

## **Paschal Epistle of the Ruling Hierarchy of the Western American Diocese**

**Beloved Clergy, Monastics and Faithful!**

**CHRIST IS RISEN!**

In the early hours of this Paschal morning we greet one another with the proclamation that neither death, nor time, nor the powers of darkness have ever been able to silence: *Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!* The Apostle Paul declares with absolute certainty: *"If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (I Cor. 15:14)* — but He is risen, and therefore our Faith is not in vain and nothing is without hope. As the Holy Hierarch Philaret of Moscow declared on this very feast: *"Christ is risen! In saying this, what more can I say? All has been said!" (April 18, 1826).*

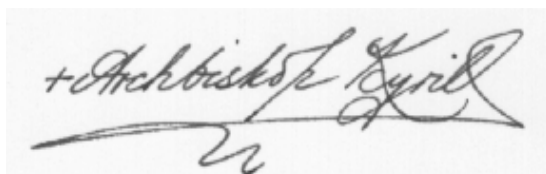
Today we look out upon a world suffering beneath the weight of its own unbelief. The Middle East bleeds from a war that has brought devastation to countless innocent souls; the economies of nations tremble; and a spirit of confusion has settled over our age, as though no firm ground could be found anywhere. Yet the Lord Himself said: *"In the world ye shall have tribulation — but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).* It is precisely into this darkness that the light of the Resurrection blazes, not dimly, but as *"the eternal lightning of the eternal light illuminating all things" (St Philaret of Moscow).*

Saint Philaret declared that the Holy and Glorious Feast of Feasts — Pascha — *"creates hope, ignites love, inspires prayer, calls down grace, illumines wisdom, destroys all calamities and even death itself, gives vitality to life, makes bliss not a dream but a reality, glory not a phantom" (St Philaret of Moscow).* Saint John the Theologian wrote simply: *"The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1:5).* No war, no human fabrication, no human despair has ever comprehended the Light of Christ — and nothing grounded in the cares of this world ever shall. The tomb remains empty,

and the Risen Lord, who stood amongst His disciples and said *"Peace be unto you"* (John 20:19), stands amongst us still, truly present in His Body and Blood at every Divine Liturgy.

May we be filled with the same joy as the Myrrh-bearing Women on that holy morning, and may that joy strengthen us in every trial and draw us ever more deeply into the life that awaits us in Christ alone. Let us offer all our sorrows, our fears, and our hopes upon the stone in the empty tomb of our Risen Lord, for as the Apostle Paul assures us: *"Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come... shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 8:38–39).

**TRULY HE IS RISEN!**

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light background. The signature reads "+ Archbishop Cyril" in a cursive script. Below the signature is a long, horizontal, wavy line that tapers at both ends.

Pascha 2026