

PASCHA 2005

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

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

Dearly Beloved in the Lord,

Once again, we greet one another with these joyous words, words that not only embody the essence of our Paschal celebration, but embody the very essence of our faith and hope in the love of Our Lord.

Central to our faith are the words of Saint Paul: "If Christ is not risen, our preaching is in vain and your faith is also in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14). Having desired to reconcile all creation to its Creator, the only-begotten Son of God took on our human flesh. He entered human history, time, and space, as one of us. He came not to be served but, rather, to serve. And in so doing, He revealed that God "is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matthew 22:32), the God Who desired the renewal and transformation of His people and all creation with such intensity that He was willing to die, that life might reign. By His death and resurrection, He led us into a new promised land, one in which there is no sickness, sorrow, nor sighing, but life everlasting. It is this reality that we proclaim in that simple, yet profound, expression of faith, "Christ is risen! Indeed, He is risen!"

As Orthodox Christians, however, we may never be content with sharing these words only with "our own." Before His Ascension, the risen Lord commanded that the good news of His Resurrection be proclaimed to all nations, to those who continued to sit in darkness, to those who still had no hope. Who among us can doubt that the world in which we live, and the society in which we minister, is in desperate need of that new life which shines forth from the empty tomb of Christ? There are many who see modern culture as a "culture of death," one which values life but only to the extent that it has some "productive meaning" or "youthful energy." Recent events confirm that life is, in many instances, seen as expendable, if not disposable, when it appears to have no meaning, no value in relationship to others. Rather than falling into the hopelessness that attempts to find consolation in "death with dignity" and other similar hollow sentiments, are we not being challenged to share boldly the dignity accorded to all creation by the resurrection? Is not true dignity found precisely in the fact that God so loved the world that He reclaims it in the name of eternal life as "the God of the living?" And is not the dignity He accords "every man who came into the world" found and perfected in "the life of the world to come," in which true dignity is found neither in sickness, nor sorrow, nor sighing, but life eternal?



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By His death, Christ endured the supreme indignity; by His Resurrection, He dignifies us, and all creation, by sharing with us His ultimate victory and divine glory, bringing us from the brink of hopelessness to the joy of eternal life. May we, during this most sacred time of the year and beyond, not only proclaim this, the essence of our faith, among ourselves, but may we seize every opportunity to proclaim, as did the apostles, the Risen Lord and the eternal life which He offers to one and all to those who have yet to embrace Him.

With love in the Risen Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a cross symbol followed by the name "Herman" in a cursive script.

+HERMAN
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada