



*“O Christ our Saviour, the angels in heaven sing the praises of Your resurrection, make us, on earth, also worthy to extol and glorify You with a pure heart” (Paschal Matins).*

Christ is Risen!      Indeed He is Risen!

Dear Basilian Family!

Christ is Risen! Jesus lives! This is the great news the Church proclaims day in and day out throughout the world, and with special intensity on this Easter Sunday!

The Resurrection of Christ is much more than the reanimation of a dead body. It is the most consequential event in the history of the universe. Jesus emerges victorious from the tomb to die no more. His victory is the victory of human nature over sin and death. His rising from the dead brings all creation to its fulfillment in God. His resurrection accomplishes God’s loving plan for creation. God himself has submitted to the power of death, to destroy it. He took upon himself the weight of our sin, so as to lift this weight from our shoulders. We are truly healed by His wounds, because His wounds lead to his rising from the dead.

Jesus is risen indeed. What we celebrate is not an event of the distant past, much less a myth or a pious story. Today and whenever we celebrate Divine Liturgy, we are celebrating the Paschal mystery, the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus in the eternal present of God. This Sunday in particular, we bask in the contemplation of His rising. Just as on Good Friday when we felt emptiness because Jesus was in the tomb, so on Easter Sunday, joy, light, peace, life overflow in our hearts as we celebrate a momentous event of His resurrection.

We experience great joy for we know with the certain knowledge of faith that Christ lives. His rising from death is a fact that we have come to know because of the account of eyewitnesses; people who were even willing to lay down their lives to proclaim to the world what they had seen. We have also encountered Christ in our lives. That is the reason why we are Christians.

Because of the resurrection of Christ, everything He claims about Himself, everything the Church teaches about Him and about herself, every single event in our lives makes sense. Every command of His, every teaching of the Church is worthy of our assent because He is alive.

The event we are celebrating illuminates all of human history. Everything that happened before this took place in time, everything that is happening and everything that may happen until His second coming finds meaning in this one and unique event. The man Jesus, who was put to death and buried, is now alive. He is present in His Church, especially in the Eucharist, guiding human history and our personal histories to their consummation in God. Even now as the COVID-19 pandemic is sweeping throughout the world, the power of the Resurrected Christ will be our saving grace.

Of course, the full effects of Christ's resurrection are not yet fully manifest. There is much suffering in the world, especially the suffering of families that have lost their loved ones to this horrible virus, people battling cancer, poverty or abuse, and wars that continue to rage in the world. Through it all the Church still struggles to serve her children in these times of uncertainty when there is so much injustice, poverty, murder, exploitation, and disordered behaviour of all kinds in the world. There are many battles yet to be fought in our personal lives. We still see imperfectly and are subject to our miseries, limitations and, yes, we will die. But all of these do not deny in any way the fact of the Resurrection. Rather, they are a call to open our hearts wider to grace.

The effects of His rising will be made completely manifest when He comes again in glory to judge the living and the dead. In the meantime, we ought to rejoice in this great news and fight our own battles, while working together to battle our common enemy COVID-19. At the same time we should never despair in our setbacks, but simply draw grace and the strength from our Risen Lord. We know full well that if we are united with Him and open our hearts to the grace that flows from Him, though we will not be spared suffering, ultimately we will overcome. Jesus will embrace us and bring us to full communion with Him for all eternity when our time comes to appear before Him.


The Resurrection of Christ does not, however, take away our free will. It is possible to live as if we were still under the yoke of death, having forgotten that Christ's Resurrection calls us to be holy, and that it reminds us that we were created for communion with God in this life and for all eternity. May His Resurrection strengthen our hearts and minds, and remind us of our ultimate destiny.

The Resurrection of Christ is an explosion of light dispelling the darkness of sin, an outpouring of grace overflowing all of creation. This grace of God, this abundant life flowing to us mainly through the Sacraments entrusted to the Church, heals us and strengthens us for the journey of life. Those of us who have been baptized have a great responsibility. He has come to meet us in a special way. We have been configured to the Risen Lord and ought to be Christ to others, reflecting the light coming out of the empty tomb, radiating the love of God in everything that we do, going about doing good, becoming agents of healing and reconciliation, abhorring sin, first and foremost its ugly manifestations in our own lives.

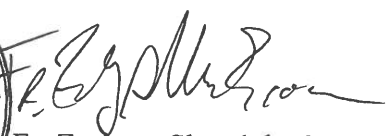
The resurrection of Christ brings meaning to our lives. To have encountered Him alive and present in our midst is the best thing that could have ever happened to us. Easter Sunday is a good day to recommit to working diligently to build up the Kingdom of God and to hasten the coming of the Risen Lord!

May Risen Lord be your anchor at this time of uncertainty and fear, and may He bring us Hope and Joy. Your brother in Christ Jesus.

Христос Воскрес! Воістину Воскрес!

  
Fr. Gabriel Haber, OSBM  
Provincial Superior



  
Fr. Zachary Shwaluk, OSBM  
Provincial Secretary