



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

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PASCHA

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Metropolitan Constantine, Archbishop Antony, Bishop Robert, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Dragan Filipović, Father Stevo Rocknage, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Michael Mihalick [MS], Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Cuthbert Jack, Father Elias Warnke, Archimandrite Lev, Father Nestor Kowal, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Emilian Balan, Father Silouan Rolando, Hieromonk Vasyl (Janick), Father Stephen Ivanoff, Deacon Dennis Lapushanski, Joshua Agosto and his family, Mike Holupka, Eva Malesnick, Stella Peanoske, Joe Nezolyk, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Maria Balo, Linda Mechtly, Mary Mochnick, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Stella Cherepko, Sam Wadrose, Isabella Olivia Lindgren—a 4-year-old with a brain tumor, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Erin, Michael Miller, Dave May, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Alverta, Michael Horvath, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Michael Miller, Liz Stumpf, Theodore Nixon, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Robert Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, John Sheliga, George & Mika Rocknage, Robert McKivitz, Liz Obradovich, Liz, Halyna Zelinska [Bishop Daniel's mother], Charlotte, Peter Natishan, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Brandi Thomas, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Doris Artman, Nancy Barylak, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier [4-year-old with cancer], Nathan Forbeck, Sarah Doyle, Samuel Peters, Jean Stutchell, Charles & Esther Holupka, Wanda Mefford, Lynn (Bush) Gill, David Vallor, Henry Faraly, Betty O'Masta, Julie Eiler, Glenn Miller, Vince Ferro, Michael Pawlyshyn, Dorothy Lednovich, Kristin Batch Vaughn, Bob C., Allie—young girl with leukemia, Heather Kramer, Jane Wartinbee, Matthew—21-year-old with cancer, Nicholas Orlando, Mary Ann Kuznik, Michael Woloschak, Michael Pryhodzenko, Sonia Luciw, Nellie Patsko, Theresa Ditto, Mary Ann Musial,

Mary Pelino, Yvonne Christy, Myron & Barbara Spak, Pete Niederberger, Julia Duda, Lisa Pandle, Kris & Julie Hanczar, John Kennedy, Lloyd Sheakley [Pani Gina's uncle], Diane McDaniel, Loretta, Nancy, Carol, & Michael Sheliga, Gaelle Kelly Irma McDivitt, Robin Young, Mckayla, Rachel, Carl & Margaret Reed, Theodore Demopoulos, Jillian Bowman [10-year old with cancer], Lydia Wilson, Robert Pointon, Walter Cecelia, John Persico, Jeff Miller, Mary Kernick, Glenn Miller, Jean Marie, Evan Elliott, Donna & Walter McCrackin, Shirley Tkacik, Sabrina Sudol, Doug Smith [Millie Kerr's son-in-law], Bonnie Blair [Pani Gina's mother], Mel & Charlotte Malik, Paula Pasquinelli, David Hoenshell, Barbara Macino, Shelley Hill, Mikaela Kapeluck, Linda Cawley, Gerald Cogley, Helen Bozo, June Miller, Corey Guich, Monica Salvatore, Glenda Tickerhoof, Eugene Blair, Robert Vangrin, Juliana Lies, and Daria Masur. ARNOLD: Stefania Lucci, Steve Sakal, and Homer Paul Kline. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

Please remember James John Logue, George Senita, John Kirkowski, Matthew Machak, Michael Repasky, and ALL American service men and women in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American service men and women—and bring them all home safely!

PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR “BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION” AND CAMPBELL’S SOUP LABELS TO CHURCH. There is a shoebox in the basement for Debbie Paouncic’s class. THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR HELP!

REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!

Communion Fasting: nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please call Father Bob.

