Paschal Epistle of His Grace John, Bishop of Naro-Fominsk, Administrator of the Patriarchal Parishes in the USA to all the clergy and faithful children of the Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church in the USA.

**Reverend fathers-concelebrants, dear brothers and sisters!**

**CHRIST IS RISEN!**

“Great is the mystery of godliness: God was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory” – proclaims a witness of Christ’s Resurrection St. Paul the Apostle in his epistle to Timothy (1 Tim. 3, 16). In contrast to the human mysteries, the mystery of God appears in the utmost revelation of Creator to His creation.

According to the word of the Bible, the history of Old Testament – is a time of expectation, God’s expectation for the human response to the Divine plan and call of the Creator. The Paschal event tells us that God entirely and irrevocably has Himself become such a response. In unconditional devotion to the Father, commitment to the promise and Covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ made healed, brought the sinful and the rejected back to the God, fulfilling the promise to people about Truth coming into the world. “He showed Himself upon earth, and lived among people” – as we read in the book of Prophet Baruch (cf. Baruch 3, 38).

The world’s response to the life of God is the death on the Cross. The Crucifixion of Jesus would have been the greatest triumph of the forces of evil in history… But God turned the defeat of the Righteous One into the Triumph of glory. He raised Jesus from the dead and, in accord with the word of the Bible, clothed Him with glory, made Him Lord – the Master of History.

It is not by chance that Apostle Paul is named as a witness of the Resurrection. The Resurrection is not a chronological point of human history, but the beginning of a new messianic, sacramental enumeration of being and time that overcomes chronology. It is a new life born in our hearts through Baptism, that triumphs in power and glory, and manifests itself in our becoming like the Savior. Together with St. Paul we all become the witnesses of His Resurrection, testifying before those both near and far, before the entire world, before all of humanity and history.

The Resurrection of Christ – is the triumph of the Savior, the true incarnation of God. In passing through death and non-existence, in their abolition by the Resurrection, His Glory and our future are revealed. This is His new Paschal promise: “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I live forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of Hades and of death” (cf. Rev. 1, 17).

**CHRIST IS RISEN!**

**INDEED HE IS RISEN!**

**+ JOHN**

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*New York City*

*Pascha 2015*