

EASTER 2019 MESSAGE OF HIS BEATITUDE THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS III

By the Mercy of God Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem
and all Palestine

to all the members of the Church, grace and mercy and peace
from the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb
of the Resurrected Christ.

“Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him” (Mark 16:6).

The Myrrh-bearing Women who came on the morning of the first Saturday to anoint Jesus with myrrh, heard this joyful and hopeful words from the luminous angel who was sitting by the tomb.

The angel’s words were confirmed with the sight of the empty tomb, with the “the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself” (John 20:7). Moreover, they were confirmed with the vision of the resurrected Christ. Christ went down to Hades through the cross but Hades did not hold Him. With His descend in Hades, the Lord removed and retrieved from it those who had been bound in hell for centuries, “He stood and cried aloud to those in Hades, enter again Paradise”. “ For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God” (2 Cor. 13:4), He was risen from the dead by His Divine-Human power and appeared to the Myrrh-bearing women and to His disciples many times. He appeared to them at the Upper room on

the first and on the eighth day after His Resurrection (John 20:19 & 26), on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:15), in Jerusalem “the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them” (Luke 24:33), “not as a spirit, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones” (Luke 24:39), but with His illumined and glorified body with the signs of the nails in His hands and feet” (Luke 24:40), asking them “Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them” (Luke 24:41-43).

“To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days” (Acts 1:3), He was then ascended to heaven in glory from the Mount of Olives, He sent to the gathered disciples in the Upper room “another Comforter” from the Father, the Spirit of truth, and through them captivated the whole world, founded and established the Church in it.

The Lord established the Church as the witness of His truth and continuer of His mission. The Church, in the Holy Spirit teaches and preaches Him to be Incarnate, Crucified and Resurrected. It teaches through the word and manifests the teaching through works, while it sanctifies through the Sacraments. It conveys the Divine Grace, transforms the morals, the life and the whole being of the people. It becomes both paradise and heaven, as the troparion says “as we stand in the temple of Thy glory we think we are in heaven”. The Church is an earthly oasis, a spring of living water, of truth and of peace, of righteousness, of brotherhood, of reconciliation, of rapture, and of fulfilled happiness. It deters wars, dispels enmity and unites the nations. The Church preserves and protects the environment and the planet as the creation of God for the habitation of the humankind.

The Church of Jerusalem, as the Mother of Churches, works its pilgrimage, pastoral and salvific mission at the divine dwelling places, at the places that have been sanctified

through the grace of the Incarnate, Crucified and Resurrected from the dead, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. From them, and especially from the All-holy and Life-giving Tomb, through the offering of the bloodless sacrifice "on the salvific and bright night of the luminous day of the Resurrection" we pray for the peace-making of the whole world, and especially for the troubled Middle East, for the cessation of the schisms of the Churches and for the unity of the Orthodox Church in the bond of peace, and greet our reverend flock in all parts of the world along with the noble pilgrims, and wish to all, the joy, the power the hope and the light of the Resurrected Christ.

Christ is Risen!

In the Holy City of Jerusalem PASCHA 2019

With Fatherly wishes and Patriarchal blessings

Fervent Supplicant for all before God

THEOPHILOS III

Patriarch of Jerusalem