

The Paschal Epistle
of the Permanent Conference
of Ukrainian Orthodox Bishops Outside the Borders of Ukraine

To the venerable clergy, monastics and faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church beyond the borders of Ukraine and to our brothers and sisters in Ukraine,

“You fell asleep in the flesh as a mortal, O King and Lord; You rose again on the third day, raising Adam from corruption and abolishing death: Pascha of incorruption, the Salvation of the world.”
(Exapostilarion)

Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers!

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Today the entire Christian world in one unified and joyful choir praises the event which is without analog in any time or age. The entire essence of Christianity rests upon the most glorious Resurrection of Christ, which contains the answer to the mystery of our life and faith. “If Christ is not Risen,” says the Apostle Paul, “then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty” (1Cor.15:14). Our faith would not exist without the Resurrection of Christ, and without faith there would be no true life, because the Christian faith is the point of our life and our spiritual essence. On this Paschal night we, in the words of St. John Chrysostom, proclaim the victory of life over death: “O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave.”

Together with this, though, we see and hear that our dear ones do die, both the young and the old. What, then, is this victory of Christ over death? There are various types of death: there is bodily death, but there is something more terrible – spiritual death, when the soul dies by removing itself from God and cutting itself off from Him. All people died this death during the millennia before the advent of Christ, having lost God as the Source of life.

And so Christ, the Son of God, came upon earth. As God He could not die, but out of love for us, as a man, He shared our fate, ascended the Cross, and died for us.

Christ rose from the dead, descended to hades, into the abyss of sin, and by His entrance there once and for all destroyed death, filling all with the wondrous light of eternal life.

On this joyous Paschal day we also rejoice, dear brothers and sisters, for on this day through the Resurrection of Christ the salvation of the world was achieved – let us rejoice and be glad, for Christ, the conqueror of death and hell, opened to us the path to eternal life and salvation.

By His Resurrection Christ opened to us the gates of heaven, most especially to all those who approach Him with faith, hope, and love.

Today all the sorrowful and suffering, the infirm and poverty stricken, all those who bear difficult circumstances in this earthly life, rejoice as well, for the joy of the Resurrection is greater than all temporary sorrows and suffering.

St. Paul says that the sufferings of this present age are nothing compared to the glory and joy which we will experience when, by the grace of Christ the Saviour, we become heirs of the heavenly good things and participants in His eternal glory.

We will be joyful and thank God, Who so loved us that He gave His Only-begotten Son for our salvation and eternal life.

How can we Orthodox Christians respond to this unconquerable and divine love of our Saviour? We should always thank God, fulfilling His commandments and learn to love every other person as God has loved us. We must turn away from everything temporary and passing, turn away from love of self, and offer up our lives for others.

“Pascha” means “passing over” from one state to another. “As in ancient times the Israelites passed from the slavery of Egypt into the promised land, thus our soul should pass over from the captivity of sin to piety and virtue” (Ven. Abba Dorotheus).

We offer heartfelt greetings to the clergy, deacons, and monastics of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the diaspora during this festive, Paschal season, as well as to our youth and children. We offer a special greeting to our brothers and sisters in Ukraine, who are bearing various trials and difficulties at this time in defense of their homeland.

May the Risen Christ bring long-awaited peace and unity to every Ukrainian family, strengthen our faith, fill our hearts with spiritual joy, and increase our love, so that we will be able to fully delight in the joy of these bright, Paschal days!

We pray and believe that the Lord God will bless our Ukrainian nation, and that our Motherland Ukraine will become a strong, European country. May the blessing of the Risen Christ be with all of you.

Truly, Christ is Risen!

With Archpastoral Blessings,

+ YURIJ, Metropolitan,
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
+ ANTONY, Metropolitan,
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA,
Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the Diaspora
+ JEREMIAH, Archbishop,
Ukrainian Orthodox Diocese of Brazil and South America
+ DANIEL, Archbishop,
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA
+ ILARION, Bishop,
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
+ ANDRIY, Bishop,
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada