



**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL**

Prot. No. 135/2025

Archiepiscopal Encyclical on Great and Holy Pascha, 2025

Holy Pascha, 2025

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Holy Archdiocese of America:

*You raised with Yourself the whole race of Adam,
when You arose from the tomb.
(Canon of Pascha, Ode 6)*

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη! Christ is Risen!

When our Lord Jesus Christ arose from the dead, not a single witness is recorded as having seen this most monumental event in the history of the human race. His crucifiers, who posted sentries to ensure that no one tampered with the seal that had been set upon the Stone that covered His tomb, only felt the earthquake and bore false witness against the truth of His Resurrection (Matthew 27:62-66). But the Lord had no need to break that seal or roll away any stone, for His Arising from the grave transcended all categories of human understanding. Rather, the earthquake and the stone's rolling away by the angel happened for the astonished guards, the myrrhbearers and His perplexed disciples.

The Church, in Her divinely inspired wisdom, has given us a picture of this moment with the icon that is simply named, "Anastasis." The most famous version of this icon in the world, which has inspired countless reproductions, is in the *Parecclesion* of the Chora Church in

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).

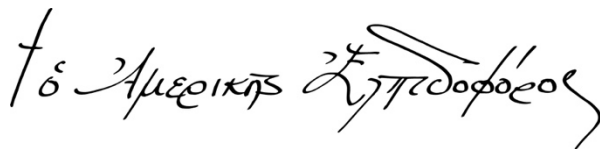
My dear Christians,

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,



† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America



ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΕΓΚΥΚΛΙΟΣ

Αριθμ. Πρωτ.: 135/2025

Αρχιεπισκοπική Έγκύκλιος για τὸ Ἅγιο Πάσχα.

Ἅγιο Πάσχα 2025

Πρὸς τοὺς Σεβασμιωτάτους καὶ Θεοφιλεστάτους Ἀρχιερεῖς, τοὺς Εὐλαβεστάτους Ἱερεῖς καὶ Διακόνους, τὶς Πρεσβυτέρους καὶ τὶς Διακόνισσες, τοὺς Μοναχοὺς καὶ τὶς Μοναχές, τοὺς Προέδρους καὶ τὰ Μέλη τῶν Κοινοτικῶν Συμβουλίων, τοὺς Ἐντιμολογιωτάτους Ἀρχοντες τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου, τὰ μέλη τῆς Ἡγεσίας τῶν 100, τὰ Ἡμερήσια καὶ Ἀπογευματινὰ Σχολεῖα, τὶς Φιλοπτώχους Ἀδελφότητες, τὴ Νεολαία, τὶς Ἑλληνορθόδοξες Ὁργανώσεις καὶ ὁλόκληρο τὸ Χριστεπώνυμο πλήρωμα τῆς Ἱερᾶς Αρχιεπισκοπῆς Ἀμερικῆς.

«Συνανέστησας παγγενὴ τὸν Ἀδάμ, ἀναστὰς ἐκ τοῦ τάφου».

(Κανόνας τοῦ Πάσχα, ὠδή 6^η).

Προσφιλεῖς ἀδελφοὶ καὶ ἀδελφές ἐν τῷ ἀναστάντι Χριστῷ,

Χριστὸς ἀνέστη!

Τὸ μέγιστο γεγονός ἐπὶ τὴν ἱστορία τοῦ ἀνθρώπινου γένους, δηλαδὴ ἡ ἀνάστασις ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν τοῦ Κυρίου μας Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ συντελέσθηκε χωρὶς τὴν παρουσία μαρτύρων τῇ νύχτᾳ ἐκείνῃ. Οἱ σταυρωτές του, ποὺ ἔβαλαν φρουροὺς γιὰ νὰ σιγουρευτοῦν ὅτι κανεὶς δὲν θὰ ἀγγίξει τὸν σφραγισμένο λίθο ποὺ σκέπαζε τὸν τάφο του, ἔνιωσαν μόνο τὸν σεισμὸ καὶ ἔδωσαν ψευδῆ μαρτυρία γιὰ τὰ γεγονότα ἐκείνης τῆς νύχτας (Ματθ. κζ' 62-66). Ὅμως ὁ ἀναστημένος Κύριος δὲν χρειαζόταν νὰ ἀποκυλήσει τὸ λίθο καὶ νὰ παραβιάσει τὴ σφραγίδα, καθὼς ἡ ἀνάστασίς του ὑπερβαίνει κάθε ἀνθρώπινη λογικὴ κατανόηση. Ὁ σεισμὸς ἔγινε καὶ ὁ λίθος ἀποκυλίστηκε ἀπὸ τὸν ἄγγελο ἀποκλειστικὰ καὶ μόνο γιὰ τοὺς ἀποσβολωμένους στρατιῶτες, τὶς μυροφόρες καὶ τοὺς ἀπορημένους μαθητές του.

