



# The Resurrection of Christ the Lord



*Message of the Glorious Feast of the Resurrection (EASTER)*

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*“The night shall be the light about me”*

“If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be the light about me. Yes the darkness hides not from you, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to you”. (Ps. 139:11-12)

### Darkness or bright light!

The commentary of St. John Chrysostom on what the prophet David mentioned in Ps. 139:11-12, drew my heart to the week of the Holy Pascha (Holy Week) of suffering.

#### What did John Chrysostom see?

He saw the psalmist groaning bitterly, for darkness trampled on him and was about to crush him. But as soon as he saw God, the Lover of mankind, intervene, not to take away darkness, but to change the nature of darkness. He let it shine with a wonderful bright light.

#### Bitterness turned into sweetness.

John Chrysostom calls us to see the three saintly men in the furnace, the fire is kindled and the men are enjoying a joyful mist that moistened the body and the soul.

The fire did not change into mist and the mist did not put out the fire, but God granted them to obtain from the fire what is not of its destructive nature (Dan. 3). Likewise, God does not take away our distresses, but in the midst of it we enjoy the divine comfort; He turns the night into shining bright light!



## Death or Resurrection?

Through this prophetic experience, we enter into the divine truth, that is, the salvation of Christ the Lord, who truly died in the flesh. Through His death, He entered with us into the experience of His glorious Resurrection. His death is called a Christian Pascha or Passover; He passed over with us while we are still in this world into the token of Heaven (1 Cor. 5:7).

That is what all believers experience, from the young to the elderly. Under all circumstances, the believer feels that the week of Holy Pascha is the generator, that brings forth the power and joy of the Resurrection, to live all the days of one's life as if one is in Heaven itself.

In that week, a wonderful message is noticed: cleave to the crucified Christ and abide in Him; that by Christ's cross, the believer enjoys victory, triumph and the continuous renewal by the Spirit of God; meaning, enjoying the blessings of the resurrection.

### Suffering surrounded by the resurrection

We do not wonder if Christ our Lord raised His beloved Lazarus, who died and decayed (Jn. 11:39), a very short time, before entering Jerusalem as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and He ended the week by His glorious resurrection, as if His suffering was preceded by raising up Lazarus and proceeded by His resurrection.

Likewise, in our suffering we are encompassed by the work of Christ, who came to raise us up from our graves and understand that we have no resurrection, but by being united with Him, crucified with Him, and accepting His life-giving death.

Christ's resurrection is not a day that we celebrate, then ends. But it is a life with Christ, who is the resurrection. We live it all the days of our pilgrimage in the midst of our suffering, until we are



released to and through Him, to dwell with Him in the Heavenly Jerusalem to enjoy the fellowship of His Glory.

### **Palm Sunday and the Power of Resurrection**

We never heard through all of history that someone walks in a royal procession as a king on his way to death. Heaven was shaken for Him, and the heavenly hosts were in perplex, praising and chanting in fear and awe, over taken by a feeling of helplessness, not understanding what really happening.

The Palm Sunday procession is a daily procession lived by the believer, seeing his God and Savior, the Resurrection and the Giver of it, enter his heart, so he joins the prophet's procession praising with Prophet Zechariah saying:

*“Rejoice greatly O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble”. (Zech. 9:9)*

When we celebrate Palm Sunday we celebrate Christ our resurrection, who entered into our depths that through His love He takes us to the joy of His Resurrection. In the feast of the Resurrection we also celebrate the feast of Palm Sunday – Hosanna – (which means salvation), for it is a feast of salvation and building the New Jerusalem.

I praise, in wonder, for in the feast of Palm Sunday, the Resurrection of the Christ is transfigured before me as it did in the hearts of the children, so they went on praising Him. The blind and the lame understood it (Mt 21:14), so they came to Him in a humble procession in the temple for Him to illuminate their eyes and grant them the ability to walk. Seeing the joy of the resurrection and experiencing its power, they walk with their spiritual legs to the Lord of heaven with no feeling of disability.



In the feast of the Resurrection, I see the heavenly hosts, instead of the children, praising Him (Mt 21:16), for He enters into His New Jerusalem, His kingdom that he established in my heart.

Grant me in every morning to celebrate the feast of Palm Sunday as well as the feast of the Glorious Resurrection.

Enter, O Savior, into Your Jerusalem (my heart). And I rise with you and enter into you, O Lord of Heaven.

### **Paschal Monday and the Authority of the Resurrection**

Tell me, O my Savior, how did You spend Sunday night in Bethany? What were the thoughts of Lazarus, Mary and Martha?

Permit, O my Savior, that You come into my troubled soul and dwell in it (Mt 21:17), that I may enjoy a night with You and You with me. For though it is night, it is much brighter than noontime, for You are the Sun of Righteousness, You arise in me with healing in Your wings for my wounds (Mal 4:2).

Raise me up with Lazarus from the grave; command to unbind my bandages, take away my shroud so I can enjoy the freedom of the glory of God's Children, and put You on, O You the true righteousness and I hear the voice of the apostle: “You have put on Christ” (Gal 3:27).

