



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church
714 Westmoreland Avenue
PO Box 3
Slickville, PA 15684-0003
www.holyghostorthodoxchurch.org
Very Rev. Father Robert Popichak, Pastor
23 Station Street
Carnegie, PA 15106-3014
[412] 956-6626 cell
rpopichak@alumni.cmu.edu

CHRIST IS RISEN! CHRISTOS VOSKRES! CHRISTOS ANESTI!

ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Father Bob, Archbishop Daniel, Metropolitan Antony, Metropolitan Yuriy, Archbishop Jovan, Metropolitan Savas, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Paul Stoll, Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Elias Warnke, Father George Yatsko, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Emilian Balan, Father John & Pani Mary Anne Nakonachny, Father Steve Repa, Archpriest Dionysi Vitali, Protodeacon Joseph Hotrovich, Father Paisius McGrath, Father Michael Smolynech, Father Lawrence & Matushka Sophia Daniels, Father Joe Cervo, Father John Harrold [Saint Sylvester], Igumen Patrick, Pani Mary Ann Chubenko, Father Jim Orr, Father Rick Seilier, Panimatka Laryssa Charest, Fr. Vasyl Sendeha, Father George & Dobrodijka Oksana Bazylevsky, Father Angelo Artemas, Father John Haluszczak, Joshua Agosto and his family, Eva Malesnick, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Joseph Sliwinsky, Gary & Linda Mechtly, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Mary Evelyn King, Sam Wadrose, Isabella Olivia Lindgren, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Erin, Michael Miller, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Liz Stumpf, Theodore Nixon, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Linda Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, Robert McKivitz, Liz Obradovich, Halyna Zelinska [Archbishop Daniel's mother], Charlotte, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Nancy Barylak, Patrick Keenan, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier, Nathan Forbeck, Sarah Doyle, Samuel Peters, Esther Holupka, David Vallor, Henry Faraly, Julie Eiler, Dorothy Lednovich, Bob C., Allie—young girl with leukemia, Heather Kramer, Jane Wartinbee, Matthew—young man with cancer, Nicholas Orlando, Mary Ann Kuznik, Michael Pryhodzenko, Sonia Luciw, Theresa Ditto, Mary Ann Musial, Yvonne Christy, Father Deacon Myron & Barbara Spak, Julia Duda, Lisa Pandle, Kris & Julie Hanczar, John Kennedy, Gaelle Kelly, Irma McDivitt, Robin Young, Mckayla, Rachel, Carl & Margaret Reed, Lydia Wilson, Robert Pointon, Walter Cecelia, John Persico, Jeff Miller, Mary Kernick, Glenn Miller, Jean Marie, Donna & Walter McCrackin, Bonnie & Eugene Blair [Pani Gina's parents], David Hoenshell, Barbara Macino, Shelley Hill, Linda Cawley, Gerald Cogley, Corey Guich,

