

My Beloved Ones,

I consider myself blessed by almighty God to have had the opportunity to relive our Lord's sacred Passion and His Glorious Resurrection in my spiritual birthplace; that is the Monastery of Vatopedi, where, in 1963, I was tonsured a monk, thereafter a deacon, and then a priest. It was indeed a blessing to visit there again, and I would like to thank His All-Holiness our Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for issuing his permission for my visit.

Having returned to our Metropolis and faced once again with the reality of the society in which we live, I continue to think on the celebrations that commemorated the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, remembering His last days on earth—and of course, the Resurrection.

In particular, I am focused on the Resurrection, which is the most important thing that our Almighty God, through His Son Jesus Christ, has offered to the human race. For as St. Paul says, *“If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.”* (1 Corinthians 15:14) It is not enough to proclaim our belief in Jesus Christ, as many Christians do, but we have to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, who has been resurrected.

For with the Resurrection, we have received the “ticket” in order to enter Paradise, allowing us to meet our God and Creator, and to grow closer to Him. That was the goal of our Lord Jesus Christ and the reason our Father chose for his son to be incarnate in the flesh. The Resurrection is the fulfillment of His destiny.

The risen Christ is here in the world! He is here and wants us to know that our real hope lies, not in our possessions or in the honors we receive; not in the degrees or in the jobs we hold; not even in the stocks or bonds we leave to our grandchildren. Our real hope lies in the risen Christ, for through knowing Him, we can have eternal life.

ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ! Christ is Risen!

+ALEXIOS

Metropolitan of Atlanta

