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English

Ταῦτα Χρόνοι

The Papal message of the Glorious Feast of Resurrection

In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God, Amen.

Ekhristos Anesti, Alithos Anesti
Christ is risen. Truly, He is risen

I congratulate you my beloved on the feast of the resurrection according to our eastern calendar. I congratulate our entire Coptic community in each diocese and all Coptic churches worldwide spanning all five continents. I congratulate our fathers the metropolitans, bishops, priests, deacons, and all the clergy. Also all the congregation including youth, children, elders and all Coptic families. I congratulate you all on this feast that is our first joy. According to our faith and doctrine, the resurrection is the basis of Christianity.

When we contemplate the events of the Resurrection, we behold these 3 days, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Friday of the crucifixion or Good Friday; Then joyful Saturday, the Saturday of expectation; Then Sunday of the Resurrection, that is the Sunday of victory. Let us review what St. Paul wrote when he spoke about Christianity. He was a philosopher and great theologian. In his 14 epistles, he wrote extensively about Christ, the church, the resurrection, and eternal life. However, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 13, He wrote an immortal poem about love, written in 13 verses. In the last verse, he mentions ‘Faith, Hope and Love, but the greatest is Love.’ (1 Corinthians 13:13). These three are the three days that altered the history of the world and life of humanity.

The first day, is the day of the cross, Friday. It is referred to in the epistle of St Paul as the message of Faith. The day of the cross is the day of Faith. Our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross. Therefore we pray saying: “O You, Who on the sixth day and in the sixth hour was nailed to the cross for ... us all.” This cross, on which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, was a declaration. As it says in the Song of Songs: “My beloved is white and ruddy, Chief among ten thousand.” (Song of Solomon 5:10). White and ruddy, signifies purity and redemption. And ‘My beloved, Chief among ten thousand’ is a banner. Similarly, the cross was an elevated banner. As the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross in Golgotha. The day of the crucifixion is the day of Faith. The base of the cross is our faith. As St. Paul says: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” (Galatians 2:20). Friday is the day we were established in Christ, the redeemer and savior of all mankind. When you stand with me before the cross, we remember the centurion. When the side of Christ was pierced with a spear, blood and water oozed from His side. And the centurion declared his famous statement: “Truly this was the Son of God.” (Matthew 27:54). Being a Roman, the testimony of the centurion was a testimony from the pagan world acknowledging what Christ did for all mankind. The foundation of your faith is the cross upon which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified.

He transformed the cross from shame, humiliation, and symbol and tool of death. Christ changed this into a tool of glory and honor, in which we all take pride. This is Friday, the day of the crucifixion, the day of Faith.

Then comes Saturday, the Saturday of joy. We also call it the Saturday of expectation, the Saturday of hope. This was the expression used by St. Paul, that this is the day of hope. Christ was crucified, died on the cross, and then was buried in the tomb. The disciples and all the beloved were anticipating with hope this resurrection. It was a day of hope as expressed by Christ during His final teachings with His disciples. It was a day full of hope. Simultaneously, it was filled with fear, anxiety, and endurance. There was kind of fear that overwhelmed the soul of the disciples and the beloved ones. He was buried in the tomb, but where is He?

It was the Saturday of Hope. This is the day during which we stay awake reading the book of revelation, the apocalypse night. We read and anticipate the delivery from darkness to light, from earthly to eternity. This was the day of hope.

Then came the dawn of Sunday, which is the day of resurrection. The day of resurrection is the day of love. Let us look at what St. Paul says: "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:13). The resurrection of Christ the Lord is His love to everyone. St. Paul stood with immense power saying: "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." (Philippians 3:10). This personal experience of the resurrection is the love offered for everyone. God did not leave our souls to live in anxiety, sorrow or pain. He did not leave the souls in this status. God chose the dawn of Sunday as the day that He made to fill man with love and joy. The person whose heart is filled by godly love is the one who can live in joy. From where does this love come?

It comes when the heart of man is filled by love. And when he feels the hand of Christ on the cross is extended to him and to his heart. This is with the drops of blood that were poured on the cross. They were drops of love for everyone, and for man's sin and suffering. God came to rise from the dead on the dawn of Sunday. This became the strongest expression that Christ gave in the resurrection of His love for humankind.

In the beginning of every day, we pray the morning prayer that commemorates His resurrection. Every week, we pray on Sunday and commemorate the resurrection of Christ on the dawn of Sunday. Sunday became our weekly feast. We can call it the feast of godly love, which God poured in our hearts. St. Paul says in his epistle to the Romans: "The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." (Romans 5:5). Also the work of God through the resurrection extends in every Coptic month. The 29th of each Coptic month is the commemoration of the resurrection, nativity and annunciation. Annually, we celebrate the Glorious Feast of the Resurrection, which lasts 50 days or 7 weeks. The eighth week then starts and symbolizes eternity and heavenly life.

I congratulate you my beloved. I hope it becomes a blessed and joyful feast. May it become a feast in which we feel faith, hope and love, but the greatest is love. It is the love of Christ that God poured for every man. I hope that you stay in all goodness. I hope that you all in every diocese and church live in goodness and peace. Let your service and love spread among you all. Ekhristos Anesti, Alithos Anesti. Christ is risen. Truly, He is risen. Glory be to God forever, Amen.

Panadra II