



## THE GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

### ARCHIEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

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#### Archiepiscopal Encyclical on the Feast of Great and Holy Pascha

May 2, 2021

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Holy Archdiocese of America.

My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

*Ἴδὸν σκοτία καὶ πρωῒ ... (ΕΘΘΙΝΟΝ Ζ', Ἦχος βαρὺς )*

*Behold the darkness yet the dawn... (EOTHINON VII, Grave Mode)*

How far we have come since Easter of last year! Those were dark days, when our passing of the light of the Resurrection had to be virtual, even if no less heartfelt. But as we all know, it is always darkest before the dawn. Thus, we behold in the hope of the recovery of our world from the pandemic, the glimmer of the dawning of faith and confidence for our collective future. This year, we will celebrate our Holy Pascha – perhaps not in the fullness of the pre-pandemic days, but certainly with a greater degree of freedom and in-person community. But let this not be an excuse for relaxing our vigilance. Our responsibility to be our brothers' and sisters' keeper and guardian abides.



Our anticipation of the rising of the Sun of Righteousness is within our hearts, like the little sun that Saint Symeon the New Theologian speaks of, which dawned inside of him. The darkness of night that is dispelled at first gradually gives way, shade by shade, until the brilliant solar orb overpowers the horizon. Every other star fades in the light of the one. This is also how the fullness of God Almighty overwhelms every shadow in our souls. Like a sleepless night of worry and troubled thoughts, the dark night of the soul can be very long indeed. But as the Psalmist says, “joy comes in the morning” (Psalm 29:5, LXX). And in the dawning of the Day of the Lord, every concern of this world pales before the glory of the world to come.

The Resurrection of our Lord is the triumph of light over darkness, of good over evil, of love over hate, and of life over death. Moreover, it is the dawn of a new humanity, the potential of every human being to become divine. As Saint Athanasios the Great says: “For He became a human being, so that we might made divine” (Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνήνθρωπίσεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν). The Lord did not rise from the dead only for Himself. He arose so that we might rise with Him, in this life and the next.

Therefore, my beloved Faithful, let us embrace the dawn that rises within us. Let us live in the light of Christ, a light filled with love and compassion for every creature. A light that passes no judgment on anyone. A light that is clear and transparent with honesty and humility. Let us witness to the truth that indeed: Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down upon death, and to those in the tombs He has granted life!

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη! Ἀληθῶς Ἀνέστη!

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

† Ἐλπίδοφορος

† ELPIDOPHOROS  
Archbishop of America