

## Paschal Epistle 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Christ is risen!

The victory over death of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ is both the cornerstone and the crowning capital of our faith and redemption. The Lord became man and suffered crucifixion and death specifically to make us partakers and participants in His victory over sin and death.

Without resurrection, His incarnation, His earthly teaching, His sacrifice on the Cross, would not have a redeeming and saving significance. All would have finished on Good Friday and been sealed along with the tomb.

Christ's Resurrection, however, does not only give His incarnation, His Gospel message, His sacrifice on the Cross, their meaning; does not only fill His disciples with joy and power, but is the very immovable foundation itself of faith in the incarnate Son of God, the foundation of our salvation.

Good Friday was not the finish of Jesus, but the unfinished beginning of the victory of Christ over death and sin, which He consummated with His Resurrection.

Neither Christ as the Life, as the Truth, as the Light, nor His Resurrection stand in need of our faith, but it is we who have need to partake in His Resurrection and have faith in Him. Christ has risen to raise us, as members of His mystical risen body, His ever-living Church, into which we have been baptized. *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death [in baptism], we shall also be in the likeness of His Resurrection (Rom. 6: 5).* He has given us His Resurrection not just as a foreshadow, but as an absolute, unfailing and irrevocable pledge and promise of our own resurrection.

Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!



John, Bishop of Caracas and South America,  
Pascha of the Lord, 2018.