Robert Vangrin, Pauline Witkowsky, Sera White, Deborah Smith, Nancy & Eric Dunik, Julian Stroz [young lady with cerebral palsy], Dr. Kirsten Ream, Patricia Corey, Michelle, Katie Swarm, Michelle, Patrick, Linda Morris, Chris, David Hiles, Jennifer, Cher Mount, Frank & Janet Horrell, Jim Wandling, Gail, Sirena Sharp, Ron Paulovich, Sandi Anderson, Lina, Shirley, Denny Mader, Ella Campbell, Tom Hyatt, Bill Janiro, Jean Symanko-Andy's sister, William Lemonakis, Alma Wyke, Lindsay Romanczak & family, Susan Lucas, Neil Carter & family, James Paluh, Mickie Weikel, Evelyn Krempasky, Tammy Strunk, Loida Esbry, Darlene Chicka Deskins, Drew, Alice & Keith Philipa, Kateryna Kocelko, Mira Filipović, Lynn, Jacqueline, Sharon, Zan Cheng, Kristy, Elaine Ellenberger, Brandon, Anna Tranchine, Demetra, Blase Urban, Catherine Hogel & children, Jennifer & Dylan, Ron Schwartz, Lydia Wilson, Flora Tomlin, Howell Swarm, Jane Bielewicz Allred, Katie Elizabeth, Mileva, & Michael, Deirdré Straughan, Terri Paluh, Lori & Steve Lucier, Kyranna Cherpas, Pastor Bruce Nordeen, Heather Ried, Carla Perry, Linda Elliot, Dennis McDaniel, Luke Tinsley, Brent, Tricia, Katherine Gorman, Pamela Jaquette, Sherri Walewski, Marika Zeliszczuk, Donna Davis, Jackie Crimbchin, Marta Charron, Mary [Corba], Margie Sekelsky, Gary Howell, Fran Fulton, Gina Catanese, Bill Vizza, Jamie Swarm, Kevin Allen (from Ancient Faith Radio), Kathy Flaherty, Tori Reade-Henry's niece, Derick-Glen Burlack's neighbor, Michael, Nichole & Christopher, Ben Douglas, Dianne Donahue, Zachary, Natasha, Noah Willard, Jodi Hanczar, Gregory Cervo, Lisa Bruce, Martha Nezolyk, Kathy Cvetkovich, Judy, Will, Emma, Ginny, Ye-Jin, Maria, John & JoAnn, Jim & Kitty, Phil Bouse, Ralph & Beverly Stoker, Noah Willard, Nikola, Natalie, Nikola, & Nevenka Jovonovich, Julia Collier, Amy Kemerer, Thomas Smith, Tracy Slaughaupt, Louis & Teresa Bercelli, Tom Nolan, Silvia Martin, Dena & George, Georgia, Lawanda [Evelyn's niece], Maureen Sams, John Kendall, Judi Danser, Darcy, Denis Strittmatter, Nancy, Ian Brick, Cecilia Barnhart, Logan Magorien, Pam & Gordon Grant, Debbie & Jerry Novosel, Noah Willard, Sandra Dillard, Danielle McCann, Barry [Father Jim Orr's cousin], Tim Joyce, Joe Samchuck—vocations, Albert Heckman, Brianna Stumpf, Stanley Porembka, David & Terry Coyne Hartnett, Mike C., Jennifer Scheirer [Nick Behun's daughter], Catherine Beecham [Father Bob's cousin], JoAnne & Dave Andrews, Rev. Peg Bowman, Pat & Jan Jennings, Tim Sams, Mike Ruzzi, Stephen Popichak—Fr. Bob's brother, Mary Kay Ludovicy, Pastor Sara Irwin, George Dilendorf, Andy & Sharon Torick, Carol Behun, Erv Frye, William Lusherand, Colin Kirton—Stage 4 pancreatic cancer, Clifford, Joe Veto, Paul Riley, Tonee & Sydnee Turner, Annette Paluh, Theresa Paluh, Cathy Lotinsky, Monk Andrew, Jeff & Buschra Kerr, Rose Mary Pavlovich—Mary Anne Kuznik's Cousin, Margaret Sekelsky, Robert Sekelsky, Robert Rodriguez, Dollie Irvin, Joe Mrvos, Alexandra & Bowen, Katherine Kulik,

