



ANNUNCIATION GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

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April 24, 2022

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Χριστός Ανέστη! Αληθώς Ανέστη!

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

I pray this message finds you all well and healthy.

We have the blessing again this ecclesiastical year to live the life-giving Resurrection of our Messiah and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, whose human-divine nature is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. He brings eternal life to whoever is baptized in the Holy Trinity and whoever believes in Him and seeks to do His Will. As a sinless, perfect Man and perfect God, Christ is the lover of mankind and a caring, forgiving and comforting Savior who died on the cross so that through His sacrifice we can all share in His divinity and His union with the Holy Trinity and be granted eternal life.

During our 7-week journey of Great Lent, during which we fasted not only from food but, also, from our sins and participated in intense prayer, we have striven to achieve the personal crucifixion of our individual passions. After our journey, we hopefully are in the position to personally experience Christ's arrest, Divine Passion and willing Crucifixion of our salvation these last few days of Holy Week.

With our spiritual weapons of fasting, prayer and almsgiving each one of us is helped to acknowledge and discover, through our self-introspection, our sinful habits in thought, word and deed. It is through our true repentance and through our cleansing participation in the Sacrament of Holy Confession, that, by the grace of God, we are renewed and rebaptized and can live in harmony with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ with joy, peace and love in the glorious Resurrection of our Messiah.

Currently we are all living through this post-Covid-19 pandemic that has not only affected our health and physical state but, also, our social state through, in some cases, compulsory isolation and separation from families, friends, relatives, neighbors and social services.

During this time, our greatest fear of not getting infected by our fellow human beings or not infecting others has resulted in not only wearing masks but, also, social-distancing. It is the first time in recent history that there is a division within some nations between vaccinated and non-vaccinated individuals. In some countries, non-vaccinated individuals have even been punished economically for choosing to not get vaccinated (either through a fine or a reduction of their pension, such as is the case in Greece).

These actions have revealed themselves to be not an action of democracy but, rather, an action of repression. Just as God has granted each of us free will, so should all humans have the option to freely choose whether or not to be vaccinated, because each of our bodies are a temple of God (1 Corinthians 6:19–20) for which each of us alone are held morally responsible. Forcing people to undergo a medical procedure is unethical and removes their moral agency, even if some people have freely made the decision to undergo the very same medical procedure. And I say this from the point of view as someone who has been vaccinated. Social economic penalties and threatening actions should never be applied to whoever decides to honor his or her free will.

Let us all live Christ's Resurrection in our hearts, minds, bodies and souls to the point that our Resurrected Christ will always be for each of us our truthful companion and spiritual captain as we weather the storms of the spiritual challenges of this life as we journey towards the Heavenly Kingdom. Let us all seek forgiveness from each other and apologize to each other for any mistakes that we may have made to cause physical, mental and/or spiritual harm, and let us take the opportunity to start all over again as we seek fellowship, union, love and philanthropy with all. Let us all wish wholeheartedly to each other "Christ is Risen," "Truly He is Risen," and let God, our Resurrected Christ be the Way of our lives for the salvation of our souls and for the spiritual prosperity and the mutual wellbeing of all.

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen! May our Messiah and Resurrected Christ keep you all safe and healthy! With these thoughts, we pray for you all to have a joyful, spiritually-edifying and faith-filled Pascha as we celebrate the life-giving Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Yours in our Risen Christ,

+Rev. Economos Fr. Georgios Manias,
Presbytera Maria, Michael Angel & Vasilios Fanourios