AT ANY TIME—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please CALL FATHER BOB at [412] 279-5640.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Saturday, April 14	Anticipation Obedntisa	10:30 AM
	*****PAGE 176 IN THE BLACK BOOKS*****	
	Romans 6:3-11	
	Matthew 27:62-66	
	Paschal Nocturnes & Matins	7:00 PM
Sunday, April 15	Paschal Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
	THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST	
	*****PAGE 179 IN THE BLACK BOOKS*****	

Acts 1:1-8

John 20:19-25

+++++REMINDER—NO COFFEE HOUR TODAY!!!+++++

Sunday, April 22 **Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom** **10:30 AM**
ANTIPASCHA-SUNDAY OF SAINT THOMAS; MARTYR EUPSYCHIUS OF CAESAREA IN
CAPPADOCIA; MARTYRS DESH-BISHOP, MIARIABUS-PRESBYTER, AND 270
MARTYRS WITH THEM IN PERSIA; HIEROMARTYR BADEMUS/VADIM-
ARCHIMANDRITE OF PERSIA

Tone 1

Acts 5:12-20

John 20:19-31

Litany in Blessed Memory of Martha Batch—Harry Batch & Family

Sunday, April 29 **Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom** **10:30 AM**
SUNDAY OF THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN, RIGHTEOUS JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA, &
NICODEMUS; SAINTS MARY & MARTHA-SISTERS OF SAINT LAZARUS; VIRGIN-
MARTYRS AGAPE, IRENE, & CHIONIA IN ILLYRIA; MARTYRS LEONIDAS, CHARIESSA,
NICE, GALINA, CALLISTA, NUNECHIA, BASILISSA, THEODORA, & IRENE OF CORINTH

Tone 2

Acts 6:1-7

Mark 15:43-16:8

Litany in Blessed Memory of Nicholas & Catherine Behun—Behun Family

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 15 APRIL 2012

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

*******PAGE 179 IN THE BLACK BOOKS*******

The Paschal greeting in various languages

Arabic (standard) – ما ق ا ق ح! ما ق ح ي س م ل! (al-Masīḥ qām! Ḥaqqan qām!)

Greek – Χριστός ἀνέστη! Ἀληθῶς ἀνέστη! (Khristós Anésti! Alithós Anésti!)

Church Slavonic – Хрїсто́съ воскрѣсе! Воистину воскресе! (Christos voskrese! Voistinu voskrese!)

Croatian – Krist uskrsnu! Uistinu uskrsnu!

Italian – Cristo è risorto! È veramente risorto!

Romanian – Hristos a înviat! Adevărat a înviat!

Serbian – Христос васкрсе! Ваистину васкрсе! (Hristos vaskrse! Vaistinu vaskrse!)

Swahili – Kristo Amefufukka! Kweli Amefufukka!

Swedish – Kristus är uppstånden! Han är sannerligen uppstånden!

Ukrainian – Христос воскрес! Воистину воскрес! (Chrystos voskres! Voistynu voskres!)

Esperanto – Kristo leviĝis! Vere Li leviĝis!

The Dyeing of Eggs

By Matushka Ioanna Callinicos Rhodes



There are many customs and traditions that pertain to Pascha world-wide, but the most common one is that of dyeing and decorating eggs. Whether you are from London, Jerusalem, or Moscow, this custom is universal.

Egg dyeing and decorating can be dated back to pagan times. There is evidence of the ancients coloring their eggs in the history of Egypt, Gaul, China, Rome, and Persia. The egg was cherished as a symbol of the universe and represented life as a circle, as eternal life. The golden yolk of yellow represented the Sun God, the white shell the White Goddess, and the whole egg, rebirth. Hence, it was linked to spring, a time of rebirth for the earth after a long cold winter. The earth was reborn in much the same way the egg miraculously brings forth life.

It was customary in ancient times to go and gather different colored eggs from the nests of a variety of birds. Some suggest that may be what gave rise to egg hunts and dyeing of eggs, for people were imitating the tinted eggs of wild birds, and mimicking the colors of spring with its array of pastel flowers and blossoms in bloom. During this time there were many spring festivals where eggs were dyed, using flowers, berries, and other forms of natural vegetation. The dyes came from the rebirth of nature, and it was nature that was represented in the multicolored eggs. These eggs were used as talismans and in ritual eating. During this season these special eggs were also given as gifts.

The Jewish people have a history with eggs. Indeed, eggs were taken with them when they fled Egypt. They were the convenient food of the day and had a long shelf life of at least 40 days. These eggs were roasted in the ash of a dying fire for hours or over night. Today on the first night of Passover one will find one hard-boiled or roasted egg on the "sedar plate." Again, the roasted egg symbolizes the endless cycle of life, its procreation and continuation. Also, this egg stands for additional offerings and sacrifices

offered in the Temple in Jerusalem for different festivals and feasts. Therefore the egg, being the initiate of life, dies and is sacrificed.

