



Church of the **G**enuine **O**rthodox **C**hristians of **G**reece
The **H**oly **S**ynod

Protocol no. 2697

To be read in Church

**RESURRECTIONAL (PASCHAL)
MESSAGE FOR 2018**

*“Fear not: I am the first and the last; I am He that liveth, and was dead;
and, behold, I am alive unto the ages of ages”
(Revelation 1:17–18).*

Beloved Fathers and Brethren, children in the Risen Lord:

Our Lord began His preaching with the call to repentance, for His Kingdom (St. Matthew 4:23) had come. It was this Kingdom that His Holy Apostles preached, in accordance with His commandment, and for which He taught to us to pray and entreat: “Thy Kingdom come.”

His Kingdom is His Holy Church, which He acquired and purchased with His all-holy Blood and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, being its Head. Through the Orthodox Church, our Lord’s salvific work is continued, Divine Truth is preached, and the faithful are sanctified in the struggle and the journey toward the eternal Kingdom of the Triune God in the Heavens.

For the sake of the establishment and increase of His Church the Lord Jesus Christ taught His Disciples and Apostles after His Resurrection, “...being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). This was to be realized with the coming of the Holy Spirit, when the Holy Apostles would be endued with the power of Grace from on high (St. Luke 24:49) and, as spiritual leaders and dignitaries of the Church, would be witnesses of the Resurrection “unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

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Through the Church, there has been revealed to the world “the mystery

of God" (Revelation 10:7), which reached its culmination upon the Cross, on dread Golgotha, when our Lord, according to His human nature, voluntarily accepted a most ignoble death in order to defeat and utterly to vanquish the hostile Devil and to grant us life and incorruption through His glorious Resurrection.

Loathsome Satan has been deceived: "He received a body and, lo, he encountered God. He received earth, and, behold, he came face to face with Heaven. He received that which he saw and succumbed to that which he did not see," as the Divine Chrysostomos pellucidly affirms.

Within His Church, Christ grants healing and salvation, by means of the holy virtues and the holy Mysteries, but a ruthless warfare is waged by the Devil and his minions, unbelievers and heretics, against the Church and Her true members, that Her saving work be impeded and even prove vain. This warfare will be conducted relentlessly, and will in fact increase in intensity. The Lord, however, will come triumphant, strong, and mighty, in order to bring just recompense and fully to elucidate this "mystery." What is absolutely certain is that the final victory belongs to Him and to all who are with Him. For this reason, He both enlivens and emboldens us, emphasizing to each one of us, "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive unto the ages of ages" (Revelation 1:17-18).

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We, the least, as members of the Holy Orthodox Church, are in a particularly advantageous position in this world: "For our conversation is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20). We Orthodox Christians are mystically linked to our Savior in the Heavens, and await His coming thence as Judge and Redeemer. We are not like the unbelievers, who are established, not in the truth, but in their earthly power; they are lamentably deceived when they think that they can have recourse solely, as they suppose, to their delusion, falsehood, and unrighteousness. We are not like the weak and unstable reed shaken by the maelstrom of this world and of our unbelieving persecutors. We have a Savior in Heaven, as well as invincible, all-powerful, and ever-ready allies to help us: our All-Holy Guardian Leader, the trophy-bearing Chief Commanders of the Bodiless Hosts, and the glorious Saints of our Faith! These can intercede when we call upon them with living faith that they might protect us in every difficult circumstance.

And when it still seems that our Risen Lord does not intervene, then

let us learn that this does not come about from inability or indifference, but because it must be so. He permits iniquity to rise up, and it seems that the so-called powers of Antichrist are gaining ground: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still" (Revelation 22:11). And this, in order that we, the faithful, might show patience and struggle until death, in order to receive the wreath of victory from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who calls us to be crucified with Him, that He may grant us the eternal Life and Kingdom.

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Children in the Risen Lord:

Let us not give in and let us not lose heart over all of the unpleasant and menacing things that are going on around us; rather, let us renew our faith and confidence in victory over the passions and over all enemies, visible and invisible, through God's invincible protection and succor, proclaiming in all directions: "God is with us; understand, ye nations, and submit yourselves, for God is with us"; and, moreover, singing the resurrectional hymn of victory, "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!"

Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!

Holy Pascha, 2018

With paternal best wishes and the blessing of
† Archbishop Kallinikos of Athens
and the Members of the Holy Synod