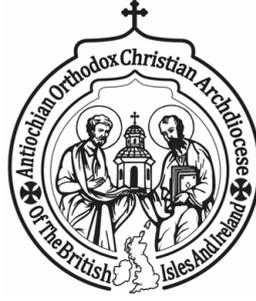


Antiochian Orthodox
Christian Archdiocese
of the British Isles and
Ireland



الأبرشية الإنطاكية
المسيحية الأرثوذكسية
للجزر البريطانية و إيرلندا

Registered Charity Number: 1175538

Archbishop: His Eminence, Metropolitan Silouan Oner

London 14/04/2020

Christ is risen!

We use this statement, this and every year, to declare our victory over death.

This year, despite this cry of victory, our joy is mixed with sadness and pain as the whole world is afflicted.

As a result of the spread of this deadly pandemic, many people have become ill, some have died, and many are risking their lives working in hospitals to protect us. Meanwhile, the Church continuously prays to God to keep this pandemic away from the entire world.

We will not talk about the causes of this pandemic; we will leave the causes and methods of treatment to the experts because whatever we say, we have not the expertise to find solutions to get rid of it.

However, we must admit that this virus has made us see many positive aspects in our lives. Such as:

- Recognising that we need divine aid in staving off the danger that surrounds us.
- Remembering that God has a role in our lives.
- Allowing our homes (in which the Lord has missed hearing our rejoicing and prayers) to become small churches in which we can pray and serve.
- Our disjointed and isolated families have now reunited, become closer, and now converse with each other, debate and pray together. The result is our homes are places of vibrant love and joy.

Dear fathers, Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Let us transform our prayers into a daily Easter, and our hearts a tomb, from which the God of all will be resurrected.

Let us reflect on ourselves and repent of the sins that we have committed towards God, towards one another, and towards nature.

Let us draw closer to God not only through communion, "which has become a habit among some of us," but through continuous prayer, strengthening God's presence in our hearts, and purifying us from our sins.

Let us learn from our many saints, led by Saint Mary the Egyptian, who repented from her sins and lived forty seven years in the desert without seeing anyone or receiving the holy gifts, but at the end, receiving the forgiveness and grace of the Lord and became a great saint in our church.

Symeon the New Theologian says: "The holy readings that we deliver every Sunday and at Easter does not say 'As we believed in the resurrection of Christ,' but "As we have seen the resurrection of Christ, let us bow down to the Holy Lord" '... because the resurrection of Christ really takes place in the soul of each and every believer individually, and that not once, but at every hour."

The Resurrection is a personal salvation, a heavenly and earthly joy, for we are the people of the resurrection, and because of that we have no fear at all.

Spiritual warfare is always with the forces of darkness, but the only victory over it comes through faith in the Resurrection.

If Easter is not to be celebrated in our Church buildings, let us remember that every encounter with Christ in prayer is Easter, and whenever we call His Name, we receive the same grace. And if we are deprived of the Divine Liturgy, we are not deprived of the Lord, because we have His Name, His Word, and His Gospel. And if His Word dwells in us, we will always have His Grace, because His words are the words of eternal life. (John 6:68)

I rejoice with every submissive heart, and bent knee, praying for the salvation of this world because the prayer of the righteous is so powerful.

With joy I greet all of you with the Paschal greeting, full of love and faith, that brings salvation, wishing you good health and holiness.

Christ is risen! He is Risen Indeed.

God bless you all.

**+ Silouan, Metropolitan of the British Isles and
Ireland**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+Silouan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East