



*Christ Taking Leave of His Mother*  
El Greco (1585)

My Beloved Ones,

***ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ!***  
*Christ is Risen!*

As we have passed the halfway point between Pascha and Pentecost, I would like to reflect on a national holiday, which has its roots in our Christian understanding of the family. For Mother's Day this coming Sunday, I pray that we will all recall the simple saying, "God could not be everywhere and therefore he made mothers." Through the bond of motherhood, God has given us an earthly example of the unconditional love that we experience through our relationship with Him. No matter what we do, good or bad, God always loves us, just as our mothers never stop loving their children.

This Sunday 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: 'so that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth'*" (Ephesians 6:1-3). Christ Himself lived out the observance of this commandment by honoring and taking care of His mother, our Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. In the Gospel of John, Christ's first public miracle, when he changed the water into wine, happened because He wished to respect His mother's request to help the wedding feast in Cana. Even when His mother watched in sorrow at the foot of His Cross, He fulfilled His obligation as a son by making sure that Mary was given to the care of His beloved disciple John.

Christ, as both God and Man, sought to present Himself as a model for the way we are to treat all people, and this includes our mothers. He knew that mothers do so many things during the lives of their children: they are our first teachers, they provide unconditional love, and they are pillars of support for the whole family (whether they work within, or outside the home). Christ knew that it is only when we, as children, return this love that we will "*live long on this earth*", in a spirit of peace and hope.

This coming Sunday, I pray that as we honor our mothers (whether they are still with us, or if they have fallen asleep in the Lord), we shall grow closer not only to our families, but also to God, who in His infinite wisdom created mothers who love and lead by example.

Happy Mother's Day!

**+ALEXIOS**  
Metropolitan of Atlanta