

PATRIARCHAL EASTER MESSAGE

Protocol No: 68/2013

THEODOROS II,

BY THE GRACE OF GOD POPE AND PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA

AND ALL AFRICA TO THE INTEGRITY

OF OUR APOSTOLIC AND PATRIARCHAL THRONE

GRACE AND MERCY AND PEACE FROM

OUR RISEN LORD AND GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

My dear brothers and sisters,

Christ is risen!

The Son of God became Incarnate so that man could be restored to his former completeness. The Son of God was crucified so that man could form a redeeming relationship of communion with God. The Son of God abolished death so that man could acquire the prospect of salvation; a prospect founded on the incorruptible, unconditional and limitless love of God for mankind.

Salvation, through the Cross and Resurrection of Christ, means that all obstacles which darken the heart of mankind are abolished. Salvation means that the disease which conceals God from man is cured. Salvation means daily recognition of mankind through his existential alignment with the life of Christ Himself.

The predominant open existence for God is children. Children have a very distinctive capacity to admire, to be delighted, and to

experience joy and unhappiness. Children have a very distinctive ability to trust, to open themselves to love, to believe with their entire being. They have the capacity to see, to hear, to feel all that adults have ceased to see, to hear, to feel. That is why Christ told us: *"Become like children"* (Matthew 18: 3).

However, today, children's right to experience the existence of God is threatened. Their right to escape from harsh daily reality is threatened. Their right to transcend the cynical mistrust of adults is threatened. Their right to what the world of adults often forgets, living in Christ, is threatened.

Children fall victim to civil strife and religious fanaticism. Children are initiated from their early age for the service of self interest. Children become object of labor exploitation. Children come to know family violence. Children are undernourished and have no health care. Children live with the prospect of an environmental holocaust due to the abuse of God's creation.

My dear brothers and sisters,

Christ said: *"Let the children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the Kingdom of God"* (Mark 10:13-14). This command needs to be transformed into a large embrace of the children who, without being to blame, are scarred by the choices of adults. Through this command, a readjustment of childhood identity is needed, as it has been impaired by the instability of our times. It is absolutely necessary that this command means the return to the original beauty of childhood for the implementation of the Lord's words: *"whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child, shall not enter it"* (Mark 10:15-16).

It is this command of the Gospel that the Orthodox Church of Africa puts into practice, working hard to build a world of respect and solidarity for the children. Through its witness and its activities, the Orthodox Church of Africa takes on, transforms and renews traumatized children's souls. It articulates its own

proposal for life, its own hierarchy of life, at the head of which is the child as the dynamic bearer of promising prospects for a world *which is the truth in love*.

† THEODOROS II

Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa

In the Great City of Alexandria

Holy Pascha 2013