Pastor Terry Polen, Eleanor Kitt, Stacie & Gary, Maria Warholak, Stacie & Gary, Anna Sekelik, Christy, Mariruth, Rich & Judy Previc, Ben Williams, Denis Strittmatter, Father Joe Uzar—newly ordained, Tim—surgery, John Wakin, Olivia—young girl with a brain tumor, Rick & Sharon Morgan, John Stasko [triple by-pass], John, Kris & Kait, Kristi Wilson, Wendy LaGamba, Melissa Gross [hip replacement], Mike & Amy Forbeck, David Salazar, James Mary, Barb Bookser, Dr. Paul Riley, David Hess, Serena, Wyatt, Makenzie, Jennifer, Carolyn Strittmatter, Barbara Shegat & Chaplain Rachelle Zazzu, Candace Irvin, Carol Muschick, Grace Love [knee replacement], Stacie Riley, Joseph Paul Cervo, Jr. [infant], Elizabeth [5-year-old], Lillian Skowvron, Pani Cathy Danczak, Sue & Greg Heinen, Paul Simpson [Father Bob's cousin, car accident], Sharon Curtis Rivas, Kathy Milcic, Lisa Bolan, David G. [cancer], Donna [dementia] & Darla, Linda Snow, the McKenna family, David Gazella, Brian & Michele Cannone, Robert & Eleanor Rodrigues & family, Father Deacon James Rossetti & Diakonissa Kari—ordination!, Michael Welsh, Nick Solominsky, Samantha & Lisa Houser, Sarah Stepanovich Clark, Julia Baloga, Brett Crosby, Randy Lapuh, Henry & Shirley [skin cancer] Tkacik, Diane & Arthur Chaklis, Denny Mader, Myra Woodruff [cancer], Zoe Oswalt—Fr. Bob's cousin [cancer], Barbette [cancer] & Scott, Kristin [cancer], Erm Hartmann, Barbara Bookser [cancer], Bob Mazzuca [cancer], Marko, Taylor, Terri Crosby-Vega, Christine Mohamed, Sue Demko, Tammy Marsico, Terry & David Hartnett, Jamie Ball, Kay Williams, Hannah Stewart, Jim Wyko—Alex's friend, Dan Losego, Lisa Bruce, Yvette, Barry Bender, Scott McDougall, Pam & Jennifer, and Susan Pulcini—Father Ted Pulcini's mom. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

PLEASE REVIEW THE NAMES ON THE PRAYER LIST ABOVE AND LET FATHER BOB KNOW ANY NAMES THAT CAN BE REMOVED...

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE! PRAY FOR PEACE IN THE WORLD—AND OUR LIVES!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ... There is NOTHING to keep us from praying...for each other, for our family and friends, and most of all for the first responders—EMTs, nurses, doctors, firefighters, police officers, and members of our military who keep us safe. Be well and be SAFE!!! God Bless!

Please remember 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!

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 ask 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] 956-6626.

SERVICES IN SLICKVILLE

SUNDAY, April 16 PASCHAL DIVINE LITURGY-UPSTAIRS 10:30 AM
RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST; VENERABLE
NICETAS THE CONFESSOR-ABBOT OF MEDIKION; VIRGIN-MARTYR
THEODOSIA OF TYRE & MARTYR IRENE; VENERABLE ILLYRICUS; MARTYRS
ELPIDOPHOROS, DIUS, BITHONIUS, & GALYCUS

*******PAGE 179 IN THE BLACK DIVINE LITURGY BOOKS*******

*******BLESSING OF PASCHAL BASKETS DOWNSTAIRS AFTER LITURGY*******

Paschal Tone

Acts 1:1-8

John 1:1-17

SUNDAY, April 23 OBEDNITZA—UPSTAIRS 10:30 AM
2ND SUNDAY OF PASCHA; SAINT THOMAS SUNDAY; MARTYRS TERENCE,
POMPEIUS, AFRICANUS, MAXIMUS, ZENO, ALEXANDER, THEODORE, & 33
OTHERS BEHEADED AT CARTHAGE; PROPHETESS HULDAH; MARTYRS
JAMES-PRESBYTER, AZADANES & ABDICIUS-DEACONS OF PERSIA

Tone 1

Acts 5:12-20

John 20:19-31

SUNDAY, April 30 OBEDNITZA—UPSTAIRS 10:30 AM
3RD SUNDAY OF PASCHA; SUNDAY OF THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN;
RIGHTEOUS JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA & NICODEMUS; MARTYR ADRIAN OF
CORINTH; HIROMARTYR SIMEON-BISHOP IN PERSIA & THOSE WITH HIM;
MARTYRS ABDECHALAS & ANANIAS-PRESBYTERS, USTHAZANES,
FUSICUS, AASCITREA & AZAT THE EUNUCH; VENERABLE ACACIUS-BISHOP
OF MELITENE;; SAINT AGAPITUS-POPE OF ROME

