

# PASCHAL \* ENCYCLICAL

From the Tomb the Great Sun Has Shone Forth  
*“Let us not sleep, but let us watch and be sober.”*<sup>1</sup>

*Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ  
and Children in the Risen Lord:*

“Blessed be the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!”<sup>2</sup>

Let us thank and glorify the heavenly Father, Who, through His immeasurable compassion, has given us new birth into the new life of Grace, through the Resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ, and Who has granted us the vivid hope that we, too, being united with Him, shall be resurrected.

Today, with the Resurrection of our Lord, our holy Church, the New Jerusalem, is illuminated and made radiant by the uncreated rays of Divine Light: “Shine, shine, O New Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord hath risen upon Thee.”<sup>3</sup>

From the life-containing Tomb, the “Timeless Light in body,”<sup>4</sup> the most radiant “Sun of Righteousness,”<sup>5</sup> that is, the Only-Begotten Son of God Himself, the eternal and true Light, without beginning, “lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”<sup>6</sup>

And the Dawning of the Sun—Christ—has dispelled the night of ignorance and the realm of darkness. The Resurrection of the Lord has marked the beginning of a new spiritual Day, of that mystical Day<sup>7</sup> which shall be without end. This God-Man is the Great Sun<sup>8</sup> which was brought into the world by the never-setting Star,<sup>8</sup> the *Theotokos*, never to set again.

*Beloved Children in the Lord:*

The Church of Christ lives in the midst of this never-ending mystical Day<sup>7</sup> and is illuminated by the Paschal Sun. Her light-bearing children “walk honestly, as in the day,” clothed “in the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>9</sup> The holy Apostle Paul reminds us of this saving truth with particular emphasis: “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness,” “ye are all the children of light, and children of the day; we are not of the night nor of the darkness.”<sup>10</sup>

From the Tomb there arose True Life and the Never-Ending Day of Grace. And henceforth, the Faithful have continually taken refuge, through the Church and within the realm of Her Mysteries, in the rays of the True Light, which purifies, enlightens, and sanctifies them. The “light-bearing day of the Resurrection”<sup>4</sup> extends on, thereby holding us in a continual state of vigilance and watchfulness and preparedness, that we might go forth on the path of salvation and labor by the Light, and in the Light, of the Resurrection of Christ, for the glory of God.

*Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:*

The Resurrection of Christ gives us a powerful impetus for spiritual awakening and watchfulness. The voice of the Lord continually urges us: “Awake” and “Be watchful.” Moral sloth, heedlessness, and hedonistic idleness deviously plunge a soul into spiritual drowsiness and the passionate sleep of sin, such that our hearts are darkened and become enslaved by the gloomy spirits of wickedness, “slumbering” and performing “the works of darkness.”<sup>11</sup>

The *Kontakion* of the Great Canon, which we chanted three weeks ago, expresses with particular compunction this exhortation to our resurrection and to watchfulness: “My soul, my soul, rise up! Why dost thou slumber? The end draweth nigh and thou shalt be troubled. Be watchful then, so that Christ God take pity on thee, He that is everywhere present and filleth all.”<sup>12</sup>

The memory of death and of the fearsome Judgment protects the soul and inspires Divine fear and sincere repentance. “Remember thine end,” says the Wisdom of God, “and thou shalt not sin forever.”<sup>13</sup> The Lord also taught us vigilance and the work of watchfulness, in order to keep us from temptations: “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.”<sup>14</sup>

If we continually force ourselves in the task of repentance; if we continually awaken our indolent hearts; if we pray without ceasing and partake always of the most pure Mysteries; if we take refuge persistently in the intercessions of the Most Blessed *Theotokos*, who is the “Dawn of the Mystical Day,”<sup>7</sup> then we shall be found in the Light of the Divine Resurrection; then, we shall live in the Day of Grace, which has no end; then, the Great Sun<sup>8</sup> will shine upon us with His uncreated rays, and we shall assuredly be “sons of the Light and sons of the Day,”<sup>15</sup> ever vigilant and prepared to receive the Bridegroom Christ, to Whom be all glory, honor, and thanksgiving, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, unto the ages. Amen.

Christ is risen! Indeed, He is risen!

Your Intercessor Before the Risen Lord,  
† *Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili,*  
President of the Holy Synod in Resistance

## Notes

1. I Thessalonians 5:6.
2. I St. Peter 1:3.
3. Canon of Pascha, Ode 9, *Heirmos*.
4. Canon of Pascha, Ode 7, *Troparion* 3.
5. Malachi 4:2.
6. St. John 1:9.
7. Akathist to the *Theotokos*, Oikos, I, 1: “Rejoice, Dawn of the Mystical Day.”
8. Canon of the Akathist to the *Theotokos*, Ode 9, *Troparion* 2: “Rejoice, never-setting Star that bringeth into the world the Great Sun.”
9. See Romans 13:13-14.
10. I Thessalonians 5:4-5.
11. See I Thessalonians 5:6-7; Romans 13:12.
12. Great Canon, *Kontakion*.
13. Wisdom of Sirach 7:36.
14. St. Matthew 26:41.
15. I Thessalonians 5:5.

\* Source: *Orthodox Tradition*, Vol. XX, No. 2 (2003), pp. 2-4.