



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.

Dear Reverend Fathers-Concelebrants, Dear Brothers and Sisters!

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Do not be terrified: You seek Jesus Who was crucified: He is risen; He is not here" (Mark 16: 6) — proclaims the Angel to the Myrrhbearers. Thus does the Gospel relate the good news that Jesus of Nazareth, who was abandoned by the people, rejected by the synagogue, betrayed by the disciples, and crucified by the Romans, has now risen from the dead, destroying death and altering the entire world order.

In the event of the Resurrection of Christ is revealed the true meaning of all occurrences and events in biblical history, and God's design for mankind and each one of us is made comprehensible. The passage of Moses through the Red Sea becomes an indication of the Lord's overcoming of the waters of death. The swallowing of Jonah by the great fish signifies the presence of the Redeemer in Hades. The three holy youths cast into the furnace of Babylon reveal the glorious rising of Jesus from the dead by the power of the Father.

In the Resurrection of Christ the events and words of the Gospel become understandable, for each word now discloses an interpretation of the life and death of the Lord in the light of His Resurrection. The glorious depiction of His Nativity is an indication that He is not subject to death as personified by Herod. The multiplication of the loaves of bread becomes a sign of the Eucharist, of the communion of the Body of the Resurrected One. The healings accomplished by the Teacher from Nazareth serve to restore to the blind, to those who are broken and hopelessly ill, that which is

not restorable. The casting out of demons indicates, at the one and same time, the destruction by the Risen Lord of the depths of Hades.

The Resurrection of the Lord unites in itself all the triumphs of the Church. By the power of the Risen One we are united to those who have lived before us. By the power of the Conqueror of death the saints stand with us rejoicing in glory and hear our prayers. The Light of the Resurrection is reflected in each of the feasts of the liturgical year, filling with life those who are in communion with the Church.

The Power of the Resurrected One makes possible the abolition of the fear of death which tears the world apart, but which has been overcome by the Glorified Lord. His Glory fills each moment of a believing human life, and the Truth of His Descent into Hades bears testimony to the fact that the all-powerful presence of the Lord will not depart from us in any seeming hopelessness. For “both death and Hades have been cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20, 14).

The Resurrection of Christ changes being itself, and fills with a new meaning the key concept of freedom, which is so meaningful for the existence of man. From this point onwards freedom, appearing in the image of the Lord, now consists of one’s incapacity to do evil, while love for what is good, once born in the human heart through the Lord’s Cross, pierces our day-to-day lives and prepares us for entry into the Kingdom.

This Kingdom comes closest to us on this Paschal Night, it becomes evident in the paschal days of triumph of the Risen One. “For the Lamb which is in the middle of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of waters” (cf. Rev. 7:17).

May the Joy of the Risen Lord remain with all of us!

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

+ JOHN

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