῦ ἀνεσπέρου φωτὸς τοῦ Φαναρίου, τὸ ὁποῖον, ὡς φῶς Χριστοῦ, ὡς φῶς ἀγάπης, φαίνει πᾶσι καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ «σκοτία οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία» (πρβλ. Α' Ἰωάν. α', 5). Ἄς ἐνωτισθῶμεν, ἀδελφοὶ καὶ τέκνα, τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον τοῦτο τῆς χαρᾶς καὶ τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ ἄς ἀπαλύνωμεν οἱ Ὁρθόδοξοι τὸν πόνον τῆς συγχρόνου ἀνθρωπότητος, μὲ τὴν ἰδικὴν μας ἀγάπην καὶ θυσίαν.

Δόξα τῷ χορηγῷ τῆς ζωῆς, τῷ δείξαντι τὸ φῶς καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ τὴν εἰρήνην εἰς τὸν κόσμον καὶ εἰς ἕνα ἕκαστον τῶν ἀνθρώπων προσωπικῶς, δόξα τῷ Βασιλεῖ τῆς δόξης Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ, τῷ Νικητῇ τοῦ θανάτου καὶ ἀρχηγῷ τῆς ζωῆς.

Φανάριον, Ἅγιον Πάσχα, βίς

† Ὁ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως

διάπυρος πρὸς Χριστὸν Ἀναστάντα

εὐχέτης πάντων ὑμῶν.

Σημείωσις: Νὰ διαβαστεῖ ἀπὸ Ἀμβωνος ἀντὶ Κηρύγματος τὸ βράδυ τοῦ Μεγάλου Σαββάτου, 30 Ἀπριλίου 2016.