Tone 2

Acts 6:1-7

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 16 APRIL 2023

**RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST;
VENERABLE NICETAS THE CONFESSOR-ABBOT OF MEDIKION;
VIRGIN-MARTYR THEODOSIA OF TYRE & MARTYR IRENE;
VENERABLE ILLYRICUS; MARTYRS ELPIDOPHOROS, DIUS,
BITHONIUS, & GALYCUS**

*******PAGE 179 IN THE BLACK DIVINE LITURGY BOOKS*******

*****BLESSING OF PASCHAL BASKETS DOWNSTAIRS AFTER LITURGY*****

Father Joseph Cervo:

This goes out especially to family, friends and lapsed faithful, who have been deceived by Satan, into thinking attendance & participation in church services, is not essential to be a Christian and necessary to enter the kingdom of Heaven. This is a great LIE, from the "prince of deceit."

An old friend & brother priest, Fr. Paul Jannakos, the OCA Chancellor of the Mid-west Diocese, writes the following: I've been an Orthodox priest for 38 years, here's what I have heard:

"Holy Week Complaints."

My response.

Overheard: Why so many services?

Me: Why so many basketball games for March madness?!

Overheard: Why are the services so long?

Me: Why is a World Series baseball game 3 1/2 hours long!?!?

Overheard: Why do we have to stand so much?

Me: Why do we stand in the hot sun for 4 hours when playing 18 holes of golf?!

Overheard: Why do we have to fast?

Me: Why do we go to the gym to work out?!

Remember: It's all a matter of PERSPECTIVE!

We worship what we LOVE.

*“You cannot have God for your
Father unless you
have the church for your mother.”*
- Cyprian of Carthage

Jerusalem's Annual Paschal Miracle: THE HOLY FIRE

(This is NOT legend, folklore or fiction. I have heard personal accounts from individuals who have been present to witness and experience this miracle).

Every year on Holy Saturday a miracle takes place in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher Jerusalem, where Christ was crucified and entombed, and rose from the dead. The miracle of the Holy Fire has taken place at the same time, in the same manner, in the same place every single year for centuries. No other miracle is known to occur so regularly and so steadily over time.

Beginning the afternoon of Holy Friday (Orthodox date) pilgrims wait in anticipation for the miracle, camped as close to the Holy Sepulchre as possible. Beginning at around 11:00 in the morning the Christian Arabs chant traditional hymns in a loud voice. These chants date back to the Turkish occupation of Jerusalem in the 13th century, a period in which the Christians were not allowed to chant anywhere but in the churches. "We are the Christians, we have been Christians for centuries, and we shall be forever and ever. Amen!"—they chant at the top of their voices accompanied by the sound of drums. The drummers sit on the shoulders of others who dance vigorously around the Holy Ciborium. But at 1:00 pm the chants fade out, and then there is a tense silence, charged with the anticipation of the great demonstration of God's power for all to witness.

Shortly thereafter, a delegation from the local authorities elbows its way through the crowd. At the time of the Turkish occupation of Palestine they were Muslim Turks; today they are Israelis. Their function is to represent the Romans at the time of Jesus. The Gospels speak of the Romans that went to seal the tomb of Jesus, so that his disciples would not steal his body and claim he had risen. In the same way the Israeli authorities on this Holy Saturday come and seal the tomb with wax. Before

they seal the door, they follow the custom of entering the tomb to check for any hidden source of fire which would make a fraud of the miracle.

