



**EPARCHY OF NEWTON**  
MELKITE GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

## Holy and Glorious Pascha 2018

Dear Clergy and Faithful,

*Now that we have seen the Resurrection of Christ, let us adore the All-holy Lord Jesus, the only Sinless One. We bow in worship before Your Cross, O Christ, and we praise and glorify Your Resurrection, for You are our God, and we have no other, and we magnify Your name. All you faithful, come, let us adore the holy Resurrection of Christ; for behold, through the Cross joy has come to the world. Let us always bless the Lord, let us sing His Resurrection, for by enduring for us the pain of the Cross, He has crushed Death by His death.*

Christ is Risen! He is Truly Risen!

This beautiful hymn is chanted on Pascha and on every Sunday after the Resurrection Gospel of Morning Prayer (Orthros). It is a stark and joyous proclamation that the Resurrection of Christ is absolutely central to the Church, as St. Paul says: "If Christ had not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain (1 Cor. 15:14). Empty! Pascha is the hinge on which the whole Church year swings – the greatest feast, indeed the Feast of feasts!

Although we did not witness the physical resurrection of Jesus two thousand years ago, it still takes place in each one of us who believes. Jesus appeared to His mother and to Mary Magdalene and brought them joy. He appeared to Peter to assure him he was forgiven for his denial. He appeared to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and, in the breaking of the bread, He cleared up their despair and doubt. He appeared to His disciples in the Upper Room, making them stronger and confident in their belief. Miraculous changes occurred because Jesus appeared.

Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. He continues to appear now and to reveal Himself now in order to forgive our sins. He is not dead: He lives! He instills new hope in us. When we fear, He upholds us. As He appeared to Paul on his way to

persecute the Christians in Damascus, He continues to appear to us today through the love we share with one another. In our confused times, He is the way; in our despair, He is our hope; in our sins, He is forgiveness and mercy; in our death, He is our life.

I know the tomb is empty because I see the resurrected Jesus in all of you; touching you I have touched Christ, like Thomas the Apostle. I have seen the Resurrection of Christ: He speaks to me in my daily prayers, and I listen to Him in His Holy Bible, and I hear His inner Voice within me, called conscience. And He touches me in the Holy Mysteries or Sacraments of the Church, especially in the Communion of His Precious Body and Blood, where He gives Himself to me entirely!

My prayer for you on this Feast of feasts is that you, too, will experience His living, loving, life-giving Presence, and that He will strengthen you in your weaknesses and sorrows. May He raise you up each time you fall – “for behold through the Cross joy has come to the world... for He has crushed Death by His death.”

My love, prayers, and blessings for a glorious Paschal Season to you all!

Christ is Risen! He is truly Risen!

Sincerely yours in the Risen Lord,

✝ The Most Reverend Nicholas J. Samra  
Eparchial Bishop of Newton