

REPUBLIC OF GREECE



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To be read in church

Protocol no. γ-1906

**PASCHAL ENCYCLICAL
YEAR OF SALVATION:
2014
To the entire Church**

*“Today the whole creation is glad and doth rejoice, for
Christ is risen, and Hades hath been despoiled!”
“This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us re-
joice and be glad therein!”*

Beloved Children in the Lord,

During today’s holy, brilliant, and light-bearing feast, the joy and rejoicing of our Lord’s Resurrection fill the hearts of all Orthodox Christians, so that they join their hymns of glory with those of the Holy Angels in heaven and with all creation in unceasing hymnody and ineffable thanksgiving.

The despoiling of Hades and the victory of life over death in our Resurrected Savior Christ Jesus is a prelude to the chosen and holy day, the queen and lady: **the Feast of feasts and Festival of festivals, Pascha, the Lord’s Pascha!**

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However, what precedes this Grace? The **Mystery of the Cross**: “For behold, through the Cross joy hath come to the whole world!”

Our Lord hastened to fulfill the work of our salvation, having often foretold His Divine Passion, the Cross, and His glorious Resurrection. To His Passion he went voluntarily, drinking the “cup” of death in obedience, in order to redeem all man-

kind from sin, the devil, and death. He truly gave up the ghost on the Cross, and encountered the “corruption” of death, in the sense that His Soul, united hypostatically with His Divinity, was parted from His Body, also hypostatically united with His Divinity, thus taking up His abode, “in hope,” in the God-receiving Tomb.

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Just as His Soul was not abandoned in Hades, neither did His flesh see corruption, as the Psalmist says. The Body of the Master rested for a short while in the tomb without suffering any corruption and decay, and His Soul was translated to Hades to free those who had been held there from ages past.

The **quicken**ing of His Body after three days through the return of His immaculate Soul, namely, His **Resurrection**, was not a feat rendered on His behalf, but **in order that this good deed might be imparted “to the entire nature of man”** (St. Cyril of Alexandria).

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Wherefore, the common jubilation of the Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity at the accomplishment of our salvation is also the common jubilation of the Church of Christ, which is transmitted to each of its honorable members.

All those of the Church of Christ, leaping with joy, praise the only blessed and most glorious God of our Fathers, for He is the cause of the death of death, the destruction of Hades, and the beginning of another life, namely, an eternal one.

The birth-pangs of death are loosed, death does not separate us from Christ, we no longer depart into dark Hades, but into heavenly and brilliant mansions, to dwell there eternally full of every good!

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However, are we living all of these things even now, as a pledge of eternal inheritance? Do we believe in an Orthodox manner, without innovation, and do we keep the holy commandments, so that we may be deemed worthy of the gifts of the Resurrection?

The Lord our God encourages each of us, as He encouraged His friend, the righteous Abraham: **“be well-pleasing before me, and be blameless”!** And St. James the Brother of the Lord tells every faithful person: **“to keep himself unspotted from the world.”**

The **joy of the Resurrection** and the living experience of **Resurrectional hope** form the connection between our sound faith (Orthodoxy) and its practical confirmation in our lives (Orthopraxis). Proportionate to our repentance, victory over the passions, cleansing from sin, liberation from the bonds of the evil one, and worthy and frequent partaking of the Immaculate Mysteries, we receive the grace and joy of the victory of the Resurrection in hope of life eternal.

From the Empty Tomb there have sprung forth **hope** and **joy**, and there ever spring forth peace, reconciliation, union in truth and love, communion of life, and a foretaste of things heavenly.

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Beloved and dearest children in the Risen Lord,

Just recently our Lord deemed us worthy to taste a **first resurrection** by way of the gift of **unity**, in our Genuine Orthodox Church, of brethren who were heretofore separated, from near and far, for the reinforcement of the bonds of truth and love and in hope of reproofing the heresy and apostasy of ecumenism in our apocalyptic times. May this engagement in the Resurrection be blessed, and may it expand ever more greatly, that none should remain a prisoner in the hell of the impassioned enmities of this world of corruption, division, isolation, and disintegration.

May our Resurrectional hope make our Church radiant and guide all of our steps to the safe harbor of sanctification and salvation, to the Glory of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!

Holy Pascha 2014

THE HOLY SYNOD

The Archbishop

† KALLINIKOS of Athens

The Members

† AKAKIOS of Attica and Diauleia

† MAXIMOS of Thessalonica and Demetrias

† ATHANASIOS of Larisa and Platamo

- † JUSTIN of Euripos and Euboea
- † GERONTIOS of Piraeus and Salamina
- † CHRYSOSTOMOS of Attica and Boeotia
- † MOSES of Toronto
- † DEMETRIUS of America
- † CHRYSOSTOMOS of Etna
- † CYPRIAN of Oropos and Phyle
- † GREGORY of Christianoupolis
- † PHOTIOS of Marathon
- † SERGIOS of Portland
- † AMBROSE of Philippi
- † AMBROSE of Methone
- † MICHAEL of Nora
- † SILVANO of Luni
- † CLEMENT of Gardikion
- † THEODOSIOS of Bresthena
- † CHRISTODOULOS of Theoupolis
- † AUXENTIOS of Photike