Patriarchal Proclamation on Holy Pascha

April 20, 2006

Protocol No. 379

+ B A R T H O L O M E W

by the grace of God Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch,

To the plentitude of the church,
Grace, peace and mercy from Christ the Saviour, Risen in Glory

"O life, how can you die? How can you dwell in a tomb?"

...
denial of responsibility, continue to reply: “Take him yourselves and crucify him” (John 19:6).

Life is risen! Christ is Risen! And we bear witness to His Resurrection not only by offering rational arguments and proofs, but rather by living our lives in accordance with the Resurrection. Only then does our witness become credible, when the Resurrected Christ lives within us, when our entire being radiates the joy, certainty and peace of the Resurrection.

Certainly, our lives and the life of our natural environment remain threatened by death. We do not mean here decay and deterioration in the biological sense, but rather those types of death and destruction brought about suddenly, in cruel and violent ways; ways that challenge our conscience, trivialize the human person, and mangle the beauty of nature.

We mean, among other things, that death which puts an end to human life before it even has the chance to see the light of the sun.

We mean those countless children, who lose their lives because of poverty, hunger, the lack of even the most basic medicine, the cruelty of those who have the power to act, but who do not do what is necessary to save these children, the impudence of the exploiters and corrupters of children’s innocence.

We mean the victims of daily acts of violence, of religious, nationalistic, and racial clashes, as well as the victims of fanaticism and war. Such acts are callously and uncaringly carried out by those who turn deaf ears to humanity’s call for the end of hostilities and the establishment of peace throughout the world.

Finally, we mean the plundering of the natural environment by human beings who, driven by greed and the lust for profit, violently and cunningly subordinate and exploit it. Such conduct not only distorts the beauty of creation given by its Creator but also undermines the foundations and conditions necessary for the survival of future generations.

We mean, in short, those types of life that bear signs of death, be they spiritual or moral, the consequences of disordered passions and errors, deprivation or greed, the trivialization and oppression of life.

Beloved brothers and children in the Lord, we worship once again this year the Holy Passion of our Savior Jesus Christ. We know that the teaching about His
death on the cross remains foolishness for those who remain unbelieving and who go the way of destruction. It is, however, the power of God for us who walk in faith the way of salvation (1 Cor 1:18) in the brilliant light of the Resurrection.

In this power and joy of the Resurrection of Christ, we respect the life of our fellow human beings. We call for an end to the killing of one another, and we denounce the violence and fanaticism that threatens life. The victory of the Resurrection must be experienced as a victory of life, of brotherhood, of the future, of hope.

"Christ is Risen, and life reigns.
To Him be glory and dominion unto the ages of ages."

Holy Pascha 2006
+ Bartholomew of Constantinople
your fervent intercessor of all before the Risen Christ

To be read in Church at the Divine Liturgy of the Feast of Holy Pascha, after the reading of the Holy Gospel.