



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΦΡΑΓΚΙΣΚΟΥ

P A S C H A 2009

*“All creation rejoices and is glad today, for Christ is risen
and Hades has been despoiled.”*

(From the Easter Magnificat)

Beloved Brothers, Sisters and Children in the Risen Christ,

On this Pascha dawn, let your heart and entire being, along with all God’s creation, be filled with the exultation of the Resurrection. It was on an early morning such as this that the second creation – the “ineffable” wonder – emerged from the splendor of the empty tomb. Even though it was rejected, and continues to be rejected by apostates and those who espouse no belief whatsoever or are weak in faith in every facet of their lives, the Resurrection of the Lord remains a fact.

The “ineffable” wonder is attested to by millions of believers who celebrate this event every year, and by the intense joy and exultation that marks its celebration. The Resurrection celebration points to an “ineffable” miracle of our own – one that might be described as our own resurrection from our constant, recurring failures and shortcomings – a resurrection that must take place if we are to avert a final collapse into spiritual and moral death.

Innumerable are the human hearts and souls that are being resurrected on this radiant dawn from a grave that seals within its confines dead dreams and aspirations, sentiments, memories, and even dead souls and consciences. Is it possible that we, too – holding the lighted candles in our hands – are to be counted among the countless who are seeking to eradicate darkness and to consume death itself in the flame of lighted candles, proclaiming once and for all: *“Enough of evil in the world, enough of enmity, violence, crime and death?”*

On this Easter morning, we have drawn near to the tomb of Christ, reliving that historical event, to remove the *“stone from the door to the tomb”* and to converse with the angel dressed in white, and hear from his own lips the message: *“He is not here”*. We have gathered to hear that God is *“God of the living and not of the dead”*, that the *“grave and mortification”* have no place in the life of believers; that Christ is risen from the dead, having destroyed the bonds of death; that *“there is no dead body in the*

tomb”; that hell was embittered because it was rejected; it was embittered because it was mocked; it was embittered because it suffered defeat and was cast aside.

Renewed by that certitude and encouraged by that proclamation, let us believe in the unending life that is Christ, and let us also try to make that faith a resurrected life – a personal, conscious, positive, and joyous, resurrected lifestyle.

Let us lift high our lighted candles and let us call upon all believers and non-believers alike in a spirit of love, proclaiming the eternal and joyous words: *“Come and receive the light from the unwaning light”*. The world greatly needs the imbuing of heaven and earth with light, and that human hearts and souls should be illumined and radiate love, forgiveness, glory and peace – for these are all the very Christ Who is risen from the dead.

Open your hearts and let Christ enter in at this very moment. He will enter even if the doors to the heart are sealed shut, to speak with all of us, just as He did with two disciples, Luke and Cleopas, on their journey to Emmaus.

Listen to what He said to His disciples after His Resurrection: *“And behold, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20)*. Let the Lord’s message beam into your hearts like the glowing rays of the morning sun to dispel fear, darkness and death.

My beloved brothers, sisters and children, it is indeed the Day of Resurrection. Let us be illumined by the unwaning light and extend our arms to embrace friends and enemies alike in the love of the Risen Christ. And let us sing out in harmonious unity as true children of God, with voices reaching heaven itself, the joyous hymn of this day of the unending Resurrection, the dawning of a new life in Christ: **“Christ Is Risen!”**

With Love in the Risen Lord,


✠ G E R A S I M O S
Metropolitan of San Francisco

**NOTE: To be read immediately following the reading of the
Gospel of the Paschal Vigil service.**