

Encyclical

for the All-Glorious Resurrection of Our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ

“Be Crucified with Him so as to Rise with Him”

Our Becoming Christ Through Partaking in Christ’s Sufferings

*“To the extent that Christians suffer for Christ, they themselves
become christs.”*

St. Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain¹

Beloved brothers in Christ and children in the risen Lord:

a. “From the Realm of Darkness” “into the Kingdom of the Son”

LET US RENDER THANKS to our God and Father, perfect in goodness, Who “*delivered us from the realm of darkness and translated us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love!*”²

During the period of the Holy Fast we have partaken in the Passion of our incarnate God; today we partake in His Resurrection. Yesterday we were crucified with our Christ; today we are glorified with the Lord of glory. Yesterday we were put to death with our Savior; today we are brought to life together with the Life-Giver. Yesterday we were buried with our Lord; today we rise with Him.

Blessed be the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit!

Before the Divine Resurrection of the God-Man, our nature was in the “*realm of darkness.*”² That is, we were not simply “*in the dark,*” but we were captives and enslaved by “*the powers of darkness,*”³ by the evil spirits who had unlimited power over us.

Man, the “*possession*” of God “*highest in dignity and nearest of kin,*”⁴ according to St. Gregory the Theologian, had been rendered useless by sin, deception, disgrace, and death.

But blessed be our Man-Befriending Lord, Who not only redeemed us from the “*realm of darkness*”² by the Resurrection, but Who brought us over into the “*Kingdom*”² of His Beloved Son, into the Communion of the Light, Who



revealed to us **His Light-Bearing and Light-Imparting Church...!**

In fact, Divine Loving-kindness “*translated*”² us from the darkness into the **Kingdom of Light**, from deception into the **Truth**, from disgrace into **Glory**, from death to **Life**, from the communion of Satan into communion of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit “*through the Church.*”⁵

Thus the exaltation of the children of our **Light-Giving Church** is justified, as they chant today with such eloquence and splendor: “*Yesterday I was buried with Thee, O Christ; today I rise as Thou art risen; I was crucified with Thee yesterday; do Thou Thyself glorify me, O Savior, in Thy Kingdom.*”⁶

Beloved children in the Lord:

b. “The Fellowship of His Sufferings”

THE HOLY FATHERS teach us that in order for our life as Christians to lead us into the **Light** and the **Glory of the Kingdom**, it must be a constant participation in the Passion and the Cross of our Lord. It must be “*the fellowship of His Sufferings*” and “*being made conformable to His Death.*”⁷

“*Be crucified,*” St. Gregory the Theologian urges us, “*be mortified, be buried with Him eagerly, so that you also may rise and be glorified and reign with Him, see God as He is and be seen by Him, Who is worshiped and glorified in Trinity.*”⁸

If our heart truly longs to be built on the foundation of our Lord and the Apostles, so that we become “*lively stones*”⁹ of the Divine building of the Church, then we must travel the path that they did, that is, the **Cross and Martyrdom**.

It is indispensable, according to St. Macarios of Egypt, for you “*to be crucified with Him that was crucified,*” “*to suffer with Him that suffered,*” so that “*you be glorified with Him that is glorified,*”¹⁰ our Savior and God.

Indeed, our participation through our deeds in the Passion and the Cross of our Lord is so necessary for us to become “*christs,*”¹¹ because this is the only proof that we truly believe in His Resurrection.

“*For he especially believes that Christ hath risen,*” says St. John Chrysostomos, “*who hath fellowship with Him in His sufferings.*”¹²

Beloved brethren in Christ:

c. The “Power of His Resurrection”

THE RESURRECTION of our Savior is not simply an historical event; it is also the **New Life of Grace**, which is renewed in our hearts and strengthens us on the path of the Cross and the Passion.

Here there is a **supernatural mystery**: while we are still walking the painful path of repentance, because this is fitting “*for all, sinners and righteous, at*

all times,¹³ while we are still striving and struggling for purification, because “*struggle is the mother of sanctity*,”¹⁴ while this is still in process, at the same time “*we know*” in practice and experience the renewing “*power of the Resurrection*”¹⁵ of our Lord.

Thus, while through the **Cross of Repentance and Struggle** we are striving for the **Glory of the Kingdom**, we realize that the Resurrection is already present; it is the constantly active “*power*”¹⁵ of the Uncreated Grace in our life in Christ.

And to the extent that we endure, with time the power of the Holy Spirit enters into our heart and becomes a “*soul in the soul and spirit in the spirit*”;¹⁶ then we live the great blessing of having “*the Divine Spirit*” as “*the life of [our] soul*,”¹⁷ then we are in reality “*resurrected*” and “*glorified*.”

“*And when your soul communes with the Spirit*,” says St. Macarios of Egypt, “*and the heavenly soul enters into your soul, then you are a perfect man in God and an heir and son*”¹⁸ of God.

Beloved children in the Lord:

PONDERING the **Light** and the **Glory of the Kingdom** of Christ our God, let us be eager to travel the **Way of the Cross**, drawing strength from the “*Heavenly Nourishment of the Spirit*”¹⁹ and worshipping our Savior, Who is risen from the dead and calling us from the darkness “*into His wondrous Light*.”²⁰

To Whom be all glory and thanksgiving with the Father and the Holy Spirit, unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!

Holy Pascha of the Year of Salvation 2004

Your intercessor before the risen Lord,
† *Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili*
President of the Holy Synod in Resistance

1. St. Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain, Commentary on Philippians 3:10. See “We also become christs, insofar as we suffer” (St. Theophylactos of Bulgaria, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. CXXIV, col. 1184C).
2. Colossians 1:12-13.
3. See Ephesians 6:12.
4. St. Gregory the Theologian, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. XXXV, col. 397B.
5. See Ephesians 3:10.
6. St. John of Damascus, Canon of Pascha, Ode 3.
7. See Philippians. 3:10.
8. St. Gregory the Theologian, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. XXXVI, cols. 332C-333A.
9. See I St. Peter 2:5.
10. St. Macarios of Egypt, Homily 12, §5.
11. St. Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain, Commentary on Philippians 3:10.
12. St. John Chrysostomos, *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. LXII, col. 266.

13. **St. Isaac of Syria**, Homily 55 (Greek printed edition, p. 220).
14. *Idem*, Homily 16 (p. 56).
15. See Philippians. 3:10.
16. **St. Macarios of Egypt**, Homily 12, §16.
17. *Idem*, Homily 30, §6.
18. *Idem*, Homily 32, §6
19. *Idem*, Homily 1, §12.
20. See I St. Peter 2:9.