



Reverend Fathers, Venerable Monastics, and Pious Faithful
of the Western American Diocese ROCOR:

Precious Children of the Church, my beloved flock:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

The voice of the Angel who proclaimed “He is risen!” has never been more longed-for than today, nor has our joy been deeper in hearing it. This voice shattered the expectation of the women at the Lord’s tomb: they expected the continuation of funeral rites and the prescribed customs of the Law, and they wept when what they expected was disturbed. But the Angel revealed to them what was beyond their expectation as they made that journey to the tomb: “He is not here, for He has risen” (Matthew 28:6). In the same way the risen Christ would soon respond to St. Thomas, whose vision was ruled by expectation and the normal order of things — making him so brash as even to declare, “except I shall put my finger into the print of the nails ... I will not believe” (John 20:25). But Christ, like His Angel, revealed a different reality to His Apostle. The letter of the law of life was something that the Apostle felt dictated all. Christ revealed that He could write a new perfection of the Law into the life of His children.

We are, ourselves, too often ruled by expectation, habituation and our limited understanding of God’s power. When the normal customs of our life, and especially our Church life, are disrupted, such a mindset creates fear, sorrow and judgement. We insist to go to the tomb, lamenting. We insist that we will not receive other than what we expect. But Christ sends His Angel to us, and comes to us Himself. He is not bound by the chains of our expectation. “He is not here, for He has risen!”

May this lesson, the lesson we most need to learn in this life, break through any fear, judgement or bitterness in our hearts, and may we shape our words so that they sing out only this divine proclamation: “Christ is Risen! Truly, He is Risen!”

+ Archbishop Kyriakos

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