



CHRIST IS RISEN!

Dear Reverend Fathers, Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

I greet all of you with the Glorious and Joyous Resurrection of Christ
- Holy PASCHA!

Over the past three years the members of all our parishes have experienced a most turbulent and chaotic time. Before 2020, before the lockdowns and Pandemic, we could all say with a sense of certainty and complacency that there were aspects of our lives that were immovable, traditional and reoccurring from year to year. Now, in the post-pandemic world as we were slowly trying to return to that sense of normalcy, our lives again feel (from one degree to another) another disruption and upheaval due to the strife felt in the lands of Ukraine.

However, we need to focus on that one aspect of life that is unchanging, forever and solid - Christ and the Joy of Salvation through His Resurrection. We must keep Christ in our hearts, Christ in our thoughts and Christ in our life in order to stay as Orthodox Christians in this self-agrandising world of hate, anger, retribution and every base emotion that the darkened human heart can conger. To think that these times are something extraordinary or unusual is to forget our history and moreover our Orthodox Church.

Our Russian Orthodox Church lived through horrible persecutions through the centuries from the Turks, the Golden Horde and the Bolsheviks. Our Faith withstood schisms, falsehoods, secularism, and humanism's irreverence to the Divine. Our Orthodox people survived and prospered during the Medieval Rus wars of one Rus state against another, the Russian Civil War of 1918-1921, the Spanish Influenza Pandemic, exile and the deprivations suffered after 1917. To say we live in new times, with new wars and new persecutions (as if they did not exist before) is to forget our history and Christ's words, "And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. (*Matt. 10: 21-22*)".

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ - my earnest prayer and desire is for all of us to share the True Joy of Christ's Resurrection in our everyday lives and the life-to-come! This Eternal Joy will warm us, gladden us, help us and keep us on the path of service to Christ, His Church, each other and all those around us. May God, through the Christ's Resurrection, keep us all strong in these most strange times!

TRULY HE IS RISEN!

+ Archbishop Cyril

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