



*Paschal Letter of His Eminence Metropolitan Serapion*

## GLORIOUS FEAST OF THE RESURRECTION 2017

*“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels” (2 Cor. 4:7)*

My Beloved, the Blessed Children of the Holy Church,

**Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!**

**I**T IS MY PLEASURE TO WISH ALL OF YOU THE BLESSINGS OF THE GLORIOUS FEAST OF THE RESURRECTION. We rejoice in the Resurrection of our Lord, because it gives us the strength to face the power of evil. Amidst our celebration and rejoicing in the Resurrection of our Savior, we are following the pain and suffering that our beloved brethren in Egypt are facing, such as the terrorist attacks on the Boutroseya Church, St. George Church in Tanta, and St. Mark Cathedral in Alexandria; the assaults and the forced displacement of Copts in El-Arsish; and the pressure placed on some Christian young women in Upper Egypt, along with kidnappings in some cases. Additionally, in our American society, we are facing new policies and movements that are in direct opposition to our Christian values and ethics. As we confront the forces of evil, terrorism, and extremism, it makes us feel as though we are earthen vessels.

Indeed, we are earthen vessels! However, the Resurrection of Christ gives us an enormous Treasure, Who is our Risen Lord, Who gives us the power to face the evil forces. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, St. Paul the Apostle wrote, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed – always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body” (2 Cor. 4:7-10).

***How do we overcome the world that lies under the sway the wicked one?***

St. John the beloved answers this question by saying, “And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 Jn. 5:4-5).

***Our Faith in the Resurrection of Christ gives us the power to overcome the world.***

It is this faith in the power of our Good Savior, which gives us the courage to face the forces of evil and terrorism, which martyred Veronia, Marina, and Magy in the Boutroseya Church. Yet, the mothers of these martyrs witnessed through their strong faith and overcame the world.

We read that Goliath the Giant looked at David and saw him as an earthen vessel. However, David, through his faith, showed the real treasure within his earthen vessel, “So the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him; for he was only a youth, ruddy and good-looking... Then David said to the Philistine, ‘You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied’” (1 Sam. 17:42, 45).

My Beloved,

Today, the world comes to us, who carry the name of Christ, with a sword, a spear, and a javelin. The world disdains and curses us, because of our belief in our Lord and His Life-Giving Cross. To the world, we are seen as earthen vessels, but we should not have fear, because we have a precious treasure within our earthen vessels, so that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

The power of Christ’s Resurrection is manifested in our human weakness and gives us the victory over the wickedness in the world. In his Book, *On the Incarnation*, St. Athanasius wrote,

*“How can you think otherwise, when you see men naturally weak hastening to death, unafraid at the prospect of corruption, fearless of the descent into hades, even indeed with eager soul provoking it, not shrinking from tortures, rather than to remain in this present life? If you see with your own eyes men and women and children, even, thus welcoming death for the sake of Christ’s religion, how can you be so utterly silly and incredulous and maimed in your mind as not to realize that Christ, to Whom these all bear witness, Himself gives the victory to each, making death completely powerless for those who hold His faith and bear the sign of the cross?” (29:4)*

My Beloved,

Let us pray for the peace of the Holy Church and for our beloved shepherd and father, H.H. Pope Tawadros.

Let us pray for every soul facing the power of evil.

Let us pray for the families of the martyrs and the confessors.

May our Lord grant us the power of His Glorious Resurrection and give us the strong faith to overcome the world.

Wishing you many joyous returns  
Metropolitan Serapion