There is even a visual "pun" on the name for egg, because in Aramaic the word "bea" also means desire. Therefore it represents the desire of the Holy One to redeem the people of Israel. The egg is the first course of the Passover meal, and it is either chopped or dipped into salt water. Jews always have them on the Sabbath, births, and deaths and at all important moments in life's cycle. It is important in Jewish tradition to have eggs particularly at a funeral, where they represent death and the tomb. At funerals, the egg has been cooked, and therefore there is the absence of life and no possibility of renewal and rebirth, because the life within the shell is dead. It has become the tomb.

For Orthodox Christians, one custom dictates that on Cheesefare Sunday the last thing one eats is a roasted or hard-boiled egg. This particular white hard-boiled egg represents the "Old Adam," who brought on death. This way the mouth closes with the egg and thus, Lent begins. Then, with anticipation on Pascha night, the mouth is reopened, after the long period of fasting, with the New Egg, the Brilliant Red Egg, which represents the "New Adam," Christ. So of course, it is the first thing eaten! In this action we acknowledge the Resurrection of Christ, the "New Adam," and the fast is broken. He is the sacrificial Lamb who died and entered the tomb and destroyed death.

Why red? It is the brightest of all colors and it represents joy and happiness. In Russian the word also means beautiful. The early Christians always used red colored eggs to symbolize the Resurrection. This tradition has been passed down to us from them, through St. Mary Magdalene. St. Mary Magdalene was a woman of social status and wealth. After the Resurrection she used her standing to gain an invitation to a banquet given by Emperor Tiberius Caesar. Upon arriving she greeted him with "Christ is Risen!" He laughed and responded, "Christ rising from the dead is as likely as the egg in your hand turning red." Before he finished speaking, the egg turned bright red in her hand. She then cried, "Christ is Risen; for Jesus has burst forth from the tomb!" For this reason, the icons St. Mary Magdalene often depict her holding a red egg in her right hand. And so, we dye eggs red for Pascha!

The West adopted the multicolored eggs of pre-Christian times, and Christianized the practice to symbolize the Resurrection of Christ. Many other customs have evolved with the egg. One of these is egg tapping. Also known as egg dumping or egg jarring, this is the tradition of one person hitting the egg of another person on the pointy nose side, then the wide side. The winner is the person whose egg is intact. This symbolizes the gates of Hell being smashed. This game is played through out all the

Orthodox lands and in England and Scotland. In both England and Scotland people also enjoy an egg rolling game, dropping their eggs down a sloped hill. This is to represent the rolling away of the stone from the sepulcher.

Custom has it that eggs are traditionally dyed on Holy (or Maundy Thursday). In some areas of Europe it was common to dye eggs green on this day as a reminder of the bitter herbs and vinegar that were given Christ while on the cross. Also in Russia, Cyprus, the Balkans, Poland, Scotland and England, eggs are boiled with onion skins for a reddish brownish color. In England and Scotland, these types of eggs are known as "pace" eggs or "paste" eggs.

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For Immediate Release

April 9, 2012

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS TO OBSERVE PASCHA (EASTER) APRIL 15

NEW YORK – More than 250 million Orthodox Christians worldwide will celebrate Pascha (*Easter*) this coming Sunday, April 15. Faithful in great numbers crowd churches for Holy Week services and in preparation for the Feast of Feasts, the Resurrection of Christ.

"On this day and in the celebration of Holy Pascha, we are blessed in so many ways. We are called by the hymnological canon of the feast to 'partake of the new fruit of the vine of divine gladness and of the Kingdom of Christ,'" says Archbishop Demetrios, spiritual leader of 1.5 million Greek Orthodox Christians in America in his Easter Encyclical. *"The Holy Resurrection of our Lord affirms that as the True Vine, He is the source of life. He has made it possible and now guides us in being connected to His presence and the power of His Resurrection through faith."* And His Eminence concludes his message: *"These blessings, this fruit of Pascha that is produced in our lives as the Risen Lord is in our midst, are not for us alone. They are a witness of the grace and power of God through our worship, and they are blessings we are called to share with all of humanity. In the joy and light of this day, our hearts are so filled with gladness that we cannot but speak of things we have seen and heard. Our attitudes, words, and actions, our response to the needs of others reveal a source of strength, love and peace. Our lives are a witness of Pascha, guiding all around us to encounter a Risen and Redeeming Christ."*

Yesterday, **Palm Sunday** April 8, Archbishop Demetrios of America presided at the Divine Liturgy of Palm Sunday at the Greek Orthodox Shrine Church of St. Nicholas in Flushing, N.Y. On **Palm Sunday** in all Orthodox Churches around the world, palms are blessed during the Divine Liturgy and distributed to the faithful commemorating Christ's entrance into Jerusalem.

