"*When in the tomb in the flesh you were enclosed by your own will, O Christ, who by the nature of your godhead are uncircumscribed and unbounded, you unlocked the storehouses of Hades and emptied all his palaces"*

Dearly beloved in the Lord,

Following the long and venerable period of Holy and Great Lent we have been made worthy yet again to celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. This is why I address you all, leaders and laity, with a heartfelt paternal greeting of love and honour in order to share with you the joy of the Apostles, Myrrhbearers and friends of Christ, He who is Risen from the dead; who as a victorious, trophy bearing and glorious God, invites us all to celebrate with a pure heart and to give him thanks for his boundless mercy and love towards the Human Race. The God-Man Christ shared in our sinful human nature, and with his Resurrection he shared His Glory and His Divinity with us. The fact of the Resurrection is an event of joy, hope and faith in Him who "has risen from the dead, and has trampled down death by death, and to those in the tombs has bestowed life". As Saint John Chrysostom writes, "This matter - the fact of Christ's Resurrection - has manifold importance, it both corrects our beliefs and regulates our lives".

The Resurrection of Christ is an event for the whole world and all of humanity, which fills our hearts with the happy and blessed hope for our own resurrection and our own salvation in Christ. Christians throughout the world are called to resurrect the love of God with all our being, and to relive the message of the Resurrection in our daily lives so that we can return to our spiritual roots and not be overwhelmed by a secular mindset and be free of the apostasy that torments modern society, both Christian and non-Christian. *"The Pascha celebrated by us is the cause of the salvation of all people, beginning from the First-Created man, in whom every person is saved and made alive."*

The events of Holy Week became the motivating power that led the Holy Apostles to travel to the ends of the earth to preach the Resurrection of Christ and to show His Divine love towards the people He made and to the whole of Creation. "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (*John 3:16)

The Church celebrates, treasures and bequeaths the Message and the symbols of the Resurrection from one generation to the next, and calls upon the Faithful of each age to become communicants in the mystery of our Salvation. Regular and conscientious church attendance, participation in the Divine Liturgy and communion of the body and blood of Christ establishes and witnesses to our participation in His life, death and Resurrection. The family, Orthodox Christian education, the guarding of our children and young people, our participation in charity and supporting those less fortunate, our real love and care for the administration of our churches and schools and our promotion of the Gospel of the Resurrection and our prayer for God's Kingdom to prevail are resurrectional requests and responsibilities for us all.

Brothers and sisters in the Lord, we take part in the joy of the Resurrection by forgiving each other, by being reconciled to our brothers and sisters, through harmony, peace, and love towards others, to "*forgive all in the Resurrection"*. Wishing health, joy and peace to you and your loved ones, and humility and brotherliness to the Church of Christ, I remain, with the warmest blessings and in the love and honour of Christ who is Risen from the dead.

London, Easter 2017

Archbishop Gregorios

of Thyateira and Great Britain