

"Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so that we too might walk in newness of life"

Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans 6:4

Fellow Redeemed in the Risen Saviour,

The triumphant exclamation, "Christ is Risen from the dead!" the Victory cry against Death and Hell, is joyfully repeated today by myriads of Orthodox Christians around the world. "The Church, shedding her mournful attire, clothes herself in bright and radiant garments, which shines as if reflecting the brightness of the Angel who rolled away the stone from the tomb," wrote an Orthodox layman who was asked to describe the Easter Liturgy to a non Orthodox.



The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church of Christ celebrates, as the mouths of the faithful, filled with joy, cry aloud, "The Lord is Risen! Our Resurrection has come, Hosanna!" For we know that "*Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him*" (Romans 6:9). And what is more, we believe and we know that, since we have been buried with Christ by Holy Baptism, we will live with Him in eternity. This is the meaning of salvation; this is the cause of our joy and the reason for our Paschal festivities. The new life in Christ is already a reality. The life of the faithful after the Resurrection of Christ is not the same as life before it. The Holy Spirit has already descended and has made the Church its dwelling. Our life already is enriched by the Divine Grace, and is being brought to perfection by the uncreated energies of the Godhead, which benefit and renew us in many and varied ways.

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This great gift of Almighty God to us, however, calls for a response on our part, an expression of our gratitude and love toward Him; namely, the reception of this gift, the acceptance of the resurrected life offered to us, by means of living a life worthy of our calling, by walking in newness of life.

For the Resurrection of Christ Jesus will become a reality for each of us personally only if we identify with the Lord Jesus and are buried with Him in a death, like His, to sin; thus we may live with Him in God, being reborn in the Holy Spirit and continuously cleansed by Him, having Him dwelling within us.

This newness of life, the new life into which the Resurrection of Christ Jesus leads us, is a life lived in accordance with Divine Grace, a life led, with our consent and cooperation, by the Holy Spirit. The world has opened up for us. Its borders are no longer those of material reality. Our interests are not confined to created nature. We aspire to a life beyond bodily restrictions. We prepare ourselves for eternity.

When seen from the perspective of the Resurrection, the events of this world take on new dimensions. The sorrows with which we are confronted are shown to be transitory in nature. The burden of human mishaps becomes lighter when seen through the eyes of hope. The God-given joys of this life are sanctified and experienced as a foretaste of that eternal joy which no one can take away from us. Our whole life is transformed into something new, a life different from that lived by people far from God. The joy and certainty of the Resurrection prevail within us, and arm us with courage, with optimism, with concern and love for our fellow human beings and for all creation.

The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus is a reality that does not leave our life unaffected. It is the foundation of hope, of creativity, of love, of our concern for all and for everything, and of our joy in Christ Jesus, which cannot be taken from us.

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With paternal love I pray that all experience the joy of the Resurrection in its fullness and live "*in newness of life*," guided and consecrated by the Divine Grace, which heals the sick and makes up for what is lacking.

To Christ our True God, Who rose from the dead and granted us new life, are due Glory, Honor, Praise to the ages of ages. Amen.

Abba Yohannes