

# MESSAGE



## FIRST PASTORAL VISIT IN THE PHILIPPINES

Your Excellency Ambassador of Greece,  
Your Excellency Ambassador of Romania,  
Respected Clergy,  
Beloved People of God

Grace, peace and mercy from God Almighty and from the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour and from the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

Christ's Great Church, in its mission to spread the Gospel of the True Word to every corner of the Earth, has chosen my Humbleness to serve as Metropolitan of the Holy Orthodox Metropolitanate of Hong Kong and South East Asia, and has sent me to your side, that I may bring to you the joyous word of His Gospel, the revelation of the love of God the Father and the sanctifying sacraments that are celebrated in the Orthodox Church, with the Grace of the Holy Spirit.

This mission of the Church does not lie simply in the improvement of the world and of each individual human being. It is also its mission to bear witness to the martyrdom of Christ and to complete His mission. The presence of the Orthodox Church in the countries of the Far East has as its goal to reach out to all the people, and together, to follow in the footsteps of Christ and to find salvation.

Christ says *I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.*

His is the only road to salvation; that is, to the divine. His intercession is the bridge across the abyss that divides man the sinner from God, and that reconciles man to Him.

Christ is the *Truth* because He showed us how to live in the Truth, the way to True Life.

Christ is the *Life*; the One Who conquered Death. His Resurrection is the stone on which the very existence of the Church rests. His taking on the Flesh unlocked the mystery of human existence and opened the gates to eternal life. In a world worn out by corruption comes the hope of everlasting life. Christ's resurrection is the decisive victory over death, where life goes on in the Grace and Love of God.

My dear Brothers and Sisters,

This is the mission that the Church gave to me. To be among you as a candle, to shine my humble light, to be the bearer of the Light of the Resurrection and of God's Hope and Love. I know that we are not many. But Christ gives us courage, and the example of Paul the Apostle gives us strength with his words: *I can do all things, in Him Who strengthens me.* (Philippians: 4:13)

I am constantly aware that we are here not to prevail, nor to impose your will by force, but to welcome all our Brothers and Sisters into God's House.

Our holy Orthodox Church teaches us that in all things there is to be order, correctness and unity of faith. From the earliest times, the Church clearly stated her position on matters, so that she would hold true to these principles. The Church is one, united and undivided, except in the case when people freely choose to separate themselves from the body of Christ.

The Church is an Eucharistic center and without the celebration of the Eucharist and the blessing of the Bishop there is no local parish. Gatherings of lay people who pretend to be the Church are not, in fact the Church. They are only a means of self-deception. The fathers of the Church remind us that "where the Bishop, there is the Church". A body must have a head, so that it may function properly. Just as Christ is the head of the Church, the Bishop is the head of the diocese and flock that have been entrusted to him by the Church.

As your bishop and spiritual father I pray for the prosperity of the orthodox church of Philippines, the orthodox clergy, the monks, the nuns, the laity and the catechumens.

*"And the Spirit and the bride say Come And let him that heareth say Come And let him that is athirst come And whosoever will let him take the water of life freely" (Rev.22,17)*

The Grace of our lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

Delivered by His Eminence Metropolitan Nektarios of Hong Kong and South Asia  
On 24<sup>th</sup> of May 200 at the Annunciation of the Theotokos Orthodox Cathedral  
4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of Pascha