Sanctify your temple, drive out from within me those who sell the pigeons, and turn over the tables of the money changers (Mk 11:15).

Curse the fig tree (Mt 21:19), that I may not pick up its leaves to cover up the shame that befell me, and plant instead of it the tree of life, Your cross, that You may sanctify me with Your precious Blood that I may hide in Your pierced side. Glory be to You, O who rose from the dead, for You make from my life a Paschal Monday, rejecting the fig leaves and putting on Your glorious cross.



## **Paschal Tuesday and the Mystery of Resurrection**

Allow me, O my Savior, to listen to Your words with Your disciples, for it brings back the joy of the lost paradise, sitting at Your feet, and listening to You talk about the Kingdom of Heaven.

Make me worthy to carry inside of me five wise holy virgins, enjoying the power of Your Resurrection so they may enter with You, O the Heavenly Groom into Your bridegroom chamber (Mt 25:1-13). Sanctify my soul's five senses, the virgins, who are dwelling with You that I may carry luminous lamps.

But as You promised, I ask of You, in shame and unworthiness; "Make me a light to the world", for You said: "You are the light of the world" (Mt 5:14).

Your Resurrection made out of my life unceasing Paschal Tuesday.

## **Paschal Wednesday and the Light of the Resurrection**

My soul is so bitter, to see Your disciple betray You and pledge to give You away as a slave, sold for 30 pieces of silver (Mt 26:15).

I will cry all the days of my life asking that You never take away Your grace from me so I may remain faithful to You, O You who loved me and gave Yourself to death for me.

I see in that day, all the hosts of darkness have allied themselves together with all what it holds of hatred, malice, violence, betrayal and ungratefulness (Jn. 12:19). But Your resurrection diverted their wickedness to build up my soul. You did not prevent the hosts of darkness from planning and fulfilling their evil plot as if You were weak and did not comprehend what they were doing. The heavenly hosts expected a command or a gesture from You,



for in a moment the earth could have opened to swallow the daring betrayer and all those wicked ones with him.

You are the One who sent His angel and slew 185 thousand of Assyrians for they besieged the earthly Jerusalem (Is 37:36, 2 Kings 19:35).

Reveal to me, O my Savior, what was going on among the heavenly hosts in that painful day. Were they questioning deep inside: O Word of God, would You permit that the day will pass on those wicked ones while alive? But who is the blessed one that You would send to retaliate against them?

Why did You not confuse their tongues as You have done the day some wanted to erect a tower to take shelter from Your wrath?

You did not answer the questions of the heavenly hosts or the weak disciples, but You let the light of Your Resurrection reveal Your divine mysteries. You have revealed through weakness, the demonstration of what is greater than power.

Your resurrection transformed the darkness of the Paschal Wednesday into the fulfillment of the desired salvation by You and Your heavenly Father and Your Holy Spirit.

Your resurrection let the sons of darkness obtain the desire of their heart, but Your splendor was poured out on Your believers.

## **Great Thursday and the Token of Your Glorious Resurrection**

Who would be able to understand the events of that unique day, but those who experience the token of resurrection?

The heavenly hosts who revere You, stood by in wonder as they witnessed.

The Holy Word of God girded and bent down to wash the feet of the sinful humanity.



Your Resurrection revealed the mystery of what You have done, for we will never be washed from our sins, except with the hands of the Savior who is raised from the dead.

Through His Resurrection we understand the mystery of true repentance:

Coming back to You that You may wash our hearts, our thoughts and all what is within us. This is a second baptism – Let us put in practice our sonship to God and wash each other’s feet in the spirit of love and humility that You have granted us by dwelling in us.

You offered to us Your crucified body that is raised from the dead, and Your life – giving offered blood instead of the sacrificed animals, which is unable to sanctify the depth of the soul.

Your Resurrection distinguished Your offering from all other offerings, for You are the offering and the Heavenly Priest who is offering it.

We partake of It by Your mysterious hand that we may rise with You and make us sit with You in the heavens. In that day, You gave us a new understanding of worship through Your Resurrection; that is: our union with You, so that we may live the risen life; the token of the heavenly.

## **Good Friday and the Effectiveness of the Resurrection**

How did that day pass on the heavenly hosts, Your apostles and disciples and Your believers? Every moment of that day was extremely heavy... who can endure it? Your Resurrection made of that day a joyful feast for heaven and all mankind! Now the heavenly hosts race to show love to us whom You loved and was crucified for!

If You the Lord of heaven accepted the cross with pleasure, and You have prepared the way in Your thoughts before creating us;



doesn’t everyone long to love whom You have so loved? We praise Your Resurrection.

“But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Gal. 6:14).

How did You yield Your spirit and permit Your body to die and be buried in the grave, You who are the Resurrection and Giver of life? Your soul went to hades to bring good news of eternal freedom to the dead; You proclaimed to them that You have fulfilled all the prophecies.

How did Abraham, Isaac and Jacob receive You with their women and offspring?

How did the prophets receive You, as they now understand new depths of the prophecies which they prophesied about You?

You broke the gates of Hades, carried them, freed them, and entered with them into Paradise!