Throughout Holy Week, centuries-old religious services which recall the passion, crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ are conducted each morning and evening in Orthodox Christian Churches including: Greek, Russian, Romanian, Antiochian, Bulgarian, Carpatho-Russian, Albanian, Serbian and Ukrainian, which serve some 6 million faithful in the Americas.

In the evening of **Palm Sunday** and **Holy Monday**, the beautiful and solemn service of *Nymphios* (the service of the Bridegroom) is held as Holy Week begins.

On **Holy Tuesday** evening church services include the poetic and moving hymn of repentance, known as the *Troparion of Saint Kassiani*.

On **Holy Wednesday**, the faithful are anointed with the Sacrament of Holy Unction, blessed oil, which cleanses, renews and strengthens both spiritually and physically.

On **Holy Thursday** evening, the Service of Holy Passion takes place, during which the Twelve Lessons of the Gospel are read. After the Fifth Gospel a solemn litany begins. A large crucifix is carried in a procession led by the clergy as the mournful hymn of Crucifixion is sung.

On **Good Friday afternoon**, the Vespers of the Descent from the Cross are offered. The Body of Christ is taken down from the Cross, wrapped in white linen and prepared for burial.

On **Good Friday evening**, the Lamentations are sung during the *Epitaphios* Service, which symbolizes the burial of Christ.

On **Holy Saturday evening**, the Easter Resurrection Service begins with Matins at 11 p.m. At midnight, the Church is completely darkened and the faithful wait in joyous expectation for the bishop or priest to come forth carrying a white candle, chanting, "*Come, Receive the Light, the Light of the Resurrection.*" The *light* is passed to the congregation until the Church is ablaze with the glow of candlelight. A procession of altar boys, choir, chanters and clergy joined by all the faithful move outdoors where the Gospel proclaiming the Resurrection of Christ is read. The triumphant hymn, *Christos Anesti*, **Christ is Risen** is joyously sung by the faithful. At the conclusion of the Resurrection Liturgy, red Easter eggs, which symbolize the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, are distributed to the congregation.

On **Easter Sunday**, the Vespers of *AGAPE* (Love) are celebrated with the Holy Gospel of the Resurrection read in several languages emphasizing the universality of Christ's teaching of love and peace.

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, will be visiting the Phanar the See of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople (Istanbul, Turkey) on Holy Wednesday and Holy Thursday where he will attend Holy Week services and the completion of the services of the sanctification of the Holy Myrrh which is prepared there once every ten years.

On Good Friday evening, Archbishop Demetrios will preside at the service of Lamentations and *Epitaphios* in the Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity (319 East 74th St. New York City.) He will also proclaim the Resurrection, again in the Archdiocesan Cathedral, on the evening of Holy Saturday (starting at 11:00 p.m.) and immediately following will celebrate the Paschal Divine Liturgy.

This year the date of Orthodox Pascha does not coincide with the celebration of Western Easter. The Orthodox date for Easter is based on a decree of the Council of Nicaea, Asia Minor, held in 325 A.D. According to this decree, Easter must be celebrated on the Sunday following the first full moon of the vernal equinox but always after the Hebrew Passover to maintain the biblical sequence of events of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. The Orthodox Christian Churches have adhered strictly to this formula.

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen! A Blessed Pascha from the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC)

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen! We, at the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC), pray that you have a blessed Pascha. We are thankful to have you as brothers and sisters in Christ's triumphant Resurrection. Please continue to pray that more people around the world will join our Orthodox Christian family and come to know hope in our Risen Lord!

Holy Week

From: "The Orthodox Faith" Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko

In the Orthodox Church the last week of Christ's life is officially called Passion Week. In popular terminology it is called Holy Week. Each day is designated in the service books as "great and holy." There are special services every day of the week which are fulfilled in all churches. Earthly life ceases for the faithful as they "go up with the Lord to Jerusalem" (Matins of Great and Holy Monday).

