

## **The celebration of the Resurrection of the Lord at the Phanar**



With particular splendour, solemnity and in accordance with centuries-old ecclesiastical tradition and order, the Bright Resurrection of the Lord was celebrated at the Centre of Orthodoxy.

At Midnight on Great and Holy Saturday, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew presided over the service of the Resurrection of Our Lord in the courtyard of the Patriarchate, surrounded by the Their Eminences Metropolitan Meliton of Philadelphia, Metropolitan Irinaios of Myriophytos and Peristasis, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Myra, Metropolitan Theoliptos of Iconium and Metropolitan Theodore of Seleucia, as well as by the clergy of the Patriarchal Court.

His All-Holiness then addressed a Message for the feast of Holy Pascha to the plenitude of the Church, pointing out that in the historic City of Constantine, but also in other cities, countries and continents, “in peaceful places and places disturbed by wars and various crises, peoples, races and languages are brightly

proclaiming tonight the joyful news: Christ is risen!”

At another point in his resurrection greeting, His All-Holiness emphasised:

“In vain, even in these hours, the evil forces of the world, with their wars, with their bombings, with their arsons, with their evil plans, with their oppression and exploitation of the weak, of the captives, try to prolong the Passion and Cross of Christ in His human images, the people, in many regions of the earth! However, Pascha has inevitably come for these peoples too! The Resurrection belongs to everyone! For “Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us,” and Christ is Life and Resurrection!”



The following is the speech of His All-Holiness:

Honourable Brother Hierarchs and beloved children in the Risen Christ,

In the spring night with the rich fragrances of flowers and blooming trees, in a sea of cheerful light, the sound of the bell joyfully signalled the Resurrection! In great cities, such as this historic city of Constantine, in towns and small villages, on mountains and islands, in countries near and far continents, in peaceful places and places disturbed by wars and various crises, peoples, races and languages are brightly proclaiming tonight the joyful news: Christ is risen!

No matter if there is still pain in the world, no matter if tears are shed, no matter if



sighs are heard? Human history has now taken a completely different path! Evil, all the negative, all the disadvantages and difficulties, all the tears of everyday life no longer have the last word in human life and history! The reality is completely different! Christ, with His death and three-day Resurrection from the dead, definitively destroyed the rule of death, bound the mighty, liberated the captive person, granted them a new life full of light, joy, tangible hope, true freedom! And indeed with the seal of eternity!

In vain did the soldiers guard the life-giving Tomb of the Lord! It could not keep life itself imprisoned! In vain even in these hours do the evil forces of the world, with their wars, with bombings, with arson, with evil plans, with the oppression and exploitation of the weak, of the captives, try to prolong the Passion and Cross of Christ in His human images, the people, in many regions of the earth! However, Pascha inevitably came for these peoples too! The Resurrection belongs to everyone! For “Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us,” and Christ is Life and Resurrection!



The all-luminous Phanar, bathed from the beginning in the Grace of Christ, always illuminated in the harsh fluctuations of its history by the Paschal Light, tonight also raises its resplendent resurrection candle and calls with a loud voice every person to participate in the banquet of Faith and to enjoy the wealth of the goodness of the Leader of Life, our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ!

Christ is risen, brothers, sisters and children! “On the day of resurrection, let us brilliantly shine, O people!” “This is the day that the Lord has made! Let us rejoice and be glad in it!”

Also present at the Service of the Resurrection were Archons of the Great Church of Christ, Ambassador Mr. Konstantinos Koutras, Consul-General of Greece in Constantinople, as well as many pilgrims from abroad and faithful from the city of Constantinople.

Following the proclamation of the Resurrection, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew presided over the Resurrection Divine Liturgy and was joined in concelebration by the Holy Hierarchs.

Photographs: Nikos Papachristou

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