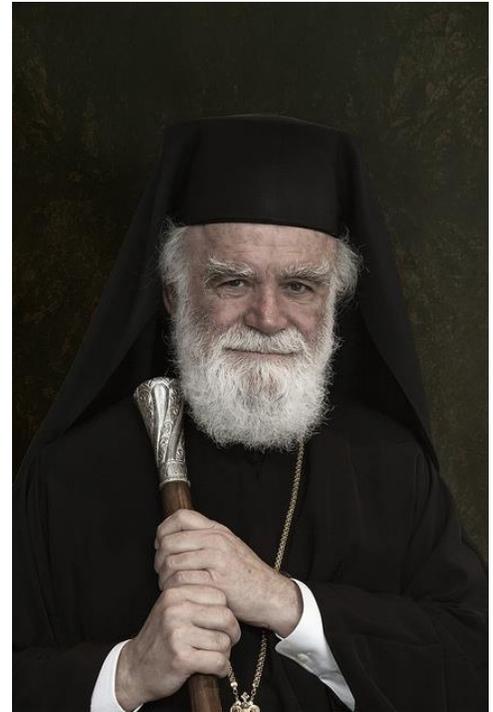


My Beloved Ones,

Having celebrated the Ascension, we have now come to the end of the Paschal season. Our Lord has gone into heaven, where He sits at the right hand of the Father. At the time of His Ascension, His Disciples were both amazed and saddened to be parted from their Master.

However, we read in the account of the Ascension in the *Book of Acts* that, “...while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:10-11) We also know that in a matter of days, we will be most fortunate to celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit—the Comforter that Jesus promised to send to His followers.



Such is our Lord’s love and concern for each one of us, that He says, “*I will not leave you desolate... the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*” (John 14:18; 26)

Though we are not blessed as the Disciples were—to live and walk with our Lord—our blessing is no less great. Though we cannot see Him physically, as baptized Christians, the Holy Spirit dwells in each one of us. And guided by the Holy Spirit, we are then able to have a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior, all the days of our lives.

We have spent the preceding 40 days much as our Disciples did after the Resurrection: filled with joy at Christ’s victory, and celebrating the festive promises of Heaven. All earthly celebrations do fade, however. And now, perhaps like the Disciples, we feel less joyous, and more anxious and preoccupied with our worldly futures. We would do well to remember though, that the celebration we experienced is but a taste of what is to come, and that our Lord is ever-present, even if human understanding cannot see Him.

I wish for you a blessed Pentecostarion, as we keep close to us our Lord’s words before He ascended into Heaven, “...*I am with you always, to the close of the age* (Matthew 28:20”)

+ALEXIOS
Metropolitan of Atlanta