Each day of Holy Week has its own particular theme. The theme of Monday is that of the sterile fig tree which yields no fruit and is condemned. Tuesday the accent is on the vigilance of the wise virgins who, unlike their foolish sisters, were ready when the Lord came to them. Wednesday the focus is on the fallen woman who repents. Great emphasis is made in the liturgical services to compare the woman, a sinful harlot who is saved, to

Judas, a chosen apostle who is lost. The one gives her wealth to Christ and kisses his feet; the other betrays Christ for money with a kiss.

On each of these three days the Gospel is read at the Hours, as well as at the Vespers when the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is served. The Old Testament readings are from Exodus, Job, and the Prophets. The Gospel is also read at the Matins services which are traditionally called the "Bridegroom" services because the general theme of each of these days is the end of the world and the judgment of Christ. It is the common practice to serve the Bridegroom services at night.

Behold, the bridegroom comes in the middle of the night and blessed is the servant whom he shall find watching, and unworthy the servant whom he shall find heedless. Take care then, O my soul, and be not weighed down by sleep that you will not be given over unto death and be excluded from the Kingdom. But rise up and call out: Holy, Holy, Holy art Thou O God, by the Theotokos have mercy on us (Troparion of the First Three Days).

During the first three days of Holy Week, the Church prescribes that the entire Four Gospels be read at the Hours up to the point in each where the passion of Christ begins. Although this is not usually possible in parish churches, an attempt is sometimes made to read at least one complete Gospel, privately or in common, before Holy Thursday.

Excerpt from Wounded by Love, pg 132, Elder Porphyrios on how prayer works

Prayer for others which is made gently and with deep love is selfless and has great spiritual benefit. It brings grace to the person who prays and also to the person for whom he is praying. When you have a great love and this love moves you to prayer, then the waves of love are transmitted and affect the person for whom you are praying and you create around him a shield of protection and you influence him, you lead him towards what is good. When He sees your efforts, God bestows His grace abundantly on both you and on the person you are praying for. But we must die to ourselves. Do you understand?

You get upset when others are unwell, whereas what you should do is devote yourself to prayer so that what is desired comes about through the grace of God. With your own wisdom, you tell others what should be done, when that is not necessarily the best thing. The secret is to be found elsewhere, and not in what we say or suggest to others. The secret lies in our devotion, our prayer to God for what is best for our brethren to come about through the grace of God. That is the best. What we are unable to do will be done through His grace.

Having purified the soul beforehand by repentance and good deeds, and with faith in the Crucified, having closed the bodily eyes, immerse the mind within the heart, in which place cry out with the invocation of our Lord Jesus Christ; and, to the measure of one's zeal and warmth of spirit toward

the Beloved, a man finds in the invoked name a delight which awakens the desire to seek higher illumination. ***St. Seraphim of Sarov***

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Protocol 36/12

April 15, 2012

Holy Pascha

The Feast of Feasts

*Come, on this auspicious day of the Resurrection,
let us partake of the new fruit of the vine
of divine gladness and of the Kingdom of Christ,
praising Him as God unto the ages.
(Hymn of the Canon of Holy Pascha)*

To the Most Reverend Hierarchs, the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the Distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox Family in America

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Χριστός Ἀνέστη! Christ is Risen!

As we gather to celebrate this great Feasts of Feasts, and together we experience the supreme joy of Holy Pascha, we offer our praise to God for His abundant grace and for the triumph of our Savior Jesus Christ over the power of sin and death. In a magnificent revelation of His invincible might, our Risen Lord has defeated all that corrupts and destroys our human existence. Through His compassionate sacrifice and Holy Resurrection, He has reconciled us to our Creator. By trampling down death by death and dispelling its darkness with the light of true life, He leads us to salvation and eternal communion with God.

On this day and in the celebration of Holy Pascha, we are blessed in so many ways. We are called by the hymnological canon of the feast to "partake of the new fruit of the vine of divine gladness and of the Kingdom

of Christ.” The Holy Resurrection of our Lord affirms that as the True Vine, He is the source of life. He has made it possible and now guides us in being connected to His presence and the power of His Resurrection through faith.

