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Patriarch Daniel’s Easter Encyclical: Love has conquered death



In this year’s pastoral encyclical for Holy Pascha, His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel highlights the mystery of Christ’s Resurrection noting that the faith in the resurrection ‘helps us not to lose our hope in the face of life’s hardships.’

‘Let us ask more insistently for the help of the crucified and risen Christ, Who knows our life with all its trials in a mystical but real way.’

‘The Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is the victory of His humble love over the sin of human disobedience to God, over hell as an isolated existence and over death as the soul’s separation from the body,’ Patriarch Daniel opened his pastoral letter to the venerable monastic order, the reverend clergy and the beloved faithful of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

While ‘the crucifixion and the death of our Lord Jesus Christ were caused by the envy and hatred of some teachers of the law and Pharisees, by the betrayal of his

disciple Judas the Iscariot, and by the injustice of Pilate of Pont,' the Patriarch of Romania underscored that 'Jesus answered to hatred and violence with the endurance of suffering, with prayer to God the Father to forgive the sin of those who crucified Him – Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing – and by perfect obedience and self-offering to God the Father.'

'The sacred mystery of Christ's humble and merciful love, included in His Cross and Resurrection, was anticipated and instituted by Jesus Christ as a holy and salvific work before His Passions, Death and Resurrection, at the Last Supper, giving to His disciples, and through them to His Church, the Holy Eucharist, which is officiated in His Church unto forgiveness of sins and for life eternal.'

The Patriarch noted that 'the Orthodox Church has the richest and most beautiful liturgical profession of the truth of the Resurrection of Christ, the Conqueror of sin, death, and hell.'

'The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Universal Resurrection of all people who will have lived on earth from the beginning of the world until its end (1 Corinthians 15:52),' Patriarch Daniel reminds his 'beloved brothers and sisters.'

'The Universal Resurrection is not a natural phenomenon, but a miracle, a supernatural work. It is the exclusive gift of God's love for all individuals of all nations, from all times and from all places (John 5: 28-29 and 1 Corinthians 15:52).'

The light of the Resurrection of Christ, 'shows us the great value of the earthly human life, precisely because human life on earth is the antechamber of the Universal Resurrection and eternal heavenly life, man's preparation to enter the Kingdom of the love and glory of the Most Holy Trinity.'

'The light of Christ's Resurrection supports every Christian's struggle or endeavour for a holy lifestyle and good works during the earthly life. Peace, joy, and the gift of forgiveness of sins (John 20: 22-23) are the holy gifts that risen Christ has offered to His holy disciples and continually offers to His Church, through the Holy Mysteries, culminating with the Holy Eucharist as a promise of the eternal life in the Holy Trinity's Kingdom.'

'The faith in the Resurrection helps us not to lose hope in the face of life's hardships, but to ask more fervently for the help of the crucified and risen Christ, Who knows our life with all its trials in a mystical but real way and tells us: "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:20).'

After mentioning that this year the Romanian Orthodox Church marks the Solemn Year of the pastoral care of parents and children and the Commemorative year of Romanian Philanthropists, Patriarch Daniel notes that the Romanian Orthodox Church contributes responsibly and substantially to alleviating the sufferings of the people, through the liturgical, spiritual and pastoral work, as well as through the social-philanthropic activities.

‘Today, in the context of the new coronavirus COVID 19 pandemic, when we see so many signs of illness and physical death around us,’ the Romanian Patriarch urged, ‘we all have to pray to God for all sick people, but also for all doctors and healthcare personnel, for all the volunteers who help the sick and the isolated, as well as for all those who work with devotion for the health and the well-being of the Romanian people,’ he wrote.

In his Easter 2020 pastoral letter, Patriarch Daniel addressed a ‘paternal word of blessing and spiritual strengthening to all Romanians from abroad,’ especially to those living in Italy and Spain, two of the countries worst-affected by the coronavirus.

Patriarch Daniel used his encyclical to express comfort and compassion to the families of the coronavirus victims.

‘The love that comes forth from prayer for those who fell asleep in the Lord is stronger than death! Praying for those who reposed in the Lord is an act of faith, hope and love,’ His Beatitude’s letter reads.

The Patriarch concluded by wishing everyone good health, peace, joy and hope. ‘With paternal love, we greet all of you with the Paschal greeting: Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!’

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