



ARCHPASTORAL MESSAGE OF HIS BEATITUDE

METROPOLITAN TIKHON

PASCHA 2015

To the Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America:

This is the day of Resurrection! Let us be illumined, O people! Pascha! The Pascha of the Lord. For from death to life, and from earth to heaven, has Christ our God led us, as we sing the song of victory! (Paschal Canon, Ode I)

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

Today, on this radiant Feast of feasts, let us all rejoice as newly illumined souls, basking in the brightness and joy that is the Resurrection of our Lord! Christ's triumph over corruption and death is a victory for all people; there is none vanquished but death and wickedness, for it is a victory that has made salvation possible to all. We offer our expressions of joy and exhilaration today; joining the countless Orthodox Christian faithful who, for more than two millennia throughout the world, have bore witness to the Pascha of Our Lord.

Today's world is yearning for satisfaction, and hungry for love, truth and righteousness. We have a precious responsibility to proclaim Christ Jesus – the Risen One – of Whom Christians of the second century said,

This is the Alpha and Omega! This is the beginning and the end, the ineffable beginning and the incomprehensible end. This is the Christ! This is the king! This is Jesus! This is the commander! This is the Lord! This is He Who rose from the dead! This is He Who sits at the right hand of the Father! He bears the Father and is borne by Him! To him be the glory and the might for ever. Amen! [On Pascha, Saint Melito of Sardis].

Christ's victory over death and corruption is also our victory, for the divine Pascha of the Lord has brought us who are mortal and earthly "from death to life and from earth to heaven." It is likewise He, the risen Lord, Who gave us the struggles of the Great Fast, that image of the "narrow path" of life, because indeed, our journey does not end with our Lord's Pascha. Rather, today we are beginning that journey anew which ultimately leads to our own death, and resurrection at the glorious and awesome Second Coming of Christ. Today's celebration prepares us for that journey to the eternal Kingdom.

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The Resurrection opens for us a path of joyful repentance, so that like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, our heart may burn within us as our Lord opens to us the Holy Scripture, so that truly there is no longer anything standing in our way of knowing Him as "the Resurrection and the Life."

As we continue on our path to salvation, we are given the Resurrection as a motivation and strength to accomplish every good thing necessary to expand His earthly Kingdom, the Church. Each of us is worthy of our calling to strengthen our personal faith in the risen Lord - and, like the disciples after the Resurrection, to share it in love and joy with all who would accept it.

There are still those, either by choice or circumstance who continue to sit in darkness - hungry, naked, alone, imprisoned, and in desperate need of Christ's love and compassion. As St. Tikhon of Moscow wrote to his new flock in America, "It is our obligation to share our spiritual treasures, our truth, our light and our joy with those who do not have these gifts. And this duty lies not only on pastors and missionaries, but also on lay people, for the Church of Christ, in the wise comparison of St. Paul is a body, and in the life of the body every member must take part."

It is my prayer today on this Feast of feasts, that this Holy Day of holy days, this Triumph of triumphs will strengthen all of us to embrace, continue and expand the mission of our Lord. And that He will give us the courage and fortitude necessary to engage the world with Christ's message of love and salvation, and proclaim to all:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

With my archpastoral blessings and love in the Risen Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tikhon", with a small cross symbol to the left.

†Tikhon
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

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