



**EPARCHY OF NEWTON**  
MELKITE GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Pascha 2022

Dear Melkites across America,

Christ is risen! He is truly risen!

A number of years ago, a large New York City hospital made a simple but unusual discovery. Crying infants in the nursery disturbed others who also began to cry, leaving them restless. Some proposed playing background soft music but newborn babies never heard music before. Someone suggested recording the heartbeat of a mother and playing it over the sound system. A quick miracle! The heartbeat of a mother was familiar to them even before they were born. The mother's heartbeat was a sound of security and love and became the background music for the nursery babies who grew still and went peacefully to sleep.

What is our background music of life? That we know we must die is the background music for some, so we must listen to the soothing heartbeat not of a mother but of God. The heartbeat of God is the glorious message of his love and forgiveness – we call it the Gospel, the Good News! We need to take time to listen to the risen Savior's voice, sometimes drowned out by the noises of our world.

We find the heartbeat of God in John 3:16, "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life". We find it also in Jesus' words, "I am the resurrection and the life".

If we are anxious about death, listen to the heartbeat of God, "I go to prepare a place for you that where I am, there you may be also... because I live, you shall live also." In human death we are very much alive for eternity.

For many, the background music of this world is "Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you die." But the background music of God's heartbeat sings another tune, "Christ is risen!"

- Tomorrow you do not die but rather live eternally.
- Tomorrow is the general resurrection.
- Tomorrow a reunion with our departed loved ones.
- Tomorrow judgement. Tomorrow heaven.
- Tomorrow hell.

So prepare for the Lord – Turn from wickedness and live. You are called by God to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

Our background music in life needs to be what we sing on this glorious resurrection feast and entire Pascha season, “Christ is risen! He is truly risen”. We who believe in him rise with him to a new life. We sing it joyfully, repeatedly and ecstatically again and again and we need to make it play constantly as the background music of our life: “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by his death and to those in the tombs bestowing life.” The voice of God is not death but life, not sadness but joy, not defeat but victory.

The Paschal Hymns we sing repeat our joy:

- Our Pascha Christ the Redeemer is revealed to us today
- A noble Passover
- A new & holy Passover
- A mystic Passover
- A blameless Passover
- A glorious Passover
- A Passover for the faithful
- A Passover opening the gates of Paradise
- A Passover that sanctifies all believers
- A Passover embracing one another with love
- A Passover forgiving those who hate us!

May the glory and joy of the risen Lord be with all of you and may you always feel his presence in your lives. I pray for all of you and especially remember you in this life-giving season of joy. Christ is risen!

Sincerely yours in the risen Christ,

*+Nicholas*

Most Rev. Nicholas Samra  
Eparchial Bishop of Newton