My Beloved Ones,

Χριστὸς ἀνέστη! Christ is Risen!

When difficult things happen in our lives, human understanding means that we try to find reasons. “What have I done wrong?” we ask. Or we wonder, “How could a loving God let this happen?” Even during the time of Christ’s ministry on this earth, an ancient understanding was that these difficulties were caused by sin. In the Gospel for the Sunday of the Blind Man, the Disciples act according to this reasoning when they ask the Lord, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” (John 9:2)

However, Christ turns their understanding upside down when He tells them, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him” (John 9:3). Taking spittle and making clay from dust (in the same way that Adam was created), Jesus anoints the man with new eyes. However, after the man’s sight is given to him, his neighbors do not believe, and the authorities cast him out of the synagogue. Even with such difficulties, the Man Born Blind continues to defend Jesus: “He said, ‘Lord, I believe’; and he worshiped him” (John 9:38).

Now, let us examine our Lord's answer to the Disciples: “...that the works of God might be made manifest in him.” Our Lord is indeed telling the Disciples about the miracle before He performs it, but I also believe that He is speaking about something which is part of life on this earth. Whether we think of blindness, of another disability, or any of life’s many difficulties, Christ answers that seeking blame or an explanation is not important. Instead, when we show the world how to enjoy life by walking with Christ—just as the Man Born Blind bravely testifies—we make the works of God manifest in ourselves. We are all born with crosses, but it is how we choose to carry them which can help our family and friends see God in all things.

My beloved ones, next Thursday, we will celebrate the last time our Lord’s followers saw Him as He Ascended into Heaven. Though we are not able to see Him in the same way as did the Man Born Blind, we celebrate the Ascension to look to our Lord’s Second Coming; for as the Angel said, “Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!” (Acts 1:11) And so, for the last time, I wish you,

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+ALEXIOS
Metropolitan of Atlanta