

## **The Resurrection of the Lord was celebrated at the Cathedral of Stockholm**



The Holy and Great Feast of the Resurrection of the Lord was celebrated at the Cathedral of Saint George in Stockholm, presided over by Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden and All Scandinavia, with the participation of a multitude of faithful and in an atmosphere of deep reverence and spiritual joy.

The celebration began on Holy Saturday evening with the service of the Vigil, during which one of the Holy Metropolis's volunteer legal advisors, Mr. Fredrik Styrlander, read the Patriarchal Encyclical of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in English, while the Cathedral's Pastor, Archimandrite Father Bartholomew Iatridis, read the Metropolitan's Paschal Encyclical in Greek.

In his Encyclical, the Bishop stated the following: "Once again this year, we celebrate the Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord, the preeminent event in human history, which joyfully proclaims the victory of life over death.

Endless crises, economic insecurity, natural disasters, and armed conflicts create a world full of pain and turmoil—a world severely tested by the problems of poverty, injustice, and social inequality.

Humanity is engaged in a ceaseless struggle against a series of crises that threaten its peace, prosperity, and even its survival, amidst the possibility and danger of a

potential nuclear catastrophe.

Yet the Resurrection of Christ offers us a clear assurance: that life triumphs over death, hope over despair, and love over hatred and all forms of extremism and madness.

Thus, the Resurrection becomes an anchor of hope and calls all of us to actively participate in the restoration of justice and peace in the world—to become bearers of the Resurrection in our everyday lives, to speak through acts of love and selfless offering to our neighbour, to the poor, the sick, and the refugee.

The Church, as “the living witness of the Resurrection,” is the living reality of the divine promise: ‘I was dead, and behold I am alive forever and ever’ (Rev. 1:18), and ‘Behold, I am with you always, to the very end of the age’ (Matt. 28:20).

During the sacred days of the Divine Passion that preceded, we passed from the excitement and fervent acclaim of the crowd in Jerusalem—who hailed Christ for the hope of a counterfeit kingdom and a Messiah of worldly expectations—to the reminder of Adam’s sin, which brought decay and death to the immortal God.

The God-man suffers, is put to death, and rises again, so that through the Resurrection, humanity might partake in the gift of salvation and eternity.

Christ is the tugboat, drawing humanity along with Him, thanks to His Descent into Hades!

God descends from Heaven to Hades, so that humanity may ascend to Heaven—to achieve, after centuries of expectation and trial, the longed-for and divinely gifted promise: that man may become “god by grace.”

Enflamed with love for His creation, Christ manifests through His Divine Passion the abundance of His love for all of us.

The Resurrection is the ultimate reality breaking into history. As Fr. Georges Florovsky has noted, “The Resurrection reveals and continues the victory of the Cross.” (Fr. Georges Florovsky, *On the Tree of the Cross*, p. 71)

Let the Resurrectional hymn become a promise and a triumphant exclamation in our minds and hearts: ‘O divine, O beloved, O sweetest of Thy voice! For Thou didst promise truly to be with us unto the end of the age, O Christ.’”\*

Following this, Metropolitan Cleopas shared the Holy Light with the faithful, both those inside the cathedral and the approximately seven thousand gathered outside

the Cathedral of Saint George.

The Resurrection Ceremony then took place, with the participation of Archimandrite Father Bartholomew Iatridis and Oikonomos Father George Arvanitidis. Present at the celebration were also the Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to Stockholm, Mr. Solon Savva, and the Head of the Greek Consulate in Stockholm, Mr. Nikolaos Karalekas. The Shepherd of the Scandinavian flock, deeply moved, chanted the joyous proclamation "Christ is Risen!", accompanied by the faithful, who had, it should be noted, filled the Cathedral and the surrounding streets well before the start of the service.

Also contributing to the liturgical service of the faithful were two visiting clergy from the Holy Archdiocese of Crete, Protopresbyters Father Konstantinos Petroyiannis and Father Nikolaos Psounis. With the blessing and consent of Archbishop Eugenios of Crete, the former served the liturgical needs at the Stockholm Cathedral and the Parish of the Apostle Paul in Uppsala, while the latter served at the Parish of the Holy Trinity in Gothenburg.

Warmest thanks are extended to the volunteer chanters of the Cathedral: First Chanter Dr. Andreas Selamsis, and Lampadarios Dr. George Sidiras and Mr. Miltiadis Soultanis, as well as to the members of the Byzantine Youth Choir of the Cathedral.

Following the Paschal Divine Liturgy, a festive meal was offered in honour of the volunteers and youth, sponsored by the owners of the Cypern Restaurant, Mr. Athanasios Kalpakas and Mr. Nikolaos Athanasiou, as well as by female volunteers from the Cathedral and the Ladies' Philoptochos Society.

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