



PASCHAL LETTER

PERMANENT CONFERENCE OF UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX BISHOPS BEYOND THE BORDERS OF UKRAINE

God-Loving Pastors, Honorable Monastics, and all Faithful Children
of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church beyond the borders of and in Ukraine,

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

“And now go quickly, tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead and He is going ahead of you to Galilee, there you will see Him.” (Mt.28:7&10)

It is with these words of joy through the lips of an angel that God announces the Resurrection of His Only Begotten Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, the women who had come to see His Tomb. The entire Orthodox world today celebrates the Feast of Feasts, the new Passover of Salvation, and thus joyfully glorifies the Source of Life - the One Risen from the Tomb, Christ our Lord.

The first words Christ spoke to the Apostles after his Resurrection were “Peace be with you.” Let us look deeper into the meaning of these words of the Savior. He speaks here of peace and tranquility in our souls and hearts, which we can only achieve through genuine, genial love, harmony, understanding, and mutual forgiveness.

“The Great and Sacred Feast has arrived - the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ: the foundation of peace, the initiation of reconciliation, the cessation of hostilities, the destruction of death, the victory over Satan. Today, mankind has united with angels and, we are one body together with celestials singing Paschal hymns. Today, Satan’s power is destroyed, the bonds of death are vanquished, hell is astonished because it is shattered”. (St. John Chrysostom, Epistle for Easter).

Therefore, rejoicing, we will thank the Savior for His great and incredible Mercy to us, always glorifying His Third Day Resurrection. “The angel cried to the Lady Full of Grace: Rejoice, Pure Virgin. Again I say, Rejoice! Your Son is risen from His three days in the tomb. With Himself, He has raised up all the dead. Rejoice, all peoples.” (Easter Canon)

In these holy days of Pascha – the Resurrection - we greet one another with the words “Christ is Risen.” These words unite heaven and earth, creation with the Creator, mankind with God.

The Resurrection of Christ strengthened the faith of the apostles and through them, the faith of all Christians in the world.

The present threat of the Coronavirus pandemic have shocked the world. Every day we hear about the numbers people infected and the mounting death toll. All this makes us think about our personal lives and our behavior. During this difficult period, when we think about this unprecedented crisis, let us remain at peace and most importantly, be in fervent daily prayer. May our faith be strong and firm. We pray and hope that the Lord, through His glorious Resurrection, will set us free from this pandemic and all our suffering and worry.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, dear Ukrainian people in the beyond her borders and in Ukraine! We wholeheartedly greet you all on the Feast of the Resurrection of Christ, and we pray that the Risen Lord will bestow upon all of you His gracious strength to do good works, to increase generous love, to bring peace to your families, friends and neighbors. We pray for peace throughout the whole world, especially in the East of our native Ukraine and all the other war-torn areas of our world. Let us remember that true joy and peace will be in our hearts only when we sow goodness among ourselves. Our Heavenly Father will forgive us our transgressions only if we sincerely forgive the transgressions of others.

Through the Resurrection our Lord opens the doors for us to eternal life - that precious treasure that “neither moth nor rust destroys” (Mt 6:20), because He “destroyed Death by death and to those in the tombs He bestows life.” Therefore, let us not pass by and ignore this occasion for eternal life, but let us give our hand to one another and say, “Brethren, even by those who hate us let us forgive all for the sake of His Resurrection.”

St. Gregory the Theologian says: “The day of the Resurrection is a joyful beginning. Enlighten ourselves with this celebration and let us hug one another. Let us say “brethren” to those who hate us, and, even more so, to those who love us, or have done or suffered anything because of us. In the spirit of the Resurrection, we are forgiving one another... Yesterday I was crucified with Christ, today I am glorified with Him. Yesterday I was dying with Him, today I have come to life.”

In celebrating the Passover of Christ, we ask the Risen Savior to help us all see with His Glory with pure hearts, “*Glory as the only begotten of the Father*” (Jn 1:14).

May the Grace of the Risen Lord Jesus Christ from His Radiant Tomb be with you all.

With the Arch-pastoral blessings,

+ YURIJ

Metropolitan Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada

+ ANTONY

Metropolitan Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, South America and Diaspora

+ JEREMIAH – *Archbishop Ukrainian Orthodox Eparchy of South America*

+ DANIEL – *Archbishop Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora*

+ ILARION – *Bishop Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada*

+ ANDRIY – *Bishop Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada*