



## GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

### ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΤΛΑΝΤΑΣ



To the Clergy, Monastics, Parish Councils, Philoptochos, Archons, Youth, and all the faithful of the Metropolis of Atlanta:

My beloved in the Lord,

I greet you with love and joy in the name of our Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! Having been once again found worthy to witness our Lord's life-giving Resurrection, I pray that you and your loved ones experience the radiance that we are blessed to receive through our Lord's victory over Death.

Only one year ago, we experienced the joy of Pascha, much as the Disciples did, for Evangelist writes, *"When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week...the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear..."* (John 20:19) Though we remained in our homes for protection from an unseen virus, we were perhaps better able to understand the Disciples. Our Lord had taught them that *"The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again."* (Mark 9:31) However, in fleeing from His Betrayal, they lost heart.

During last year's Paschal celebrations, many questioned: What would the future bring? When could we celebrate our Church's Great Feasts with our loved ones? Human beings may fall into negative thoughts, but hours before His Passion, Jesus reminded us that, *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."* (John 14:27) Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the celebration of Pascha remained the same.

As the Disciples grieved for their loss, so do we grieve for those who have fallen asleep in the Lord, especially in the past year. However, our grief becomes joy, for as St. John Chrysostom writes in his Paschal Homily, *"Christ is risen, and life reigns! Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in a tomb!"* Though the Disciples could not yet comprehend the wisdom of this plan for our salvation (as they had not yet received the Holy Spirit), we Orthodox Christians are blessed to know that God's love for His Creation conquers all things, even Death.

Now, as we are blessed to begin gathering safely with our parishes and our families, we can be renewed in those feelings of love and fellowship, since we are all part of a community whose spiritual life remains focused on the reality of our Lord's triumph over sin and the grave. Therefore, may you greet the Resurrection of our Lord with a renewed joy and gladness, knowing once more, that after the darkness comes the dawn!

**Χριστὸς ἀνέστη! Ἀληθῶς ἀνέστη!**  
Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

**+ ALEXIOS**  
Metropolitan of Atlanta