

Confessing His Resurrection in our Lives
Glorious Resurrection Feast
April 2017

My Beloved Children,

Christ is risen! Truly He is risen! I wish you all a very joyous Feast of the Glorious Resurrection, always abounding in God's love with constant jubilant hearts distinguishing you as children of our risen Savior.

By Christ's holy resurrection, we were given a renewed infinite chapter in life. Before His resurrection, we were marred by the plagues of sin, but in His resurrection, we live by love, grow in virtue, serve with grace, and rise above sin through hope. Christ's resurrection is the epitome of joy yielding to an unshakable state of contentment, *"Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content"* (Philippians 4:11). By emulating Christ, we confess His holy resurrection in our lives. As Christians, we proclaim Christ's death, for which He was delivered for our transgressions and we confess His resurrection, for which He was raised for our justification (cf. Rom. 4:25).

To proclaim His death alone is insufficient, but confessing His resurrection in our lives affirms His divinity and confirms our faith in Him as the One Triune God. Indeed, Christ rose from the dead. *"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven"* (Matthew 10:32). This kind of confession is not by mere words but in life. Confessing His resurrection is abiding in Him and reflecting Him in you. All that He asked of us was to love one another. Love is selfless and not steered by one's ego. *"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another"* (John 13:35).

Confessing His resurrection in our lives requires devoted discipleship. People often refer to Christ's disciples as if there were only twelve. Out of His humility and love, Christ referred to His disciples as friends (cf. Jn 15:15). Though He began His ministry with twelve men, we are all His disciples, men, women, and children. As those first few left all to follow Him, we, too, must leave all and do the same. Escape from pettiness and arrogance and hold onto the cross so that His resurrection may be revealed in our lives. The followers of Christ were just as diverse in their lives as in their virtues. Some were married like a fisherman named Peter, some were celibate like a tentmaker named Paul, some were ascetic like a voice in the wilderness named John, some were women that followed Him to His cross and tomb like Mary Magdalene, some were children like the little boy who shared his simple meal of fish and bread, some were prominent like Joseph of Arimathea, some were outcasts like the woman from Samaria, and many others, including you and me. Everyone has the potential and the calling to be His disciple and to follow Him.

Confessing His resurrection in our lives is serving in a Christ-like manner by emulating His graciousness toward everyone. *"Rejoice with those who rejoice, and*

weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15). The outcasts and demeaned found their defense in Christ, like the unwelcomed woman at the Pharisee's home weeping over her sins, the shunned lepers, an infirmed woman bleeding for years, a dishonest greedy little man, a foreigner begging for the healing of her daughter, and even some noisy children interrupting His sermons. Service requires a sensitive eye like Christ's that takes notice of everyone.

Confessing His resurrection in our lives empowers us to rise above sin through hope. This means we are committed to the struggle against sin, eagerly approaching the Holy Mysteries and confident in God's infinite mercies and forgiveness through these sacred sacraments. The worst aspect of sin is not in the vulgarity of the sin itself, but moreover, in the reluctance to repent. *"Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; when I fall, I will arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me"* (Micah 7:8). Sin is a field of chains that can only be broken by God's compassion for which purpose He was incarnate, died, resurrected, and established the Holy Mysteries.

On this holy occasion, we remember our beloved martyrs of the Hosanna Sunday massacres at our Coptic Orthodox Churches in Egypt, St. Mark Church in Alexandria and St. George Church in Tanta. These martyrs recently joined the heavenly hosts to celebrate the glorious feast this year in the Paradise of Joy and will continue to pray for us until the Lord's Second Coming. We pray for the martyrs' families, the confessors, the wounded, and for all who stand beside us during these days of horrific carnage targeting Christians. We are confident in the Lord's mercy to the merciful and vengeance to the cruel, all in due time.

May our loving God allow us to be witnesses of this glorious feast by confessing His holy resurrection in our lives. Joy, love, discipleship, service, and hope are all dimensions of confessing Christ's resurrection in our lives. To proclaim His death, we must share His life with others that they may yearn to invite Him into their hearts to transform their lives. To confess His resurrection, He must be manifested in our own lives. Thus, we cry out with exceeding joy and say, "Amen. Amen. Amen. Your death, O Lord, we proclaim, Your holy resurrection and ascension into the heaven, we confess" (*Congregation Response in the Institution Narrative of the Divine Liturgies*).

Through the intercessions of Our Lady the Theotokos St. Mary, Archangel Michael and all the angels, and the prayers of St. Mark and all the saints, we beseech our Lord Jesus Christ to protect His Church and to keep the life of our beloved honored father and patriarch, His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, for many years and peaceful times.

Glory be to God, forever, Amen.

Bishop Youssef

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