The Patriarch of Jerusalem brings out the Holy Fire from the shrine encasing the Tomb of Christ

How the Miracle Occurs

The Orthodox Patriarch then enters the Holy Tomb alone. Listen to this account of Patriarch Diodorus, who was Patriarch from 1981 to 2000: "I enter the tomb and kneel in holy fear in front of the place where Christ lay after His death and where He rose again from the dead. I find my way through the darkness towards the inner chamber in which I fall on my knees. I say certain prayers that have been handed down to us through the centuries and, having said them, I wait. Sometimes I may wait a few minutes, but normally the miracle happens immediately after I have said the prayers.

"From the core of the very stone on which Jesus lay an indefinable light pours forth. It usually has a blue tint, but the color may change and take many different hues. It cannot be described in human terms. The light rises out of the stone as mist may rise out of a lake—it almost looks as if the stone is covered by a moist cloud, but it is light. This light each year behaves differently. Sometimes it covers just the stone, while other times it gives light to the whole sepulchre, so that people who stand outside the tomb and look into it will see it filled with light. The light does not burn—I have never had my beard burnt in all the sixteen years I have been Patriarch in Jerusalem and have received the Holy Fire. The light is of a different consistency than normal fire that burns in an oil lamp.

"At a certain point the light rises and forms a column in which the fire is of a different nature, so that I am able to light my candles from it. When I thus have received the flame on my candles, I go out and give the fire first to the Armenian Patriarch and then to the Coptic. Hereafter I give the flame to all people present in the Church."

When the Patriarch comes out with the two candles lit and shining brightly in the darkness, a roar of jubilee resounds in the Church.

The miracle is not confined to what actually happens inside the little tomb, where the Patriarch prays. For the blue light is reported to appear and be active outside the tomb. Every year many believers claim that this miraculous light ignites candles, which they hold in their hands, of its own initiative. All in the church wait with candles in the hope that they may ignite spontaneously. Often unlit oil lamps catch light by themselves before the eyes of the pilgrims. The blue flame is seen to move in different places in the Church. A number of signed testimonies by pilgrims, whose candles lit spontaneously, attest to the validity of these ignitions. The person who

experiences the miracle from close up by having the fire on the candle or seeing the blue light usually leaves Jerusalem changed.

How Old is the Wonder?

The first written account of the Holy Fire dates from the fourth century, but authors write about events that occurred in the first century. So Saints John Damascene and Gregory of Nissa narrate how the Apostle Peter saw the Holy Light in the Holy Sepulchre after Christ's resurrection. "One can trace the miracle throughout the centuries in the many itineraries of the Holy Land," writes the Russian abbot Daniel, in his itinerary written in the years 1106-07.

Only the Greek Patriarch

The awesome honor of invoking the miracle of the Holy Fire is reserved for the Orthodox Patriarch—literally reserved by divine fiat. Several times over the centuries clergy from other churches or Moslem conquerors tried to exclude the Patriarch from the Holy Sepulchre on Holy Saturday. When this was attempted in 1579, as the Orthodox Patriarch Sophrony IV stood sorrowfully with his flock at the exit of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre near the left column, a divine light split this column vertically and the Holy Fire flashed out near the Orthodox Patriarch. A Muslim Muezzin, called Tounom, who saw the miraculous event from an adjacent mosque, immediately abandoned the Muslim religion and became an Orthodox Christian. The split column can be seen to this day.

Seeing is Believing

Numerous online videos of the Holy Fire are available on YouTube.
(The Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem brings out the Holy Fire from the Tomb of Christ at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher)





To the beloved Clergy, Monastics and Faithful entrusted to our spiritual care in the United States of America, South America, and the Diaspora, as well as all our beloved Sisters and Brothers in long-suffering Ukraine.

Dear Brothers and Concelebrants in the Vineyard of our Lord and all our Spiritual Children,

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

"Enjoy you all the Feast of Faith: Receive you all the riches of loving-kindness. Let no one grieve at his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one weep for his wickedness, for pardon has shown forth from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Savior's death has set us free. He that was held prisoner of it has annihilated it. By descending into Hell, He made Hell captive. He angered it when it tasted of His flesh.

