

EASTER MESSAGE FROM ARCHBISHOP OF NARO-FOMINSK  
JUSTINIAN, ADMINISTRATOR OF PATRIARCHAL PARISHES OF  
THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN THE USA.

*Beloved in the Lord venerable clergy, dear brothers and sisters – faithful  
of the Russian Orthodox Church in the USA!*

Anticipating my Easter Greeting, I would like to tell you the story from my pastoral practice. Once, preparing for the celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism, I asked a teenage girl: What is the bitterest enemy of a man? I've noticed that the relatives, who were standing behind the girl, took fright at this question. Meanwhile, wishing to be baptized, a young christian replied very calmly and immediately – death. Exactly, – confirmed I this real fact, - and this baptismal font, you want to enter, – is a symbol of our death for Christ and with Christ. And those, who is not afraid to die with Him – will resurrect with Him and will inherit the Life Everlasting. Do you want to be baptized now, do you have a wish to live as Christ taught, - I asked the candidate for baptism? - Yes! - loudly and confidently replied she. And then I remembered the words of the Lord Jesus Christ: “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” (Mat 11: 25). And other words of the Saviour came to my mind: “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mat 18:3). And I'd dare to add the following: Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the joy of Resurrection of Christ.

Countless millions of books were written about Christ and His Resurrection, a great number of scientists were trying to comprehend and explain to others the mystery of the rising of Jesus from the dead, His most-glorious Victory over death. But there were also slanderers, who from the first days after His Resurrection were saying, that the body of Saviour was stolen from His Tomb by His disciples. Hellenic sages, who saw human flesh as a hated dungeon for the soul, could not even

agree with the idea, that God is able to take human nature, to die an ignominious death and in heaven human flesh with His Divine Soul...

In society the war against the truth of the Christ's Resurrection takes place to this day, and it will continue until the Second and Glorious Coming of the Christ. But let our souls not be confused! Confrontation with slanderers and skeptics strengthens our faith, makes us spiritually stronger.

Why now waste time on analysis of their arguments? Just let us lend an attentive ear to our own hearts: and they exult together with the whole Universe, they rejoice at the Christ's Resurrection without any words and arguments! He is truly Risen, and this is the proof, that God has not abandoned a sinful human, despairing of his salvation. He has not left us face to face with primordial murder-devil, but Himself came to grips with him and won a thrashing Victory. Thereto He became a Man, went through the Passions and death; Descending into hell, He destroyed the devil and liberated the souls of people, which were tortured there. Before Christ even righteous men were leaving this world with hopeless sadness, because they went to hell as independent from God, gloomy and, as they thought in their despair, eternal kingdom of satan.

Hell after Christ – is no longer a place where devil has an absolute power, hell – is a dungeon for him. After the Resurrection of Christ there is no more space in the universe, where there would not be felt the presence of Divine Love! The only exception may be the heart of unbeliever... And we, christians, believe and confess, that Lord Jesus Christ comes forth again to Earth, but with the glory, to judge the quick and the dead and His Kingdom will have no end. Then, according to the Apostle Paul, “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death...that God may be all in all” (1 Cor 15: 26-28).

We can not, dear brothers and sisters, in this full of joy Easter time to grieve and mourn neither about our personal unworthiness, nor because of the any events in the world. Let us not dare to be coward and mournful especially during this Easter time. Nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God (see Rom 8: 39), let nothing be more

important for us than God. Let us be thankful to God for this holiday,  
which He grants us, for

**CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD – JOY EVERLASTING!**

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