

THE HOLY ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF BOSTON  
His Eminence, Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston

PASCHAL ENCYCLICAL  
Of  
His Eminence, Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston

My Beloved Orthodox Christian, Christ is risen!

A short time ago, I was reading a paschal homily written by St. Symeon the New Theologian in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century. St. Symeon was the abbot of the Monastery of St. Mamas in Constantinople. He reposed in the year 1022. He wrote many spiritual treatises, and is probably best known among the faithful for his exceptional and most compunctionate communion prayer, “From lips tainted and defiled, from a heart unclean and loathsome...”

As I mentioned above, he wrote also a very profound paschal homily for the benefit of his monks at the Monastery of St. Mamas. With your permission, I would like to quote a significant portion of his homily. So, in a true sense, this year’s Paschal Encyclical is actually delivered to you by this great Saint of the Church!

This is what the Saint says in part:

Most men believe in the resurrection of Christ, but very few have a clear spiritual vision of it. Those who have no vision of it, cannot adore Christ Jesus as the Holy One and Lord. As it is written, “No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit” [I Cor. 12:3], and, elsewhere, “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” [Jn. 4:24]. The sacred hymn which is now daily on our lips does not say, “Having *believed* in the Resurrection of Christ,” but “Having *beheld* the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the Holy Lord Jesus, Who is alone without sin.” How is it that the Holy Spirit moves us to chant, “Having *beheld* the Resurrection of Christ,” when we have not seen it, when Christ rose once a thousand years ago, and even then without anybody’s seeing it? Surely the Church’s hymn does not want us to lie? Far from it! Rather, it urges us to speak the truth, that the resurrection of Christ takes place in each of us who believes, and not once, but at every hour, when Christ arises in us, shining with the radiance of divinity and incorruption. For the light-bearing Spirit shows forth to us the Master’s resurrection; He grants us to see the Risen One Himself. Therefore, we chant, “God is the Lord, and hath appeared unto us,” and we allude to His second Coming and add these words, “Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.”

So, in those to whom the risen Christ has been revealed, He is endlessly beheld spiritually, and they see Him with spiritual eyes. When this happens to us through the grace of the Holy Spirit, He

raises us up from the dead and gives us life. He grants us to see Him, Who is immortal and indestructible. More than that, He grants us clearly to know Him Who raises us up and glorifies us with Himself, as the divine Scripture testifies.

These, then, are the divine mysteries of the Christians. This is the hidden power of our Faith, which unbelievers, or those who believe with difficulty, or rather believe in part, do not see or are not able to see. Unbelievers, those who believe with difficulty, or believe in part, are those who do not show their faith through works. Apart from works the demons also believe and confess Christ to be God and Master. "We know who you art," they say, "thou art the Son of God," and elsewhere, "These men are the servants of the Most High God." Yet such faith will benefit neither the demons nor people. This faith is of no use, for it is dead, as the divine Apostle says, "Faith without works is dead," just like works without faith. Why is it dead? Because it does not have within itself the life-giving God. It has not acquired Him Who said, "He who loves Me will keep My commandments, and I and the Father will come and make Our abode in him" [Jn. 14:21, 23], so that, by Our presence, we may resurrect him who has attained faith, and, that We may give him life, and grant him to see Christ, Who has risen in him and Who has raised him up. This is why faith without works is dead, or, rather, they are dead who have faith but no works. Faith in God is always alive, and since it is a living thing, it gives life to those who come with intent and receive it. And this life is shown forth in works of love. Amen.

Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!

Your fervent suppliant unto God,

✠Ephraim, metropolitan