

EASTER MESSAGE 2016  
(By His Eminence Metropolitan Ambrosios)

My Beloved,

Great Lent, which began with the solemn Vespers of Forgiveness, has now ended up with the joy of Easter Sunday, the joy of the "Feast of Feasts and the season of seasons", that is, the joy of the glorious Resurrection of our Lord .

After singing repeatedly "Christ is risen!" and exchanging it solemnly as a greeting between us, we continued with the following beautiful prayer of our Church: *"Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the all- holy Lord Jesus, the only sinless One."*

By this prayer we acknowledge, first, that we did see the Resurrection of Christ—not in a fictitious but in a true manner—and, second, that we worshipped the Risen Lord, just like the Myrrh-bearing women and His Apostles after His glorious and brilliant Resurrection.

And just as in the beginning of the Great Lent, the prerequisite "to sail successfully the great sea of fasting" (Stichera of Forgiveness Vespers) was to forgive our fellow men from the bottom of our hearts, likewise we need to "forgive everything and everyone on Resurrection day" (Doxastiko of Easter) so that we may be able to experience Christ's Resurrection truly and fully.

This will enable us to meet the Risen Lord, in a "veiled manner", in the face of each of our fellow human beings. The Saints carried the belief that all people are icons of God, so they used the following interesting saying: *"You saw your brother? You saw your Lord and God"*. (Elder Apollo). The Risen Lord, therefore, calls us to embrace each person and receive him in our heart, as one of "the least of His brothers" (Matt 25: 40). He asks us to forgive and to love our neighbor, just as He forgave and loved those who crucified Him.

Only through forgiveness and love, which He Himself taught us from His Holy Cross, will we be able to meet with Him in person.

Only through Forgiveness and Love will we be able to experience the joy and light of His Resurrection in our daily lives.

Only through Forgiveness and Love shall we be deemed worthy to receive His spotless Body and precious Blood in every Divine Liturgy, during which we celebrate the Lord's Resurrection. Thus we shall acquire "the same body and blood of Christ" (St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *4<sup>th</sup> Mystagogic Catechesis*) and we will confess: *"Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the all-holy Lord Jesus, the only sinless One"*.

Only through Forgiveness and Love, and having the Risen Lord in us after the Divine Liturgy, shall we be able to tell others in a convincing way, "come and see" your personal Savior and Redeemer. "Come and see" Christ's Resurrection, so that you may have a foretaste, even on this earth, of your own resurrection and eternal life, since Christ "made us pass from death to life.

My dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord, together with His Eminence Sotirios, Metropolitan of Pissidia, our beloved Clergy, the Nuns and Monks, the Newly-illuminated as well as our co-laborers in the Lord, we pray that you live daily with the Resurrected Lord. In this way, each day will include the light of the Resurrection, despite its difficult moments. Through your resurrected life in Christ you will preach to others, like the Myrrh-bearing women, the miracle of the Resurrection, so that their "joy may be full". (1 John 1:4)

My Brothers, Christ is Risen!  
With much love in the Resurrected Lord.