

[Translation from the Greek original.]

Prot. No. 346

+BARTHOLOMEW

By God's Mercy

Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome, and

Ecumenical Patriarch

To the Plentitude of the Church Grace, Peace and
Mercy from Christ, who has Risen in Glory

Brother concelebrants and beloved children in the Lord,

Christ is Risen!

All Orthodox Christians once again this year joyously celebrate The Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and chant: "We celebrate the death of death, the destruction of Hades, and the beginning of another, eternal way of living. And so we jubilantly praise the Cause." (Troparion from the Paschal Canon)

Yet, while we gladly celebrate the Lord's Resurrection as the reality of life and hope, all around us in the world, we can hear the cries and threats of death launched in many parts of the planet by those who believe that they can resolve human conflicts by destroying their enemies, which in itself constitutes the greatest proof of their weakness. For, by causing the death of another, by taking revenge on our neighbor, on whosoever differs from us, neither is the world improved nor are our problems solved. After all, as everyone -- especially the intellectual people of all periods -- admits and recognizes, evil is never overcome by evil, but always by good.

Problems are genuinely resolved when we acknowledge and acclaim the value of every human person and when we respect their rights. By contrast, all kinds of problems are created and exacerbated when we despise human beings and violate their rights, especially when it comes to the vulnerable, who must feel secure, while the powerful must be just in order for peace to exist.

Therefore, Christ arose from the dead and demonstrated in this way as well the inability of death to prevail and bring about any stable change in the world. The various situations caused by death can be reversed because, despite how things appear, they are always temporary, having no root or vitality, whereas Christ, who has forever conquered death, is invisibly always present.

We, who have our hope in Him, believe that the right of life belongs to all people. Life and Resurrection are only offered by Jesus Christ, who has trodden on death and on its power over people; this is why we should only hope in Him and His teaching. Faith in Christ leads to Resurrection, to the Resurrection of all of us, while our faith and application of His teaching lead to the salvation of all, as well as to the confrontation of every challenge in our world.

Beloved brothers and children, the message of the Resurrection, this transcendence of human weakness, is the message of life over the world's corruption and humanity's adventure. It is to this message that we invite all people -- from the Ecumenical Patriarchate, where by God's mercy we serve as Primate of Orthodox love in truth -- so that they may come to knowledge and experience, convinced that only in this way will they also rediscover our true hope, and the hope of the whole world, which was stolen from us in the turmoil of confusion.

May the light of the Resurrection illumine the hearts of all of you so that you may rejoice with all people in love, peace and concord through the Son and Word of God, who is the Light of the world, the Truth and the Life.

To Him alone, who arose from the dead, the Lord of glory, "who lords over life and rules over death," who lives to the ages and "grants life to those in the tombs," belong glory, honor and thanksgiving. Amen.

Phanar, Holy Pascha 2015
+Bartholomew of Constantinople
Your fervent supplicant
Before the Risen Christ

To be read in the churches during the Divine Liturgy of the feast of Holy Pascha, after the Holy Gospel.