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His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America issues Encyclical on the Great and Holy Pascha – (VIDEO)



His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America has issued his Encyclical on the Great and Holy Pascha. Read the full text down below:

Archiepiscopal Encyclical on the Great and Holy Pascha

To the Most Reverend Hierarchs, the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the Distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox Family in America

My Beloved Christians, Νῦν πάντα πεπλήρωται φωτός… Now all things are filled with light… (Paschal Canon, Ode 2)

In this time of darkness: through the most difficult Lent in memory, through a radical reduction of our lives and livelihood, through the threat of sickness on an unprecedented scale, and the through the grievous loss of family, friends, and neighbors taken from us too soon, we have finally arrived at the dawn.

Like the Myrrh-Bearing Women, going to the Tomb λίαν πρωὶ, ὄρθρου βαθέος – "very early in the morning, in the deep of the dawn" – we are yet in the depths of a darkness from which we pray to be delivered. But we hold fast to the promise of this night:

Καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.

And the light shines on in the darkness, never overcome by the darkness. (John 1:5)

Indeed, and in very truth, "Now all things are filled with light!" The Light of Christ, Who is Himself the Light of the world, can never be extinguished. It chases away the shadow of even the darkest soul, and it burns most brightly in the human heart, which with every beat sings praises to the Lord of Glory.

He fills the world with His Light, enlightening our souls through love, forgiveness, compassion and mercy. And if this year we cannot pass that light from candle to candle, we can still pass that same light from heart to heart. The holiest fire that burns without destroying is love, for our God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29). Indeed, God loved the world so intensely that there was no suffering that He would not embrace in order to enfold us in His love. On His Precious and Life-Giving Cross, He showed us with one word that His Passover, His Pascha from death to life, would be the fulfillment for us all: Τετέλεσται! "It is accomplished!"

But now Christ is risen from the dead! Νυνὶ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν! (I Cor. 15:20) He is the firstfruits of them that slept in death, and as Lord of both the living and the dead, He is the promise, the "Amen," of our future life in eternity.

Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, let us rejoice in the light of the Resurrection that shines across the Heavens, around the globe, and in our hearts. This dawn knows no horizon line; it shines even in the depths of hades.

Embrace the light with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Share it with everyone in gratitude and gentleness. Recognize its power to transform you and transfigure the world. And know, by faith, that the shadows we experience today are fleeting, cast by the Light Who is come upon us to dispel every darkness, and to raise us up with Him to everlasting light and life!

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη! Ἀληθῶς Ἀνέστη! Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

†ELPIDOPHOROS

Archbishop of America

Watch the Paschal (Easter) Message of His Eminence: