



Metropolitan Serapion

COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

DIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AND HAWAII

Paschal Message for the Feast of the Resurrection 2025

“He Saw and Believed” (Jn 20:8)

My Beloved, the Blessed Children of the Holy Church,

Christ is Risen, Truly Risen!

I am pleased to congratulate you all on the Glorious Feast of the Holy Resurrection and wish you a blessed feast, protected by the blessings of the Holy Resurrection.

Our celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from death is not limited to the day of the Feast’s celebration, but is extended throughout the Holy Fifty Days after the Feast. After Pentecost, we celebrate the Holy Resurrection every Sunday because Christ rose at the dawn of Sunday, which became the Day of the Lord—the Eighth Day, the day of new life—in the Church.

My Beloved,

The Gospel reading of the liturgy for the Feast of the Resurrection recalls how St. Peter and St. John came to believe in the Lord’s Resurrection. St. Mary Magdalene came to Simon Peter and John, “the other disciple, whom Jesus loved,” not to tell them about the Resurrection, but about the stealing of the Lord’s body. She said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him” (Jn 20:2). The two disciples, Peter and John, ran to the tomb, and what did they find? They found the empty tomb and saw only the linen cloths and the handkerchief that had been around the Lord’s head folded in a place by itself. St. John said of himself, “Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed” (Jn 20:8). What did he see? He did not see the Lord Jesus Christ nor an angel at the tomb, but he saw only an empty tomb, the linen cloths, and the handkerchief, and he believed! What did he believe? He believed the Lord had risen from the dead. For this reason, he added, “For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead” (Jn

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20:9). How astonishing it is that the signs of death—the empty tomb, the linen cloths, and the handkerchief—all became signs of life! Indeed:

- + The death of the Lord Jesus Christ bestows life upon the whole world, for He “trampled down death by death, and upon those in the tombs, He bestowed eternal life.”

- + The death of the Lord Jesus Christ is a life-giving death, for it is a victorious death.

- + It is the death of ultimate obedience as St. Paul said that the Lord “humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Php 2:8).

- + The sin of Adam led to the death of defeat for all humanity, but Christ’s obedience and His death on the cross led to life for all humanity. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive” (1 Co 15:22).

- + The death of Christ and His Resurrection has transformed death from a curse to a blessing. As St. John witnessed in the Book of Revelation, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them’” (Re 14:13).

- + The death of Christ on the cross transformed the cross from being a curse and shame, as it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree” (Ga 3:13). Now, the cross is glorification, as St. Paul said, “But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Ga 6:14).

- + The death of Christ and His Resurrection have transformed death from something fearful to something that people desire, as St. Paul said, “having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better” (Php 1:23).

My Beloved,

Our celebration of the Resurrection is a celebration of our Lord’s power to turn death to life and punishment to salvation:

- + Our powerful Lord, Who turned the five loaves and two fish into a banquet in the desert that nourished five thousand people.

- + Our powerful Lord, Who turned the thorn in the flesh of St. Paul to a source of power and consolation. “For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Co 12:10).

Our powerful Lord is capable of helping us in our hardships and opening to us closed doors, for “[I]f God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son,

but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Ro 8:31–32).

Let us be joyful in the Resurrection of our Lord and rejoice in carrying the cross, for “if indeed we suffer with Him, we may also be glorified together” (Ro 8:17).

We pray for the peace of the Church and for our beloved father, His Holiness Pope Tawadrous II.

We pray for the peace of the whole world.

We pray for the souls of those who departed and that the Lord may grant their families His heavenly comfort and peace.

We pray for those who are suffering or in hardships.

We pray that our risen Lord may fill our hearts with the joy of His Holy Resurrection.

Wishing you many happy and joyful returns.

Metropolitan Serapion