14/04/2026

His Eminence Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden's Paschal Episcopal Encyclical 2026



Reverend Fathers,

Dearly Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Beloved children,

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

At the center of our Orthodox faith stands the radiant mystery of Christ's Resurrection. On Easter we proclaim with joy that "Christ is Risen," affirming that death has been trampled down by death and that life eternal has dawned for humanity.

This message of hope and joy is not an abstract idea but a reality that transforms

our lives and offers comfort to a world burdened by war, hunger, economic insecurity, modern slavery, human trafficking, and the suffering of innocent children.

Through the Resurrection we encounter the love of God and a call to heal our wounded world.

The Fathers of the Church teach that the Resurrection is the decisive victory of life over death. St. Basil the Great proclaims that Christ “suffered, died on the cross, was buried and rose from the dead, so that we could be saved by imitation of him”.

St. John Chrysostom, in his Paschal homily, calls us to rejoice because “forgiveness has risen from the grave”. He exhorts: “Let no one fear death, for the death of our Saviour has set us free. He that was held prisoner of it has annihilated it”. Christ “made hell captive” and “life is liberated”.

This triumphant message permeates Orthodox worship. Paschal joy is not separate from the “universal resurrection” promised for all humanity. The Resurrection thus becomes a pledge that humanity and creation will be restored.

While the Church celebrates the Resurrection, we cannot ignore the suffering endured by millions. Where conflict is present, over one-third of the population is poor.

These figures represent families facing unemployment, inflation and displacement, often forced to migrate in search of safety.
Modern slavery, forced labour and human trafficking remain hidden sins. This exploitation deny people their God-given dignity and freedom.
Violence and war continue to tear communities apart. Schools are destroyed, families are separated and children endure hunger, disease and psychological trauma. Their suffering is a wound in the body of humanity that cries out for healing.

In the face of such suffering, the Resurrection of Christ offers a profound message of consolation. This teaching is not a mere theological statement but an invitation to live Paschal hope even amidst sorrow.

Paschal joy does not ignore pain, but it transfigures it. Our Paschal proclamation becomes a mandate for action. We must pray and work for peace, support ceasefire efforts and provide humanitarian aid. The alarming figures of conflict-related deaths compels us to advocate for non violence and reconciliation.

With millions of people hungry, we must share our resources, advocate for equitable economic policies and encourage sustainable agriculture. Fasting and almsgiving during Lent should inspire year round generosity.

Knowing that millions of people live in modern slavery, our communities must raise awareness, support survivors and collaborate with organizations that fight trafficking. Spiritual vigilance and societal advocacy are both necessary.

With millions of people forcibly displaced, we are called to welcome the strangers. Christ Himself was a refugee; in serving the displaced we serve Him.
Christ’s Resurrection is a living reality that empowers us to face the tragedies of the present. Let us, therefore, embrace Paschal joy and translate it into works of mercy and justice.

May the Risen Lord grant rest to those who have lost their lives in wars, comfort to the hungry and the poor, freedom to those enslaved, and healing to every suffering person.

May He strengthen our resolve to live as witnesses of His Resurrection, bringing light to a world often shrouded in darkness.

With paternal Pascal wishes,

+ Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden and All Scandinavia