

The Paschal Epistle of
His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion of Eastern America and New York,
First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad,
to Archpastors, Pastors, Monastics and God-loved Flock

CHRIST IS RISEN!

I express my heartfelt greetings to you my brother archpastors, dear in the Lord fathers, brothers and sisters, on this holy, brightest and all-joyous day of the Resurrection of Christ, and in the name of the Three-day Risen God, the Lover of Mankind, extend to you the embrace of Paschal rejoicing and fraternal love! Bowing down to Christ, the Giver of Life, together with the entire Church, I fervently pray for His mercy, that He grant us the unearthly, desired peace that He gave His disciples, and blesses our prayerful and fraternal communion in His name.

Christ is Risen! These were the first words with which the Most-Blessed Mother of God, the Apostles, the Women Myrrh-Bearers and other followers of Christ greeted each other, when, after the heavy torments, crucifixion, death and the burial of the Savior, they first learned of His Resurrection. Some brought forth this joy, saying "Christ is Risen," and others responded: "The Lord is risen indeed" (Luke 24:34). And now, as then before the Early Church, the Resurrected Christ Himself stands before us. We, "having beheld the resurrection of Christ," gaze upon His glory with our mind's eye, hearing, as did the Myrrh-bearers, His sweet words, "Rejoice."

How much hope is offered to us by this call of the Savior, how much light it showers upon our souls, wiping away our tears of sorrow, temptation and tribulation! It is the Paschal joy with which martyrs bolstered themselves as they toiled in prisons and labor camps, the Martyrs and Confessors of the Russian Church whose lives we continue to prayerfully commemorate and praise in this hundredth anniversary of the tragic events of the murder of Hieromartyr Vladimir, Metropolitan of Kiev and Archbishop Andronik of Perm, the Royal Passion-Bearers and Holy Grand Duchess Elizabeth and Nun Barbara. Carefully examining and lovingly kissing their lives, works, sufferings and deaths, even while rejoicing in the depth of our souls for the Resurrected Christ, let us try to emulate our beloved martyrs in their staunch faith, spiritually enriching ourselves through the veneration of their memory, patiently and humbly bearing our own life's cross. As Feodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky wrote, "where there is the cross, there is also resurrection." He was even during his lifetime revered as a defender of Orthodox Christianity by the brethren of St Alexander Nevsky Lavra, where he is buried.

Lifting up prayers of gratitude to God for His abundant mercies, blessings and guidance, which we were fortunate enough to hear during Great Lent, and which we continue to receive from the All-Merciful Hand of the Almighty as He shines forth from His Tomb, we piously beseech our Holy New Martyrs and Confessors to help us preserve our temple. This temple, unmade by hands, is comprised of the souls of our flock in the Fatherland and the souls of the children of the wanderers who had lost everything, scattered throughout the world, and the other flock of our Mother Church, living in purity, chastity and sanctity, even as we live in Christ, in prayer and in the Mysteries of the Church, without which it is impossible for us to attain salvation.

And so, heeding the call of the Resurrected Savior, let us all rejoice, let no one remain in sorrow, for "This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." Amen.

With Paschal joy in the Resurrected Christ,

Metropolitan of Eastern America and New York,
First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.
Pascha of Christ 2018.