20/04/2020

Messages by Orthodoxy’s Primates, hierarchs



Church Primates, hierarchs and priests issues homilies of comfort, courage and hope during the Easter Sunday Vespers, known as the Service of Agape.

The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, emphasized that “…Nothing and no one, no natural disaster, no pandemic, no temptation, nor any human or other obstacle, is able to divide us from our faith in the Resurrected Christ.”

In the Holy Land, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher held the iconic Holy Saturday service without the presence of the thousands of pilgrims that arrive there every year for every corner of the earth. Nevertheless, the Holy Flame was again conveyed overseas, including to Greece.

In terms of the east Mediterranean country of roughly 11 residents, the vast majority of whom are Orthodox Christians, the Resurrection was celebrated from balconies and windows, with many faithful singing the “Christ has Risen” hymn in chorus with family members and nearby neighbors.

In his Easter Saturday message, the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, His Beatitude Ieronymos, emphasized that the Resurrection gives us the strength to overcome fear and the divisions among us.

In another corner of the world, the Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, His Divine Beatitude Theodoros II, officiated at the Resurrection liturgy in an empty, of worshipers, Cathedral of the Annunciation in Alexandria.

In his homily, he noted that "…Pascha is the passage from the tomb to a triumph, for us Christians it is the one, singular and non-negotiable experience…one of an entire life: the eternal Gospel of the Church".

Halfway around the world, cathedrals around the greater Moscow area, as well as St. Petersburg and other major Russian cities remained closed for Holy and Easter Week. Nevertheless, some churches in remote regions of the vast country allowed a limited number of worshipers attend services.

At the Cathedral of the Savior in Moscow, the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, His Holiness Kirill, officiated at the Divine Liturgies without the presence of worshipers.

Conversely, the doors of cathedrals remained opened across Bulgaria, as both the Bulgarian Patriarchate and the government in the country called on the faithful not to attend services, or, at the very least, strictly follow public health guidelines.

Despite the recommendations, flocks of Christians gathered outside in church courtyards, but also within cathedrals.

In his homily, the Patriarch of Bulgaria, His Holiness Neophyte, said the Church's thoughts and prayers this Easter are with those that departed the living, and with those fighting on the front lines against this invisible enemy, the coronavirus.

In neighboring Romania, cathedrals remained closed to the faithful for Holy and Great Easter Week. Bucharest resembled an abandoned city on Holy Saturday.

In the evening, the Patriarch of All Romania, His Beatitude Daniel, officiated at the Resurrection service without the presence of worshipers.

In an address, the Romanian Patriarch stressed that "…Jesus Christ, with His merciful and humble love, comes to us even when the doors of our homes are locked".