

My Beloved Ones,

ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ! Christ is Risen!

As we have passed the halfway point between Pascha and Pentecost, I would like to mark a national holiday, which has its roots in our Christian understanding of the family. This Sunday, Mother's Day, will reinforce St. Paul's quotation to the Ephesians, "*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' (this is the first commandment with a promise), that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.*"

This coming Sunday, I pray that we will all recall the simple but moving proverb, which states that, "God could not be everywhere and therefore he made mothers." Through the mysterious bond that is motherhood, God has given us an earthly, physical example of the unconditional love that we experience spiritually through our relationship with Him. No matter what we do, good or bad, God always loves us because we are His creations; just as our mothers, in spite of countless moments of sorrow and joy, never stop loving their children.

Christ Himself lived out the observance of this commandment by taking care of and honoring His mother, the Theotokos. In the Gospel of John, Christ's first public miracle, changing the water into wine, comes at the instigation of His mother. The Evangelist tells us that Christ, though He questioned whether His time had yet come, performed the miracle because His mother wished for it. Even at their most vulnerable moment, with His mother at the foot of the Cross, He fulfilled His obligation as a dutiful son by ensuring that Mary was entrusted to the care of His beloved disciple John.

Christ, as both God and Man, sought to present Himself as a model for the manner in which we are meant to treat our mothers, because He understood the valuable role that our mothers play. Mothers are so many things during the course of the lives of their children: they are our first teachers, they are providers of unconditional love, and they are pillars of support for the whole family, whether they work outside the home, or within.

This coming Sunday, I pray that we will all seek to honor our mothers (whether they are still with us, or if they have fallen asleep), and in thinking on them, grow closer to not only our families, but to our God, who in His infinite wisdom, saw fit to create people as wonderful as mothers.

+ALEXIOS

Metropolitan of Atlanta

