

Constantinople. Notably, it depicts the resplendent and risen Lord of Glory lifting Adam and Even out of their tombs by their wrists, and not their hands. This dramatic detail of humankind's rescue from death and Hades manifests that, as the Apostle Paul says, "by grace we are saved" (Ephesians 2:8). It is not by our efforts that Eternal Life is won for us. It is the Sacrifice of the Cross and its only possible conclusion – the Resurrection – that usher us into the Mansions of Heaven. God holds onto us with His fierce and glorious love! He will not let us go, and He does not depend on our strength to hold onto Him. For again, as the Apostle says, even "the weakness of God is mightier than any human power" (I Corinthians 1:25).

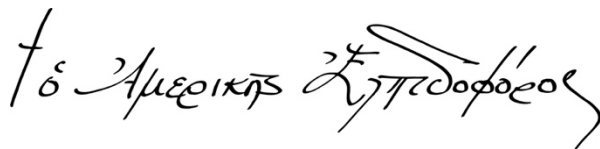
My dear Christians,

If this is how God loves us, how should we love one another? In this season of Pascha, when we sing: "let us forgive everything in the Resurrection" (*Doxastikon* of the Matins), what possible negativity could we hold on to? Rather, let us take hold of one another and lift up each other through love, compassion, forgiveness and mercy. For God lifted us up first, so that we might share the exaltation of love with everyone around us. Because only then can we sing with true integrity and unfettered joy the gladsome Paschal anthem:

*Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down upon death,
and to those in the tombs He has granted life!*

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη! Christ is Risen!

Holy Pascha 2025,

A handwritten signature in Greek script, which reads "+ ΕΛΠΙΔΟΦΩΡΟΣ". The signature is written in a fluid, cursive style with dark ink.

+ ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America