



My Beloved Ones,

As I write this Paschal message, I am confronted by the fact that this undoubtedly beautiful day of fellowship and love—which acts a foretaste of the eternal banquet in God’s Kingdom—can seem at odds with how humanity treats one another. I especially am thinking of our Egyptian brothers and sisters, whose Palm Sunday liturgies were disrupted by violence and death. In the face of such horror, one might ask: how can we hope?

Theologians have greatly discussed our Lord’s cry on the Cross, *"Eli Eli lama sabachthani?" "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* For some, the very idea of Christ, the Son of God, addressing His own Father in such a way is deeply disturbing. Yet what is beautiful about this moment is often missed. Christ is not speaking for Himself—He is quoting the Psalms. The speaker of this particular Psalm is in pain; abused and at the mercy of those who seek to destroy him, he calls out to God to deliver him from his torment—for, as the Psalmist later says, *"He hath not despised nor abhorred the lowliness of the poor; neither hath He hid His face from him; but when he cried unto Him, He heard"* (Psalm 22:25).

Consider that after the scourging and the crown of thorns; after the nails and the humiliation, Christ’s concern is not for Himself. He cries out to show that He understands our uncertainty and pain in this world. Ever-loving and ever-compassionate, we know that neither His Father nor the Holy Spirit truly abandoned Him on that lonely hill, just as our Triune God will never abandon us. The Psalm continues with the triumphant reminder that *"...the kingdom is the LORD'S; and He is the ruler over the nations."*

My children, for this Feast of Feasts, let us never forget that the pain, sorrow and suffering of this world, however immense, are temporary. Christ has vanquished Death! His earthly life and teachings act as a guide to help us attain eternal life, while His Resurrection is the key which has allowed all of us to finally reenter Paradise.

As we prepare to receive the Paschal light during this year’s Anastasi service, let us remember the Myrrh-bearing women, who went to the darkened tomb to weep for the sorrows of this world and instead saw the most life-affirming mystery; a mystery and wonder which granted light to all, proving once and forever that *"...the kingdom is the LORD'S!"*

ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ! Christ is Risen!

+ALEXIOS
Metropolitan of Atlanta