"O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen!—and you are overthrown. Christ is risen!—and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen!—and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen!—and life reigns. Christ is risen!—and not one dead remains in the grave. For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen."

We live in a world today, dearly beloved, that perhaps has never before been so desperate to hear these words of St. John Chrysostom in his Paschal Sermon, read during Paschal Matins at the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a world that fails all too often to comprehend the sanctity of life from conception to natural death. It is a world that is all too ready to end life in many ways without even the slightest pangs of conscience. It is a world in which a sovereign nation like Ukraine can be invaded with hundreds of thousands of its citizens—men, women, and children—murdered by godless aggressors who hate them simply because they want to live freely and independently in their own culture and spirituality. It is a world where the vast and rapid consumption of God's abundant blessings—our natural resources, ecological systems, the air we breathe, and the

water we drink—takes place without responsibly and fully considering the consequences. And we need not go on...

Yes, this world needs to hear the profoundly beautiful and powerful message: CHRIST IS RISEN! We all, dear ones, must proclaim that message from the depth of our hearts and souls. We must receive that message standing before the doors of our Churches as we sing it together: CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD, TRAMPLING DOWN DEATH BY DEATH, AND TO THOSE IN THE TOMBS BESTOWING LIFE! It is a message that we must internalize. We must allow the LIGHT that shines forth from the Empty Tomb to fill our very being, our homes, our life, our relationships and all else so that our Paschal declarations will prevail: *"Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered and let those to hate Him flee before Him...as smoke vanishes, so shall they vanish as does wax that melts before fire...Let the ungodly perish in the presence of God, but let the righteous rejoice...This is the day, which the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it!"*

Only if we, God's children, can indeed internalize this powerful "Good News" can we hope to influence and bring sense to this world, which He has gifted to us. We must be the living proof that our Lord lives and loves us so much that "He made divine the (our) flesh that He assumed and honored it on His Throne at the Right Hand of the Father in His Glorious Ascension!" (Third Prayer before Holy Communion) We must trust His desire for us to comprehend that our words, deeds, and thoughts must always be in sync with all the rest of His Creation and in accordance with His commandments. We must accomplish this as God's people—His community—not as isolated individuals who easily falter when faced with even the slightest resistance. May we embrace one another with this message—not just once each year at PASCHA, but every day of our lives and especially when we journey into His Heavenly Kingdom during each Divine Liturgy.

Our prayers this day and always are for steadfastness in your faith—that having "clothed yourself in Christ" at your Baptism and received the fullness of the Holy Spirit at your Chrismation, you may understand that the Grace continually inspired into your life and being through all the Holy Mysteries will always enable you to be more and to accomplish more than you might have imagined possible for yourself.

May the Grace of our Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Love of God the Father, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you at all times. You are in God's Hands always and you are God's hands in these important times. *"The Father is our Hope, the Son is our Refuge, and the Holy Spirit is our Protection."*

+ **ANTONY**, *By the Grace of God, Metropolitan*

+ **JEREMIAH**, *By the Grace of God, Archbishop*

+ DANIEL, *By the Grace of God, Archbishop*

*Given this 16th day of April 2023 – THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD
Metropolia Center of St. Andrew – South Bound Brook – Somerset, New Jersey*



+ B A R T H O L O M E W

*By God's Mercy Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical
Patriarch*

*To the Plenitude of the Church: May the Grace, Peace and Mercy of Christ
Risen in Glory be with you All!*

Most honorable brother Hierarchs,
Dearly beloved children,

Having arrived with God's grace at the all-saving Resurrection of the Lord, through which the power of death was abolished and the gates of paradise were opened to the entire human race, we address to all of you our paschal greetings and heartfelt wishes, as we proclaim the cry "Christ is Risen" that gives joy to the world.

