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Paschal Greetings of His Beatitude John X, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East- Pascha 2020



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Beloved one, I here extend to all of you in the homeland and everywhere overseas, wherever you are or you may roam, I address to you the peace of Christ, and a fragrant greeting bountiful with our Apostolic blessing and our wishes that you may be kept safe, away from any harm.
I address these words to you, as we have entered the Great and Holy Week, and are only a step away from the Most Holy Day of Resurrection.
I address these words to you, beloved ones, in these difficult days and hard circumstances that overwhelm us, because of this pandemic, that encompassed the whole world.

Pascha is a passage. The passage of whom? Wherefrom and where to? It is the passage of the Lord of creation, the passage of the One who ascended to where He had been before. This passage was wrought by the Lord to realize our own passage, for the sake of our salvation, out of love.

Our passage from death to life, from misery and wretchedness to bliss and truth, from the bondage of sin and the bondage of Satan, to freedom and dignity, from

darkness to light. It is the passage that gives each one of us the true meaning to his life and humanity.
Nothing, beloved, can separate us from the love of the Lord, the love of our Master, therefore I say to all of you, remain steadfast in hope, hold on to your faith, keep on reciting the Holy Scriptures which make you wise, strong, and intrepid. Stay home for your own safety and for the others, and respect the required measures for public safety. Let your house, hence, be a small church, so that God's holy name be glorified through you.

Beloved, we do not forget the saying of the Lord: the kingdom of God is inside you, neither do we forget his word: Blessed be the poor in spirit, for they shall see God. Therefore, we are all called to be steadfast in the faith and meet the Lord, so that every one of us makes their heart a throne for the Lord, a true dwelling. Thus, we walk in the path of light and holiness, and bears witness to the whole world that Christ is risen indeed.

Our real path is described in what we chant with the author of psalms: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me". This is what we also say in a different form on the glorious day of Pascha, when we sing with the hymnographer: "Let us purify our senses, and we shall behold Christ, radiant with the unapproachable light of the Resurrection."

The Lord Jesus dwells in us and our heart is the real home. Therefore, we pray the Lord that he shortens these days and that life goes back to normal. We pray the Lord who is risen from the dead and trampled on death. To Him we pray that He has mercy on us and on the whole world, and to pour on everybody the balm of His consolations. May He grant those who departed to eternal life to rest with the saints, heal the sick, and give strength to all those who minister and serve their fellow human being, for their healing, happiness, and safety. We pray for all those who morn, face tragedy, and tribulations. We also pray for the consolation of everyone, for the return of the kidnapped, especially for our brothers the Bishops Paul and Youhanna, may they return safe and sound. We pray for the peace of all the world, that we reach the glorious day of Pascha and cry with united voices and hearts: "Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord".
Christ is risen! May you be all well!