Satan and his angels lost their captives and their authority. The hosts of darkness on earth were cheering. The disciples and whoever was with them were in great fear and sorrow, but that was only for a few days, (less than a handful), and the disciples with the men of the Old Testament will celebrate Your Resurrection chanting and saying:

**Christ is risen... Truly He is risen.**

Truly in Joyous (Bright) Saturday the church opens the doors of the Sanctuary, a sign of the curtain of the temple being torn, and all sing the praises of the Old and New Testaments.

The church spends the night in vigil, for truly this night is far more radiant than the day. The church is released to join the procession of the believers, who is reposed in hope that it may enter with them into paradise!



With all the joy we chant and say what was not possible for any man of both Testaments to chant rejoicing, unless the Resurrection of the Lord Christ was revealed even as a shadow in their hearts.

### **Your Resurrection will never depart from my heart and my thought, O my God**

Your Resurrection takes me to the joyous Palm Sunday procession and opens my heart that You may enter into my heart, Your new Jerusalem!

Your Resurrection, O my Savior, destroys the barren fig tree and plants Your life giving cross in my depths!

Your Resurrection erects a holy temple for You in my heart, neither the money changers nor the pigeon sellers will enter into it!

Your Resurrection carries me to You so I may sit at Your feet, to hear You talk about Your Heavenly Kingdom, but I feel it being revealed in my heart!

Your Resurrection turns the evil into goodness for the sake of my eternal life!

Your Resurrection pushes me to repentance with joy, that You may wash me and sanctify me.

Your Resurrection offers me Your body and blood for the forgiveness of sins, and eternal life.

Your Resurrection reveals You, O who is crucified, the Sun of Righteousness.

Your Resurrection breaks the gates of hades and opens for me the gates of heaven.

Your Resurrection grants me the fellowship of the heavenly hosts! My heart will never cease to chant for You, O who is risen from the dead.

### **Come in Peace O Resurrection Sunday**

This is the epitome of happiness that was given to the bride, through the preaching of the Resurrection of her betrothed.



As my senses are being inflamed with love in that beloved day, I say with all joy:

Come in peace, O You new day which by His authority the old night was gone.

Come in peace, O You who comfort the mourners, giving joy to the depressed, uniting the scattered, cheering the oppressed, encouraging the fearful and planting the good news in the hearing of the disciples!

Come in peace, O that day that is without a night and that joyous morning that is not saddened by its sunset.

Come in peace, come in peace, O that rebirth (the Resurrection) that death cannot overcome, and You O Resurrection which fall cannot encounter.

Come in peace, O You the first of all days, for the universe is being adorned by Your gift.

Come in peace, O Resurrection Sunday for through You we forget the failure of Good Friday.

Come in peace, O that day that does not resemble yesterday<sup>2</sup>.

**St. Jacob of Serug**

### **Yesterday, Jesus was suffering - Today He is raised in glory**

Yesterday, the scribes were reproaching Him saying: Save Yourself; today the awakened (the heavenly) kiss His grave that He left and came out of.

Yesterday, the dead one was laying quietly in hades, today He is alive, giving life to the dead and granting resurrection to all.

Yesterday was the spear, the gull, the vinegar and the cross, today is glory, and the awakened (the heavenly) are chanting with praise.

Yesterday, the Only Begotten committed His soul into the hands of His Father, today He took it back for He has authority as the commander of all.



A day before, He rode the wood of the cross; today He has the power, the might and the life of the dead.

Yesterday, Simon denied and insisted he does not know Him, today he ran to see His tomb for He is risen.

Good Friday prepared traps for the ranks of the apostles, but Sunday prepared a new scene for joy.

Yesterday, deep sleep got hold of Him in Sheol, today He rose as the Mighty One.

Yesterday was sorrow and suffering for the women, today there is pleasure, for they saw Him as a gardener.

On sad Saturday (for the apostles), the Son of the free was among the dead, on Sunday He was in a procession by the throngs of the awakened.

The ranks of the apostles were scattered on Friday by the sword, but that day united the apostles and filled them with joy.

Yesterday the apostles were hiding; today they went out to behold the Resurrection in wonder.

Yesterday was defeat, scattering and hiding, today, the running, the gathering and the preaching.

**St. Jacob of Serug**

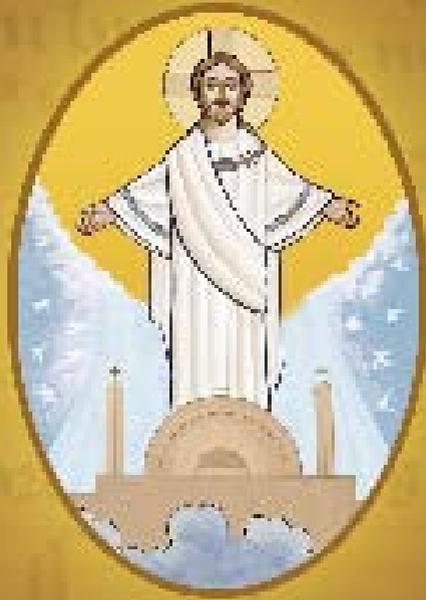
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