In all of its dimensions, the life of the Church is invigorated by the ineffable joy of the Resurrection. The "experience of resurrection" is witnessed in the labors of the Saints and Martyrs of our faith, as well as in the liturgical and sacramental life, the proclamation of the Gospel "to the ends of the earth", the devotion and spirituality of the faithful, their sacrificial love and Christian conduct, but also in their expectation of a world where "death will no longer exist, nor will there be mourning, wailing or suffering" (Rev. 21,4).

In and through the Resurrection, everything lies in a state of motion toward perfection in the Kingdom of God. This eschatological drive has always provided Orthodox Christians in the world with dynamism and perspective. Despite the claims of the opposite, as a result of the eschatological orientation of its life, the Church never compromised with the presence of evil in all its expressions in the world. Nor did it deny the reality of pain and death. Nor again did it ignore the ambiguity of human affairs. And finally, it never considered the struggle for a more just world as something foreign to its mission.

Still, though, the Church always knew that pain and the cross are not the ultimate reality. The experiential quintessence of the Christian life is the conviction that, through the Cross and through the "narrow gate," we are led to the Resurrection. This faith is reflected in the fact that the core of church life, the Divine Eucharist, is essentially linked with the Resurrection of Christ. In the Orthodox tradition, as the late Metropolitan John of Pergamon emphasizes, the Divine Eucharist "is filled with joy and light...because it is not grounded in the Cross and an idealization of passion, but in the Resurrection as the transcendence of the passion of the Cross"[\[1\]](#). The Holy Eucharist transports us to Golgotha not so that we may remain there, but so that we may be led through the Cross to the ever-radiant glory of the Kingdom of God. The Orthodox faith is the overcoming of the utopian salvation "without the Cross" and of the existential shipwreck of the Cross "without the Resurrection".

Our participation in the Resurrection of Christ through the sacrament of the Church is on the one hand a tangible abolition of every utopianism and of the false paradise promising unimpeded self-indulgence, while at the same time a definitive transcendence of hopeless self-enslavement in supposed unsurpassable negativity, because the Cross of Christ gives birth to the Resurrection, to the "endless delight", to "the enjoyment of eternal glory." The annihilation of death through the Cross and Resurrection of our Savior elevates our life to its divine-human essence and its heavenly destiny.

In Christ, we know and live that the present life is not our entire life, that our biological death does not constitute an end or obliteration of our existence. The biological boundaries of life do not define its truth. After all, the sense that life is an irreversible "journey toward death" leads to existential impasses, to depression and nihilism, to indifference for what truly matters in life. Science and financial or social progress are unable to offer an essential solution or outlet. Christians are "those who have hope" (1Thess. 4,13), who expect the coming Kingdom of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit as a final reality, as the fullness of life and knowledge, as the fulfillment of joy, not only for the coming generations but for the entire human race from the beginning to the end of the ages.

This vision of history and eternity, the resurrectional nature of Orthodox faith, ethos, and culture—namely, the unquestionable fact that the great miracle of Truth is only revealed "to those who venerate the mystery in faith"—is what we are called to witness today within a civilization that rejects the Transcendent and in the context of manifold reductions of the spiritual identity of human existence.

We give glory in chant, hymn and spiritual song to the Lord who rose from the dead and shines eternal life upon all. We participate with joy in

“the feast that is common to all.” And we beseech the all-powerful, all-wise, and all-merciful Maker and Redeemer of all to bring peace to the world and grant all His saving gifts to humankind, so that His all-honorable and majestic name may be glorified and blessed, now and always and to the ages of ages. Amen!

At the Phanar, Holy Pascha 2023

+*Bartholomew of Constantinople*

Fervent supplicant for you all to the Risen Lord

Especially make the resolution to keep faithful watch over the chief bad proclivity of your heart, the one that you most often detect in yourself and that you find most pleasant. Then devise the most effective methods for avoiding whatever sins you committed and use these methods conscientiously. In particular, try to devise methods against your chief sin, the one to which you are disposed most of all.

Metropolitan Gregory (Postnikov) of St. Petersburg

How to Live a Holy Life p.98