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The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Faith and Order

**The Third Sunday of Zemene Fasika (*Paschal Season*)**

**Liturgical Readings:**

**Col. 3:1 –end; 1 Pet. 3: 15– end; Acts 11:1-19,**

**Psalm3:5—6;**

**John 24:33-49**

**The Anaphora of Saint Dioscorus**

**He is Risen: The Lifegiver of the Dead**

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, One God. Amen.

Beloved in the Holy Covenant, we gather today under the shadow of a mystery so profound that it shattered the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron in sunder. We celebrate the triumph of our Lord under the title “ተነሳ ሙታንንም አሰነሳ”—He is Risen, and He has raised the dead with Him. This is the heartbeat of our Orthodox faith; it is the song that St. Yared, our harp of the Spirit, wove into the very fabric of our liturgy. He sang with celestial fire: “*Christ is risen, raising the dead; He has loosed the prisoners, and by His great power and authority, He has set the souls free.*” He who commanded Lazarus to come forth from the four-day grip of corruption, and He who opened the eyes of the blind by the mere authority of His Word, has now trampled down Death by death, making the Sabbath the day of His glorious Rising.

As we journey through the Gospel according to St. Luke, we find the travelers of Emmaus rushing back to Jerusalem, their hearts burning with the fire of recognition. They arrived to find the Apostles exulting in a truth that the world could not contain: “*The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon*” (Luke 24:34). This was no phantom or ghostly apparition, nor was it the fabricated lie spread by the fearful Judean authorities. It was the physical, glorified presence of the Word Incarnate. Our Lord entered the locked room, standing in their midst as the Sovereign of Peace, inviting them to behold His wounds—the certification of His identity and the trophies of our ransom. In this sacred encounter, He ate before them, proving that the body which was broken on the Tree is the same body that now breathes the air of the New Creation. He opened their understandings, commissioning them to be witnesses of these things from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth (Luke 24:33-49).

This Resurrection is not Christ’s alone; it is the general amnesty for all of Adam’s race. The Holy Scriptures teach us that His death was our death, and His Rising is our rising. We do not merely hope for a future event; we inhabit a present reality. As the Great Apostle Paul exhorts the Colossians: “*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God*” (Colossians 3:1). We are commanded to set our affection on things above, for we have died to the old order of sin, and our life is now hid with Christ in God. We have been buried with Him in baptism, and through faith in the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead, we have been quickened together with Him (Colossians 2:12).

This "First Resurrection" is the awakening of the soul, the *Tinsae Libuna*, where the Church stands as a living witness to the power of grace. Even if the scoffers and the doubters cry out that there is no rising of the dead, or that the power of the grave remains unvanquished, the Church stands upon the unshakable foundation of the Word. If Christ be not risen, our preaching is a hollow echo and our faith a withered vine; but Christ is indeed risen, the Firstfruits of them that slept! (**1 Corinthians 15:14-20**). This was the message that compelled St. Peter to defend the hope that was within him with meekness and fear, testifying that Christ, being put to death in the flesh but quickened by the Spirit, went and preached unto the spirits in prison (**1 Peter 3:15-19**). It was this same Spirit that fell upon the Gentiles, as St. Peter recounted to the brethren in Jerusalem, proving that God has granted unto all people repentance unto life (**Acts 11:1-18**).

The Prophet-King David foresaw this divine repose and rising when he sang in the Psalms: *"I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about"* (**Psalms 3:5-6**). Christ, the New David, laid Himself down in the sleep of death, but He awoke by His own divine power, becoming the boast of the nations and the strength of the weak. By treading upon the sepulcher of Adam, Christ isolated Death and destroyed the desolation of Sheol.

Beloved, in His Resurrection, we find our life. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Christ has paved the way of righteousness; He has turned our mourning into a dance of eternity. Therefore, let us live as those who are truly risen, putting off the old man with his deeds and putting on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.

Glory be to God, who raised His Son, and through Him, raised us all. Amen.