Feast of Resurrection

27 April 2008

Papal Message

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III

Pope of Alexandria & Patriarch of the See of St. Mark

My children and brethren in the lands of immigration, clergy and laity.

My sincere greetings to you on the occasion of the Glorious Feast of Resurrection. May God make it a blessing to you all and a continual source of spiritual joy.

The resurrection of the Lord Christ was a glorious and joyous resurrection. It was with a glorified Body, with which He was able to exit from the tomb while it was shut; and He was able to come out of the grave-cloths while leaving them organized. With this Body, He entered the upper room, where the disciples were, while the doors were shut; and He granted them peace and blessing. With this glorified Body, He ascended to heaven and was not over-powered by the gravitational force.

We rejoice in the resurrection of the Lord Christ for He abolished death, and gave us the promise to be like Him, having life after death and an eternal life also with a glorified body similar to His resurrection, as St. Paul the Apostle said about the Lord: "…who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body…" (Philippians 3:21) He also said that it is raised in glory … it is raised in power … it is raised a spiritual body … (I Corinthians 15: 43-44).

Truly, the resurrection of the Lord Christ was a deposit towards our resurrection and the first-fruits of it (I Corinthians 15:20). While we rejoice in the glory of His resurrection, we also rejoice for what will be ours in likeness of this glory, but each one according to his order.

Let us all then live the life that qualifies us for this glory, knowing that as we get deeper in the spiritual life, the more our glory increases in the eternal life. For all people in eternity will not be of the one rank, but as the Apostle said, "for one star differs from another star in glory." (I Corinthians 15:41)

Therefore, we must live – as befitting us – in the life of righteousness, and grow in it day after day, making perfection our aim, which can be reached according to the commandment of the Lord "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48)

May the Lord grant you grace so that you walk in the life of righteousness, holiness, perfection and be an example to many.

Be well in the Lord, absolved by His Holy Spirit, and remember me in your prayers.

(Signed)
Shenouda III
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