The Resurrection of Christ has also blessed us with the light of the absolute truth. The bondage to falsehood and error has been vanquished by the power of the Gospel of truth. False ideologies, wrong philosophies, and evil machinations have been discredited and dispelled by the brilliance of divine wisdom. The deceptions of this world of sin and corruption have been exposed in all their evilness thanks to the illumination of our minds with the sacred, holy, and eternal truth revealed by Christ.

These blessings, this fruit of Pascha that is produced in our lives as the Risen Lord is in our midst, are not for us alone. They are a witness of the grace and power of God through our worship, and they are blessings we are called to share with all of humanity. In the joy and light of this day, our hearts are so filled with gladness that we cannot but speak of things we have seen and heard. Our attitudes, words, and actions, our response to the needs of others reveal a source of strength, love and peace. Our lives are a witness of Pascha, guiding all around us to encounter a Risen and Redeeming Christ.

On this most sacred of days, this Feast of Great and Holy Pascha, I wish you and your families the fullness of the joy and blessings that are offered to us by God through our Risen Lord Jesus Christ. May this fullness of joy fill your hearts and may the light of grace and truth shine through your lives offering to all a witness of the transforming power of Christ’s Resurrection.

With paternal love in the Risen Lord,

†DEMETRIOS

Archbishop of America

PATRIARCHAL ENCYCLICAL FOR HOLY PASCHA

Prot. No. 237

† BARTHOLOMEW

By the Mercy of God, Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome
and Ecumenical Patriarch

To the Plenitude of the Church

Grace, Peace and Mercy from the Savior Christ, Risen in Glory

* * *

He became the first-born among the dead. (Easter Apolytikion, 3rd tone)

Beloved children in the Lord,

If Christ’s Resurrection referred to Himself, then its significance for us would be negligible. The Church proclaims, however, that, the Lord did not arise alone. Together with Himself, He also resurrected all people. This is how our

predecessor, St. John Chrysostom, proclaims this great truth in thunderous language: "Christ is risen, and none are left dead in the grave; for in being raised from the dead, he became the first-fruits of all who were asleep." This means that Christ became the first-fruits of the resurrection of all who have fallen asleep and who will fall asleep in the future, as well as of their transition from death to life. The message is a joyful one for us all because, with His Resurrection Christ abolished the power of death. Those who believe in Him await the resurrection of the dead and are accordingly baptized in His death, rise with Him and live on in life eternal.

The world that is alienated from Christ endeavors to amass material goods because it bases its hopes for survival on them. It unwisely imagines that it will escape death through wealth. Deceived in this way to amass wealth, supposedly to extend their present life, human beings disperse death among others, too. They deny others the financial possibility of survival, often even violently depriving others of life, in the hope of preserving their own life.

How tragic! What a huge deception. For life is only acquired through faith in Christ and incorporation in His body.

The experience of the Orthodox Church assures us that those united with Christ live even after death, coexist with the living, are in dialogue with them, can hear them and are often even capable of miraculously fulfilling their requests.

This means that it is no longer necessary to search for the "fountain of immortality." Immortality exists in Christ and is offered by Him to all.

There is no need for some nations to be destroyed in order for other nations to survive. Nor is there any need to destroy defenseless human lives so that other human beings may live in greater comfort. Christ offers life to all people, on earth as in heaven. He is risen, and all those who so desire life may follow Him on the way of Resurrection. By contrast, all those who bring about death, whether indirectly or directly, believing that in this way they are prolonging or enhancing their own life, condemn themselves to eternal death.

Our Risen Lord Jesus Christ came into the world in order that all people "may have life and life in abundance" (John 10:10). We deceive ourselves if we believe that prosperity in the world can come from destroying one another. Christ raises the dead and invalidates their killing. Christ has the power to transcend death. Moreover, the fact that he conquered death confirms His contempt of death. Christ leads to life; He re-bestows life, which happens to be interrupted, because He is "our life and our resurrection." This is why we, the faithful, do not fear death. Our strength lies not in the invulnerability of our existence but in its possibility for resurrection.

Christ is Risen! We, too, shall arise!

Therefore, beloved brethren and children in the Lord, let us follow the Risen Christ in all His works. Let us come to the assistance of those deprived of the means for survival so that their life may be preserved. Let us proclaim to all those who are ignorant of Christ's Resurrection that, through this, death was abolished and, as a result, they too may share in His Resurrection by believing in Him and following His way. Our own resurrection is only possible when it is offered for the

resurrection of others, of our brothers and sisters. Then alone will the triumphant proclamation that "Christ is Risen!" refer to the salvation for all of humanity. Let it be so!

