



**ARCHEVECHE des EGLISES ORTHODOXES RUSSES
EN EUROPE OCCIDENTALE**

**АРХИЕПИСКОПИЯ ПРАВОСЛАВНЫХ РУССКИХ
ЦЕРКВЕЙ В ЗАПАДНОЙ ЕВРОПЕ**

EXARCHAT DU PATRIARCAT ŒCUMENIQUE

ЭКЗАРХАТ ВСЕЛЕНСКОГО ПАТРИАРХА

L'Archevêque

PASCHAL MESSAGE
of His Eminence, Job, Archbishop of Telmessos, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarch,
to the Clergy, Monks and Faithful
of the Archdiocese of the Russian Orthodox Churches in Western Europe

*"Let us venerate the holy Resurrection of Christ;
for behold, through the Cross joy has come into the world ... "*

Dear Fathers, Brothers and Sisters, beloved in Christ,

Christ is risen!

Once again, the Lord has made us worthy to celebrate His Passover, the Feast of feasts, the Solemnity of solemnities, the Foundation of our faith because, as the Apostle Paul noted correctly, *"if Christ is not risen, our faith is in vain"* (1 Corinthians 15:14). This Feast truly fills us with joy. It calms our anxiety; it soothes our pain; it dispels our sorrows.

However, the joy that flows from the empty tomb today is inseparable from the Cross of Golgotha. That is why the Christian cannot access this spiritual joy if he refuses to carry his cross. The Christian life is truly a cruciform-resurrectional life which begins with our Baptism, by which we participated personally in the death and resurrection of Christ, as the Apostle Paul reminds us: *"As many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death ... Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead [...] even so we also should walk in newness of life."* (Romans 6:3-4). And St. Cyril of Jerusalem reminds us that *"Christ was truly crucified, truly buried, and truly He is risen, and all this grace is given to us, so that participating in his sufferings, by imitating them, we may truly gain salvation"* (*Mystagogic Catecheses* II, 5). If we take our Baptism seriously, our person is profoundly transformed since Baptism, reproducing in us the death and resurrection of Christ, uniting us with Him, *"the common Person of humanity"*, renewed true humanity within us.

Thus Christ appears to us Christians as a true model. But we cannot share the joy of the Resurrection without knowing the pain of crucifixion. When He invites us to follow Him, Christ tells us to take up our cross (Mark 8:34). And, on the eve of His Passion, when He prayed in Gethsemane: *"Thy will be done, not Mine"* (Luke 22: 42), He gives us *"an example and model for the relinquishing of our own will and the fulfillment of the will of God"* as St. Maximus the Confessor says. Thus, Christianity does not seek to adopt a doleful attitude, nor to justify suffering in the world, but reminds us that it is *"through the Cross that joy has come into the world."*

Living in a world that goes through so many crises, whether political, economic, ecological, moral or spiritual, a world that suffers from poverty, pollution, antagonism, violence or war, we are not indifferent to the joy and the light of the Resurrection as long as we agree to take up our cross. To take up our cross means giving up self, desires, fantasies, passions, ideologies, our own will. It is to accept obedience to God, to His commandments, to His Church. It is to reject arrogance, vanity and pride, to adopt humility, patience, detachment and sacrificial love for all, without which no Christian life is possible.

At this radiant Feast of the Resurrection, I give you, dear Fathers, Brothers and Sisters beloved in Christ, the Paschal kiss, and ask the Risen Lord to give us the strength, courage and patience to bear the cross of our Christian life daily, and that through it, we may be filled with spiritual joy to find ourselves among the disciples of Christ and say:

The Lord is truly risen! (Luke 24:34)

+ Job, Archbishop of Telmessos, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarch
Paris, Cathedral of Saint Alexander of the Neva
April 20, 2014.