Ἡ Ἐκκλησία, μὲ τὴ θεόπνευστη σοφία της, μᾶς προσφέρει μία ἀναπαράσταση αὐτῆς τῆς στιγμῆς στὴν εἰκόνα ποὺ φέρει τὸν τίτλο «ἡ ἀνάστασις». Ἡ διασημότερη ἐκδοχὴ αὐτῆς τῆς εἰκόνας παγκοσμίως, ἡ ὁποία ἔχει ἐμπνεύσει ἀναρίθμητα ἀντίγραφα, βρίσκεται στὸ παρεκκλήσιο τῆς Μονῆς τῆς Χώρας στὴν Κωνσταντινούπολη. Ἐκεῖ, ὁ ἑνδοξος καὶ ἀναστημένος Κύριος τῆς Δόξης ἀνασύρει τὸν Ἀδὰμ καὶ τὴν Εὐὰ ἀπὸ τοὺς τάφους τους, κρατώντας τους ὄχι ἀπὸ τὸ χέρι, ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ τὸν καρπὸ. Αὐτὴ ἡ δραματικὴ λεπτομέρεια τῆς λύτρωσης τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀπὸ τὸ θάνατο καὶ τὸν Ἄδη δείχνει, ὅπως λέει ὁ Ἀπόστολος Παῦλος, ὅτι «τῇ γὰρ χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι» (Ἐφ. 2, 8). Διότι δὲν ἀπόκειται στὴ δική μας προσπάθεια νὰ κερδίσουμε τὴν αἰώνια ζωὴ. Εἶναι ἡ θυσία τοῦ σταυροῦ μὲ κατάληξή της τὴν ἀνάσταση, ἡ ὁποία μᾶς εἰσάγει στὶς μονὲς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. Ὁ Θεὸς μᾶς κρατᾷ μὲ φωτεινὴ καὶ δυνατὴ ἀγάπη! Δὲ μᾶς ἀφήνει νὰ φύγουμε ἀπὸ κοντά του καὶ δὲν ἐξαρθᾶται ἀπὸ τὴν δική μας δύναμη γιὰ νὰ κρατηθοῦμε κοντά του. Γιατί, ὅπως ξαναλέει ὁ ἀπόστολος, «τὸ ἀσθενὲς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἰσχυρότερον τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐστὶ» (Α΄ Κορ. 1, 25).

Ἀγαπητοὶ μου χριστιανοί,

Ἐὰν ἔτσι μᾶς ἀγαπᾷ ὁ Θεός, πῶς ἄραγε ἐμεῖς ὀφείλουμε νὰ ἀγαπᾷμε ἀλλήλους; Τὴν περίοδο τοῦ Πάσχα, ὅταν ψάλλουμε: «Συγχωρήσωμεν πάντα τῇ ἀναστάσει» (Δοξαστικὸ τοῦ ὁρθοῦ τῆς ἑορτῆς), πῶς μπορούμε νὰ ἔχουμε ἀρνητικὰ συναισθήματα γιὰ τοὺς ἄλλους; Ἄς κρατηθοῦμε ὁ ἓνας ἀπὸ τὸν ἄλλον καὶ ἄς ἀνυψώσουμε ἀλλήλους μὲ ἀγάπη, συμπόνια, συγχώρηση καὶ ἔλεος. Διότι ὁ Θεὸς πρῶτος μᾶς ἀνύψωσε, ὥστε νὰ μοιρασθοῦμε τὴν ὑψωση αὐτὴ τῆς ἀγάπης μὲ ὅλους γύρω μας. Μόνο τότε μπορούμε νὰ ψάλλουμε μὲ πληρότητα καὶ ἀνεκλάλητη χαρὰ τὸν θριαμβευτικὸ πασχάλιο ὕμνο:

Χριστὸς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν,
θανάτῳ θάνατον πατήσας,
καὶ τοῖς ἐν τοῖς μνήμασι
ζωὴν χαρισάμενος.

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη!



† ὁ Ἀμερικῆς Ἐλπιδοφόρος