

ENCYCLICAL

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

The preternatural joy of the *Theotokos* at the Resurrection of her Son

“I shall rise, and as God I shall exalt those who magnify Thee”



Beloved Brothers and Sisters, Children in the Risen Lord:

I**N THE** Canon of Pascha, replete as it is with light, joy, and life, the Divinely-inspired hymnist addresses the All-Holy Mother of our Savior and exhorts her decorously, but ardently:

“Do thou exult, O pure Theotokos, in the rising of Him Whom Thou didst bear.”¹

The immaculate Mother of God surely rejoices with inexpressible joy and is gladdened by preternatural exultation, today, at the Resurrection of Her Son, transmitting to us, the children of the Church, Her mystical and ineffable joy and exultation.

Indeed, the Most Blessed Maiden has many reasons to rejoice exceedingly and to be exceedingly glad: for She first received the good news of the Resurrection of Her Son and God; for She first beheld Her Risen Son; for on Her account, the life-bearing Tomb of Her Son was

opened; for She heard the glad tidings of the rising of Her Son from Gabriel, the annunciatory Archangel.²

And still beyond this, the joy and exultation of Our Lady, the *Theotokos* on this all-joyous day, if I may so put it, is in some sense increased and multiplied, because She imparts Her indescribable gladness and it is thus distributed to us Christians, Her children by Grace.

It was fitting that, on Her account and for Her joy, the Sepulchre, flowing forth with life, should be opened and that all of the Mysteries of the Resurrection and the Kingdom should be revealed first to Her; and that by means of Her, all of the joyous and gladsome tidings of our “christification” and deification should be subsequently communicated to us, as well.

“Everything in Heaven above and on earth below,” say the Holy Fathers. “was opened first for Her, and through Her for us.”³

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Beloved children in the Lord:

YESTERDAY, in the most compunctious Canon of Great Saturday, the sacred hymnographer presented Our Lord consoling His All-Holy Mother:

“Bemoan Me not, O Mother, beholding in the Tomb the Son Whom thou didst conceive without seed in Thy womb; for I shall rise and be glorified, and as God I shall unceasingly exalt those who magnify Thee with faith and yearning.”⁴

Lament not, O My Most Sweet Mother, for after I have risen and have been glorified,

“as God, I shall unceasingly exalt with glory those who magnify Thee, My Most Holy Mother, with yearning and faith; for Thy glory is Mine own, and the honor of the Mother is the honor of her Son.”⁵

O wealth of blessings and ocean of Grace! The Tomb that received God has been opened and the “Mystical Paradise” of the *Theotokos* has been disclosed; all that is good and salvific has emanated from the life-gushing Sepulchre, and “all that is good has been bestowed upon us through Our Lady, the *Theotokos*.”⁶

And how, O unwedded Bride, how is it possible to *magnify* Thee for the multitude of Thy benefactions towards us, when “*every tongue is at a loss to praise Thee as is due; when even a spirit from on high is awestruck to hymn thee, O Theotokos*”?⁷

The Mother of God replies to us through the Holy Fathers: When we *magnify* the all-venerable Maiden, it is through Her that Our Lord magnifies, exalts, and glorifies us, in the Light of His Resurrection, “*with godly and noble thoughts; with lofty words and encomia befitting the Mother of God; with deeds pleasing to Her majesty as the Mother of God; for thus is the Divinely-magnified Mother of God magnified.*”⁸

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Beloved children in the Lord:

POLYMORPHOUS sin—in thoughts, words, and deeds—holds our *mind captive* and forcibly draws it *into the disobedience of Satan*, who subsequently *darkens* and *deadens* it; however, “**the mind of man is a holy place and a temple of God,**”⁹ that is, it belongs exclusively to the risen Jesus.

Let us pray continually to the Immaculate *Theotokos*, unceasingly *magnifying* Her with sacred zeal, that Her preternatural joy at the Resurrection of her Son might be instilled in our souls, that our *minds* might thereby be freed from the grievous *captivity* of Satan and “**subjugated to the [glorious and blessed] obedience of Christ,**”¹⁰ and that we might be illumined and vivified by the constant *remembrance of God*, by works of repentance, and by frequent communion of the Immaculate Mysteries,

such that the Father should be glorified in us through the Son, in the Holy Spirit, the All-Holy, Superessential, and Most Regal Trinity, unto Whom are due all glory, worship, and thanksgiving.

Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!

Holy Pascha for the Year of Salvation 2006

Your Suppliant Before the Risen Lord,
† *Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili,*
President of the Holy Synod in Resistance

Notes

1. Paschal Canon, Ode 9, *Heirmos*.
2. See St. Gregory Palamas, “Homily XVIII, ‘On the Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearers,’” *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. CLI, cols. 236-248.
3. *Ibid.*, col. 241C.
4. Canon of Great Saturday, Ode 9, *Heirmos*.
5. St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite, *Ἑορτοδρόμιον* [*Festal Sermonary*] (Venice: 1836), p. 412.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
7. First Canon of Theophany, Ode 9, *Heirmos*.
8. St. Nikodemos, *Ἑορτοδρόμιον*, p. 52.
9. St. Maximos the Confessor, *Second Century on Love*, §31, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. XC, col. 993C.
10. Cf. II Corinthians 10:5.