



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, ONE GOD. AMEN.

## CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY HE IS RISEN!

My beloved, priests, deacons, servants, members of church committees, and all the congregation, my sincerest congratulations to you all on this glorious feast that we celebrate today – when our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Glory, rose from the dead on the third day, manifesting His supreme power over death and freeing all mankind from its snares.

As St. Paul writes,

**“O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?...But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 15:55-57**

My beloved, let us take heart and find comfort in the Lord’s resurrection. Let us look to the empty tomb to find power and strength when we are weak or tired or frustrated or confused. Let us remember that the One who dwelt among us, and now dwells within us, is truly **“the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power.” (1 Timothy 6:15-16).**

And now, through His glorious resurrection, He has made that same power available to us all as well.

Christ died not only to destroy the power of death, but to share that same power with us. He came not only to defeat the enemy, but to give us power over that enemy. He rose not only to display His own power, but to show the world the power available to all who believe in Him.

As we sang earlier this evening:

**“My Lord Jesus Christ, who rose from the dead,  
On the third day, You shall raise us with Your power.”  
(Paralex hymn of the Resurrection)**

But the question for us to consider this evening is this: how does one find that power? Where is it when I am weak? Where is it when I am afraid? Where is it when I feel defeated and crushed under the weight of my sin? The question we should all be asking is how can I harness the power of the Lord’s resurrection and experience it in my own life?



The answer, my beloved, comes to us in St. Paul's letter to the Philippians:

**“that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” (Philippians 3:10)**

“The fellowship of His sufferings” and “conformed to His death”. Those are two phrases that we don't want to hear. But according to St. Paul, they are undeniably part of the equation. You can't have resurrection without death. And you can't know the power of Christ's resurrection without experiencing the fellowship of His sufferings.

It is a principle which applies to every aspect of life. Is it possible to have straight A's without studying? Is it possible to be an elite athlete without practice? Is it possible to have a perfect physique without exercise? If the answer to all those questions is NO, then why do we expect to find spiritual power without any spiritual effort? It simply doesn't work that way.

St. Isaac the Syrian summarized it best in his homily “On Faith and Humility” when he said,

**“A man can never learn what divine power is while he abides in comfort and spacious living.” (St. Isaac the Syrian)**

So do you want power from the Lord? Do you want power over the sin and bad habits in your life? Do you want power to heal your marriage or fix a broken relationship? Do you want power over the monsters of anger and depression in your life?

If so, there is only one way to get it...the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

The only way to live with Christ is to die with Him. And the only way to experience the power of His resurrection is to participate in the fellowship of His sufferings.

No, God isn't asking you to die; but He is asking that your desire to live for yourself would die. He is asking that your unwillingness to seek His will instead of yours would be killed. He is asking that your desire to live for your glory and not His would be crucified today.

He is asking you to wake up every day and say with St. Paul,

**“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20).**



May God bless you all and keep you and make His Face to shine upon you. And may He allow us to experience the power of His holy resurrection for these upcoming 50 days and for all the days of our lives.

Through the never-ending intercessions of the Holy Theotokos, St. Mary, and through the prayers of the first witness to the Resurrection, St. Mary Magdalene, and through the prayers of our holy Father and Shepherd His Holiness Pope Tawadros II.

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**Bishop Peter**

Bishop, Coptic Orthodox Diocese of North & South Carolina & Kentucky.  
And Papal Vicar of the Churches of Virginia.

