



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States

Resurrection Festal Message 2025

Look up!!

My Beloved Children,

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

“And they said among themselves, ‘Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?’” (Mark 16:3)

Such was the trouble that Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome found themselves in early Sunday morning as they came to the tomb to anoint the Body of their Beloved Master, our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we rejoice and celebrate the Glorious Resurrection of our Good Savior, we, like these women, realize there still exist so many troubles, anxieties, fears, doubts, and insecurities all around us in the world, in the lives of those we know, our communities, and even in our own families and lives.

“But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large.” (Mark 16:4)

Despite however large and overwhelming the troubles and temptations of life seem to be for us, we find that all

the women needed to do was to *look up* to realize that the stone had been rolled away. St Pope Kyrillos the Sixth assures us, “Trust that God sees you. He hears you and feels for you. So your little matters are very big before His love and your big matters are very small before His might.”

Indeed, *the love of our God* makes our little and imperfect offerings of worship, prayers, fasting, and almsgiving acceptable and even very precious before Him. *The might of our God* makes the very large stone of our sins and troubles, small and easy to remove when we approach Him in faith as these women did Sunday morning.

Let us learn from these women who came with diligence and hope to the tomb seeking their Beloved in faith, despite not knowing how their dilemma would be solved. Like the man with the withered hand who was healed when he stretched out his hand in obedience to the command of the Lord (cf. Matthew 12:13), these women did not limit themselves to their own reasoning and understanding, but trusted in Him who says, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God” (Luke 18:27).

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)

We rejoice and look up today to see the very large stone has been removed—that very large stone of humanity’s sins that had sealed us in the tomb of death for thousands of years, unable to have hope of eternal life. The very large stone of our disobedience and rebellion against God has been removed by the obedience and humility of our Good Savior who “being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8).

Let us continue to rejoice and look up for the next 50 days in at least three ways:

Firstly, to **look up with hope** and see the Lord Jesus Christ victoriously seated at the right hand of His Good Father, who, “according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:3-4). *For us*, the Lord has conquered death by His death and ascended into the heavens that He may prepare an eternal place *for us* in His Kingdom. Despite whatever troubles and obstacles we face, we live all the days of our life on earth **looking up with great hope, because “We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come!”**

Secondly, after enjoying a Spirit-filled Great Fast and Pascha Week, let us continue to **look up by seeking and setting our minds on things above** during these joyful 50 days.

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Colossians 3:1-2)

Let us look up to our Heavenly Father with the Lord Jesus Christ and give thanks, bless, and sanctify our lives with the presence of God in every relationship, every endeavor, and every celebration during these Holy 50 days. As the Lord changes the bread and wine into His Body and Blood every liturgy, we pray He transforms our ordinary earthly life to be spiritual and heavenly: “Change us into a spiritual manner of life, that we may walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.” (Absolution of the 3rd Hour of the Agpeya)

Thirdly, the Lord speaks of evangelism and exhorts us to **look up and share the good news of salvation with others** saying, “Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” (John 4:35) “The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. ³⁸ Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” (Matthew 9:37-38) Indeed, the joy of the resurrection is for all the world: our

neighbors, our co-workers, our classmates, and so many who are hungry for a true relationship with our Heavenly Father. They are waiting to meet Christ in us that we may invite them into the Body of Christ—the Church.

To acquire this spirit of looking up and rejoicing in hope of resurrection, setting our minds on things above, and sharing the Gospel, let us begin with recommitting ourselves to **look up to the Lord every morning** during these Holy 50 days and pray with King David,

“My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; In the morning I will direct *it* to You, And I will look up.” (Psalm 5:3)

May the Lord grant you to enjoy a peaceful and grace-filled Feast of the Glorious Resurrection and Holy 50 days.

Through the intercessions of the Mother of God, Saint Mary, Archangel Michael, and all the heavenly hosts, martyrs, and saints, we ask the Lord to preserve the life of our beloved father, His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark, for many years and peaceful times.

Metropolitan Youssef

Bishop Basil

Bishop Gregory

Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States

