



PASCHAL LETTER

PERMANENT CONFERENCE OF UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX BISHOPS
BEYOND THE BORDERS OF UKRAINE

PASCHA!

A Message from the Permanent Conference of Ukrainian Orthodox Bishops Beyond the Borders of Ukraine to the Clergy, Monastics and Faithful of Ukraine and the Diaspora.

“O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown. Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and life reigns. Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave. For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen.” (Conclusion of the Paschal Homily of St. John Chrysostom, read during Paschal Matins at the FEAST OF FEASTS – the RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST)

Dearly beloved Sisters and Brothers in our Lord,

CHRIST IS RISEN! ХРИСТОС БОЖЕ ЖИВ!

Our Lord and Savior has offered Himself up on the Precious and Life-Giving Cross, suffered under the torture of human hands, was buried and on this third day, He has “risen from the dead, trampling down death by death and to those in the tombs bestowing life!” How do we express our love and gratitude to the One Who opened the gates of Heaven to us all – both the living and the dead? First and most important, we do not express that love and gratitude only during the celebration of the Resurrection FEAST. We offer them every day in prayer.

We offer them in the ways we relate to one another. We offer that love and gratitude through every single, miniscule decision or choice that we make through the course of a day. We offer them through the mercy, comfort and compassion with which we embrace those who are different from us in any way.

We no longer fear death, says St. John, because our Savior has annihilated death! Ours is to take up the life that He has given us, victorious over demons and rejoicing with the angels, knowing that none of us is left behind. Basking in the Resurrection LIGHT that shines forth from the empty tomb and filled with the Grace inspired into us through all the Sacraments, we can work miracles in a world that all too often seems dark and still consumed with death. We are victorious in Christ. We CAN be the LIGHT that transforms the whole world and to all who choose that darkness.

Oh, what opportunity we have in our world’s present circumstances! We are confronted with a pandemic and the isolation associated with it, with racial strife and its horrific manifestations and with crippling and destructive political division. In all this we have opportunity to witness to the world as did the new Christians who conquered a much darker world in the first centuries after our Lord’s Ascension to Heaven. When they came together in worship, many times in caves, the space literally throbbed with anticipation in the contemplation of the Resurrection Power that was theirs. They could barely hold themselves back until

the conclusion of the worship service so that they could go back out into the world to bear witness to a God Who loved them perhaps more than they loved themselves. They had a mission and a ministry of serving others – being Christ to them – in that love – the same mission to which we are called today.

Our prayer as we celebrate the FEAST OF FEASTS, dearly beloved, is that today your hearts are throbbing because of the Resurrection Power that is also yours. Not all are called to preach to the world, but we all are inspired with the Grace that can and will enable us to utilize that Power. We all can reach into the lives of those whose lives intersect with ours. We can be peacemakers when we witness hatred in speech or in deed. We can speak the positive, perhaps changing the perspective through which the individuals involved view a situation or a heated argument. This Power given to us also enables us to be merciful, pure in heart, hungry and thirsty for righteousness, meek and unselfish.

The pathway to salvation has been provided by our Risen Lord, throughout His public ministry and especially through the days of Holy Week. Let us now follow that pathway anew as we enter into Bright Week. The world needs us! Nothing is more certain in life than the promise of salvation for those of who live in sincere faith and trust in our Risen Lord. May the Grace of our Risen Lord, the Love of God the Father and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all as you follow the “narrow path” that leads to salvation.

INDEED HE IS RISEN!

With Archpastoral blessings,

+ YURIJ – Metropolitan
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada

+ ANTONY – Metropolitan
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, South America and Diaspora

+ JEREMIAH – Archbishop
Ukrainian Orthodox Eparchy of South America

+ DANIEL – Archbishop
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora

+ ILARION – Bishop
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada

+ ANDRIY – Bishop
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada

