



Metropolitan Serapion

COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

DIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AND HAWAII

Paschal Message for the Feast of the Resurrection 2022

“He went out conquering and to conquer” (Rev. 6:2)

My Beloved, the Blessed Children of the Holy Church,

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

It is my pleasure to wish all of you a blessed Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Feast of the Resurrection is the feast of victory, because when our Lord Jesus Christ arose from the dead, He was victorious over death, sin, Satan, and the world. Indeed, “He went out conquering and to conquer” (Re 6:2).

Victory over death: Death entered into the world as a result of sin. God warned Adam that “in the day that you eat of it (the tree) you shall surely die” (Ge 2:17), but the first man disobeyed the commandment and ate of the tree of disobedience. Consequently, Adam fell, lost his state of grace, and plucked for himself and for the entire human race the sentence of death. Additionally, the human race became under bondage to death, as St. Paul explained, “We were dead in trespasses” (Eph 2:40). As a result, “death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Ro 5:12). However, Christ overturned the death sentence by conquering death through His Resurrection, and we say in the Paschal hymn, “By His death, He trampled death and to those in the tombs, He bestowed eternal life.” Moreover, death lost its dominion over mankind, because Christ “raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places” (Eph 2:6). Furthermore, death has become a passage for us to pass from this present life to another far better life, as expressed in the Litany of the Departed, “For there is no death for your servants, but a departure.” In 1 Corinthians 15, better known as the “Resurrection chapter,” St. Paul wrote, “Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” (1 Co 15:54-55).

Victory over sin: The sting of death is sin (1 Co 15:56), and death is understood as separation from God. Since God is the source of life, light, and holiness, therefore sin

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results in separation from the Life, the Light, and holiness. Without light in his life, man stumbled in the darkness and descended from one evil to another. Moreover, man was incapable of justifying himself, neither by his works nor by the works of the Law, because “they have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one” (Ro 3:12). Sin dwelt inside man, and his enslavement caused him to cry, “I am carnal, sold under sin” (Ro 7:14). However, through the sacrifice on the Cross, Christ, the Most Holy, completely reversed man’s condition, because “He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb 9:26). Consequently, Christ’s glorious Resurrection delivered man from the law of sin and saved the human race from the death sentence, as St. Paul wrote, “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death” (Ro 8:2). However, sin continues to separate man from God and leads to death, but repentance brings man back to God and leads to life. This concept is clearly illustrated in the Parable of the Prodigal Son when the father said, “For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found” (Lk 15:24).

Victory over the devil: The Fall of the first man was through the envy and deceit of the devil. But the fall was not limited only to Adam, because all mankind fell. However, the Father, in His love, sent His Only-Begotten Son to the world to deliver mankind from the servitude to the devil. In the Incarnation, the Son of God took our human nature, with a human soul, and accepted to be tempted by the devil, so that He may conquer Satan and grant us victory. Although Christ conquered the devil in the wilderness, yet He accomplished the greatest victory over the devil on the cross when “He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Php 2:8). Christ’s Glorious Resurrection and victory over the devil fulfilled the prophecy that “He shall bruise your head” (Ge 3:15).

Victory over the world: “The whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one” (1 Jn 5:19). The devil is the prince of this world, and the world has its own principles, ideas, and desires (lusts). However, victory over the world came through Christ’s Resurrection, and we are called to trust in His victory and have confidence in His words, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (Jn 16:33). Therefore, although we live in the world, yet “we know that we are of God” (1 Jn 5:19).

My Beloved,

Let us rejoice in the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and that we are raised with Him.

Let us rejoice, because our Lord Jesus Christ conquered death, sin, the devil, and the world, and bestowed upon us a new life.

Let us pray for the peace of the Holy Church and for our beloved father and shepherd, H.H. Pope Tawadros II. Let us pray for the repose of the blessed soul of Fr. Arsanious Wadid, who was martyred in Alexandria ,Egypt, as well as for his blessed family and congregation.

Let us pray for the peace of the whole world and especially for Russia and Ukraine. We ask God to grant comfort to the families of the victims, healing to the wounded, and safe return of the refugees to their homes.

Wishing you many happy returns.

Metropolitan Serapion