08/05/2024

Metropolis of Sweden and all Scandinavia – Paschal Episcopal Encyclical 2024



Reverend Fathers,
Honorable Ambassadors of Greece and Cyprus,
Esteemed state, civic, and community leaders,
Dearly Beloved people of God,
Friends and Benefactors of the Holy Metropolis of Sweden and All Scandinavia,
We are blessed to celebrate the mystery of the Resurrection of Jesus the God-man from the dead once again this year.
Humanity has tasted the bitterness of death ever since Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s commandment and continues to do so until today. There is temporal physical death, which represents the separation of the soul from the body, but there is also eternal death; that is, the spiritual death of the soul, which is marked by the permanent separation of the soul from God.

According to St. Gregory the Dialogist: “since we are talking about two types of life, it is only logical for us to conceive of death in two forms. It is one thing to live for God – in a state of beatitude – and something altogether different to live as we were created and fashioned; hence, to live as mere biological beings.

Likewise, the soul is both mortal and immortal. It is mortal when it loses the beatific life. On the other hand, it is immortal when it lives in a spiritual manner. This allows us to conclude that the soul suffers an immortal death and a disappearance that is indelible and endless.” (Elder Eustratios [Golovanski], Answers to Christians’ questions, p. 116)

In this world, which is marked by progress on the one hand, and the continuation of wars, hatred, poverty, and the oppression of souls and bodies on the other hand, the inconceivable miracle of the Resurrection fills our lives with joy and invites us to a eucharistic communion and sharing of true life.

The Church offers the Divine Events as a living communion and historical presence for each and every member of the faithful, so long as the recipients accept the invitation of salvation and walk along the path of the teachings of the Gospel.

Let us not forget that our Lord Who Rose from the dead desires the salvation of all mankind, “and this is called the Church,” according to St. Clement of Alexandria.

“Let us draw near to Christ Who exits from the tomb with lit candles in hand” and “let us keep the festival with splendor and embrace one another” with pure hearts; most importantly, giving forgiveness even to those who hate us and do us injustice.

Invoking the grace of our Lord’s Holy and Lifegiving Sepulcher, I pray that the blessing that sprang forth from the empty tomb may shine upon the plenitude of the Mother Church of Constantinople living in Scandinavia, with the assuredness that the Risen Lord will remain with us until the end of the ages, unto the ends of the earth!

With love in the Risen Lord and many paternal paschal blessings,

† Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden and All Scandinavia

Metropolisofsweden