



## **Diocese of Pennsylvania and its Affiliated Regions**

**The Glorious Feast of the Resurrection Message- April 8, 2018**

### **Christ's Resurrection in Our Life**

My beloved brethren and children - the priests, deacons, servants, and dearly loved congregation: **Christos Anesti - Alithos Anesti . Christ is Risen - Truly He is Risen**

I'm delighted to rejoice with you on this cornerstone of our Christian faith, the Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Resurrection is the fountain of our peace, the source of our joy, the mystery of our hope, and the power of our spirituality. Jesus rose to lead us triumphantly, giving us eternal life and granting us courage in the face of evil, death, and sin.

#### **1. The Resurrection is the fountain of our peace:**

Notice the contrast between the state of the disciples on Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday. Scattered on the day of His crucifixion, fear filled their heart. Even as they gathered in the upper room, they were in great fear until Christ appeared to them and consoled them saying, "Peace be to you" (John 20:19). Fear became courage, weakness became strength, and confusion became peace. They went out preaching this message of peace that our Lord gave them. Whoever believes in the Resurrection of our Lord, is invited to the life of perfect peace: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you" (John 14:27). The Risen Christ is our peace. Even death that people feared became a bridge to a joyful eternity.

#### **2. The Resurrection is the source of our joy:**

The joy of the Resurrection overcomes the sadness of the world and the stress of life. The believers live in continuous joy in Christ's salvation, experiencing joy not from external circumstances but from the risen Christ. Believers are certain that God will raise them from the tribulations and temptations of this life, purifying them, and perfecting them to be worthy of His eternal kingdom. We rejoice that God is always present; He is a helper in our tribulations and a fortress in which we always live in joy. Before the crucifixion, Christ promised his disciples: "Your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you" (John 16:22). He fulfilled this promise after His glorious Resurrection "Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord John 20:20. The Bible commands us to always live in joy, "Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer"(Romans 12:12).

### **3. The Resurrection is the foundation of our hope:**

The hope of the Resurrection overcomes the darkness of the world. We hope in the living Christ who saved us from; sin, sickness, weakness, and granted us the power of His Resurrection and its glorified body. We persist with hope that God is not far from us but He suffers with those who are suffering and defends those who are persecuted. He went forth conquering and to conquer (Rev 6:2).

The mystery of the Resurrection flows in our Coptic church to live for the Risen Christ, offering a strong witness sealed by the blood of her martyrs. The church if filled with the love of her Savior thus, she (the church) carries his cross and follows Him to enjoy His Resurrection. He grants the church peace, saves her in the midst of the fiery furnace, and gives her patience in suffering and hope in tribulations. We draw out our hope from the power of the Resurrection to witness for Christ as light shining in the world. For the Risen Christ leads us in the way of virtue and righteousness. As St. Peter said, "[He] has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3).

### **4. The Resurrection is the power of our spiritual life:**

The Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ leads us to eternal life. For as Christ rose conquering death, we will rise with Him and inherit eternal life. As St. John said, "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). Christ also told Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die" (John 11:25-26). Likewise St. Paul preached, "If Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God... But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:14-20).

His resurrection and promise of eternal life to those who overcome make us eager to strive for heaven. The believers long for that which is greater than this world, more valuable than the material, deeper than all desires: a heavenly home and an eternal spiritual life bearing the glorified body.

We ask the risen Christ to grant you the peace, joy, hope, and power of the Resurrection to taste eternity with Christ. "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God" (Colossians. 3:1).

**Be perfected in the Lord and may you have a blessed Feast of the Resurrection**

**Bishop Karas**

**Bishop of Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and West Virginia**