



Resurrection Feast 2018

My Beloved Children,

Christ is risen! Truly He is risen! Who is like the Lord our God? His mercies outnumber the sand of the sea. His generous love is beyond measure. What has He left undone to save us and give us eternal life? When we think of God's many benevolent attributes, generosity is a constant characteristic. Immeasurable is God's desire to give us eternal life. Though He asks for little, He gives with abundance: "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly" (John 10:10). He offered Himself as a sacrifice of love and His precious blood was shed as a ransom for the human race. His glorious resurrection assures the world that a resurrection awaits each one of us. The world foolishly tries to deal with God from an intellectual and practical perspective, but fails to grasp God's love for all and His pleasure to give us eternal life: "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" (Matthew 7:11).

We are assured of God's generous love in His glorious resurrection for He suffered immensely to give us a better and greater life that is everlasting and void of pain and sorrow. He furnished the earth in the days preceding the creation of man in preparation of the arrival of humanity on the sixth day (Genesis 1-2). Mar Isaac the Syrian says, "In love did He bring the world into existence." God left nothing undone to give us love, grace, forgiveness, and eternal life. The Lord's generosity was demonstrated throughout His ministry by transforming sinners to saints, esteeming the meek, feeble, and outcasts, healing the sick whether by fault or circumstance, welcoming all people, blessing the children, and feeding the multitudes.

The beginning of the journey of the Holy Great Fast provided instructions for laying up treasures in heaven without worry about needs and materialistic desires, but rather offered assurance that God's abundant love meets and exceeds all our necessities: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). When the Lord appeared to Solomon telling him, "Ask! What shall I give you?" Solomon replied by asking for wisdom and knowledge to be able to serve God's people (2 Chronicles 1:7). The Lord responded with great generosity by granting Solomon's humble request and added more and more (2 Chronicles 1:11-12).

The Lord expects us to be generous with others. He prepared His nation to show kindness toward the Gentiles, for He desired to save all humanity: "The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: *I am* the Lord your God" (Leviticus 19:34). We should never forget God's generous love, forgiveness, and grace in the many challenges we face everyday. Even if you feel empty of love for others, let His love fill your heart and it will naturally pour out of you. All that we

can possess in life can either be drops of oil like that which ignited the glow in the lanterns of the wise virgins or we can become dark and hollow vessels like what the foolish virgins possessed because their souls were spiritually vacant (Matthew 25:1-13). Faith is the vessel and love is the content.

The entire world, those from the time of creation unto those yet to come and receive the Lord in His glory, were granted the grace of His holy resurrection. Grace is a feature of God's generosity. No one deserves it and no one can earn it, but the Lord Christ is pleased to give it with abundance: "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). He expects us to be like Him, generous in love, gracious in speech, and considerate in all conduct. We have no enemies, except Satan. Abundant is God's willingness to forgive all our sins. Therefore, do not hesitate to forgive others. Christ the Lord made Himself the acceptable Sacrifice upon whom the burdens of the people's sins are laid. He gave us the Mystery of Confession for constant renewal and refreshment of our souls from the bondage of sin. "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence" (Ephesians 1:7-8).

With grateful and joyful hearts, let us reflect daily on Christ's glorious resurrection and His abundant love, grace, forgiveness, and the eternal life He has prepared for us so that our hearts may broaden with generosity toward all people. Through the intercession and prayers of Saint Mary, all the angels and saints, we ask the Lord to preserve the life of our beloved father, His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, the 118th Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of Saint Mark, and to keep him on his throne for many years and peaceful times.

Glory be to God, forever, Amen.

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