

A Message for Pascha

By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

Pascha returns annually as a precious season that places us before the fact of that salvation given to us by Christ's voluntary death and glorious resurrection. Today is a day to renew our hope in the value of life. Today is a day to rectify our path towards true life. Today, we understand that eternal life is our goal and objective and that our life on earth—in all its joys and sorrows—only becomes a true life once we start approaching it as the beginning of our eternal life.

We must examine our faith, our conduct, and our life's path in light of the resurrection. Are these leading us to eternal life, the essence of which is God's active, living, and life-giving presence in our lives? Our Christ did not endure all these sufferings to grant us a happy life that just lasts for some years on earth, only to vanish and disappear. He fulfilled His divine dispensation so that life on earth might become our passage into life eternal. It is through us, the children of the resurrection, that the world passes into life eternal.

The pains, fears, and dangers that surround us must drive us to search for the meaning of life and to place everything in its appropriate context. Sooner or later, the shape of this world will pass away. Why do we then reduce our aspiration to what is on this earth, forgetting the genuine life to come? We believers fear not death but sin. We do not fear losing our earthly life but rather losing life with God. With the power of the resurrection, we confront the different forms of death armed by the unconquerable hope that Life has defeated death.

The resurrection of Christ means that we Christians have no place for despair, regardless of tribulations and dark times. The guiding and directing light of the resurrection remains more powerful than anything. It is not a coincidence that Christ endured severe pains before He died and then arose. His resurrection occurred after He went through Golgotha in order to teach us that the pains of this life, as harsh as they might be, cannot be compared to the joys of the life to come, as the Apostle Paul teaches (2 Cor. 4:17).

We believe that we will witness our personal resurrection before the general resurrection—that is, of course, if we are fully purified from our passions. This is why we will never tire of rising after every fall until we achieve that great purpose.

We are certain that there is no salvation in the world except through this. The bigger the disappointments, the more we cling to our objective, for we have, in the resurrection of Christ, a hope and an energy that will never disappoint or be exhausted.

Let us, therefore, be armed with the resurrection as the cornerstone of our Faith, and let us also, through the resurrection, drive away every despair, fight every fear, and renew our determination to build a virtuous life. Let us couple our faith with works, unite our words to actions, and not be satisfied with pleasantries. Carry the splendor of your rituals of worship into your world and society. Never cease trying to live your Christianity, and you will see that the rest will be added to you.

On this feast, we must renew our love, which is tainted with fear, and look, not merely to ourselves, but to those who are in need of a breath of true life. Remember that man was created for endless love. In Christ, both God and our neighbor become close to us. I beg you to strive to discover that you are one family, responsible for each other, for you are brothers and sisters with one Father. It is proper to intensify our prayers and fasting in order to call upon God's mercy. If we are truly the children of the resurrection, we must become witnesses for life and persistence. This is what we hope for and work towards, for the sake of our country, our people, and all the people of the world. In this spirit, we will welcome the feast this year by lifting up together our thoughts, wishes, and desires and placing them at the feet of Him who rose from the dead, hoping for the resurrection of the entire world. Amen.

Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!