



Paschal Epistle of the Ruling Hierarchy of the Western American Diocese

*“The angel cried unto her that is full of grace:
O Pure Virgin, rejoice, and again, I say rejoice;
for Thy Son hath risen from the grave on the third day...”
Paschal Matins – 9th Irmos*

To the Reverend Clergy, Monastics and Laity of the Western American Diocese

CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY HE IS RISEN!

The day of Christ’s Resurrection, Pascha, is a time of joyousness, light and new life – *I am come that they might have life, and that they may have it more abundantly* (John 10:10). A life in Christ is a life centered not on something transient and fashionable, but it is a life focused on the stability of eternity in God. It is a life of happiness and joy free of the passions and temporal cares that clog our life. When pondering on Christ’s Glorious Resurrection, an Orthodox Christian, sees death not as the end, but sees death as a defeated paradigm conquered by the love of God for His creation.

Even in the most horrible of times an Orthodox Christian can feel the love of Christ through His victory over death. In the midst of the Russian Civil War and the Red Terror St. Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow, made a visit to Petrograd (now St. Petersburg) at Paschal-tide in 1918 to bolster the resolve of the Orthodox Faithful in the Northern Capital. Thousands upon thousands of people clamoured to just get a glimpse of their “Great lord and Father” at every Divine Service he attended or served, and even when he simply was traveling about the city. At every venue St. Tikhon reminded all, sometimes with just his presence, that the message of the hope in Christ’s Resurrection cannot be eradicated. “Our hope is in Life, not in death and not in the grave.”, said His Holiness at a gathering in Petrograd. This is the fundamental thought that every Orthodox Christian needs to have in his mind not only in moments of crisis and calamity but also in moments of calm and certainty.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, let us truly take to heart the life and words of St. Tikhon. Let us, “*Lay not up...treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt*” (Matt. 6:19), but invest ourselves into maintaining the hope and attaining the eternal joy that has sustained Orthodox Christians for two millennia – Christ’s Glorious Resurrection. Let us make the words *Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!* our source of joy, inspiration and motivation to dedicate our lives to our Merciful Lord and Savior!

In the Risen Lord,

Pascha 2025
100 year anniversary of the murder of the
Holy New-Martyr Patriarch Tikhon