Holy Pascha 2012
† Bartholomew of Constantinople
Your fervent supplicant for all

THE PASCHAL EPISTLE OF THE PERMANENT CONFERENCE OF UKRAINIAN
ORTHODOX BISHOPS BEYOND THE BORDERS OF UKRAINE

To the Reverend Clergy, the Diaconate in Christ, the Venerable Monastics and Faithful Laity of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Beyond the Borders of Ukraine and on their native soil.

Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen!
Христос Воскрес! Христос Воскрес! Христос Воскрес!

Dearly Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

We greet you with the all-joyous and most important feast-day, the Glorious Resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The Resurrection of Christ is the pinnacle of our expectations and hopes, the fulfilment of the Lord's promises and the beginning of renewed life in the Lord Jesus.

The Resurrection of Christ is the immovable foundation upon which is built His Church, which calls all to salvation and preaches eternal life after death. "Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep." (I Cor. 15:20)

It is this foundation, that the enemies of Christ and His Church have attempted to shake and shatter throughout history, for they correctly know that without the Resurrection the Divine Christ is no longer divine and is reduced to a mortal prophet, teacher, healer. St. Paul writes to the Corinthians, "And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty." (I Cor. 15:14)

It is because Christ rose from the dead, that the faithful are inspired and have the spiritual strength to wage battle against the enemies of God – the wolves among the sheep, that sow discontent within the Church, that attack the teachings of Christ as being irrelevant to the advances in modern science, technology, philosophy or the needs of today's social issues and relative morality.

It is because Christ rose from the dead, that we heed His directives to, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mk. 16:15). It is the unbelievers, who say, that this or that country will never be Orthodox.

It is because Christ rose from the dead, that we accept His authority and submit to the truths, that He has passed on to us through the Holy Apostles and their episcopal successors and regard them higher than the philosophical ponderings of those who say, "We are greater than Christ".

Following the crucifixion on Golgotha the Lord's followers were consumed by great sadness and feelings of hopelessness. Then the Risen Christ appeared among them bringing new hope and victory. He also comes to us today bringing resurrection and a new life beyond our

imagination. Where frustration and disillusionment with life reigns, there Christ brings a new life filled with new meaning and new joy.

Let us, brothers and sisters, greet “This chosen and holy day, the first, the Queen and Lady of Sabbaths, the Feast of Feasts and the Festival of Festivals on which we bless Christ to all the ages.” (Easter Matins, Canticle 8)

May this day mark a new beginning in our relationship with God, our family, our church and society.

With this new joy we greet all of you scattered throughout the world and in Ukraine. May the Risen Christ always be with you. May He be a constant source of our unity and may He guide us in our common future here on earth and to eternal life in heaven.

Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!

Pascha 2012

With Archpastoral Blessings,

+ Constantine

Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and the Diaspora;

+Yurij

Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada;

+Antony

Archbishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA;

+Ioan

Archbishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the Diaspora;

+Jeremiah

Archbishop of the South American Eparchy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church;

+Ilarion

Bishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada;

+Andriy

Bishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada;

+Daniel

Bishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA.

On behalf of the Holy Orthodox Church, the Holy Orthodox Patriarchs, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, His Beatitude Metropolitan Constantine, His Eminence Archbishop Antony, His Grace Bishop Daniel, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, Father George Hnatko and the Pittsburgh Deanery clergy and faithful, the Holy Ghost Parish Family, the Parish Board, Saint Olga Sisterhood, and our family, I greet you all with the joyous news that CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN! May the joy of this Feast of Feasts be with you all the days of your life! In His Love, Fr. Bob, Pani Gina, Alex, Matt, and Stancy [my mom].

REMINDER: This coming week is a FAST-FREE WEEK except for pre-Communion fasting! Enjoy your Paschal feast all week!

DON'T FORGET—NO KNEELING: The Church dictates there is no kneeling from Pascha until the Kneeling Prayers of Pentecost.

PLEASE REMEMBER—*THERE WILL BE NO COFFEE HOUR AFTER CHURCH TODAY—ENJOY YOUR PASCHAL FEAST WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS!*