

PASCHAL EPISTLE

**Episcopate of the UOCC, to the Venerable Clergy, to the Diaconate in Christ,
and to all the faithful children of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada:**

Christ is Risen!

“And go quickly, tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead, and He will go before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you!” (Matthew 28:7)

Venerable Fathers, Dear Brothers and Sisters!

With these very words of joy, through the voice of the Angel, God announces to us the Resurrection of His only Begotten Son and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. A bright light has shone forth and darkness has vanished. Today, we have been redeemed from death and have received the hope of eternal life, which the Son of God grants to us.

This year, the entire Christian world together celebrates the Feast of Feasts and the Celebration of Celebrations, the Pascha of God, which grants salvation, by joyfully glorifying the Fountain of Life, the Risen from the Tomb Christ and Lord.

“Peace be unto you!” (John 20:21). These are the first words Christ spoke to the apostles after His Resurrection. Let us ponder these words of the Saviour more deeply. Jesus speaks of peace and first of all, of peace and tranquility in people’s souls and hearts, as well as in all nations and countries of the world. Christ overcame death by death for the sake of granting us eternal life which we can obtain by living with all people, in peace, in sincere brotherly love, in harmony and in mutual understanding. All this is happening today on the day of the bright Resurrection of Christ: the most bitter enemies give their hand to each other, forget all reproaches and malice and together everyone celebrates this triumphant and Holy Day.

This joy is eternal and unchanging because Christ Himself, through His Resurrection, laid the foundation for the resurrection of all people for “as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all will become alive” (1 Cor. 15:22)

In these festive Paschal days, we greet each other with the words “Christ is Risen!”. These words unite two lives: heaven and earth, creation and the Creator, and man with God.

The Resurrection of Christ convinces us to the forgiveness of our sins and strengthens our faith in eternal life. Let us keep this in our hearts and believe that the Risen Christ is still among us today and will be, according to His Divine Testament, until the end of time.

Venerable Fathers, beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, dear Ukrainian people in Canada, in our native Ukraine, and those living in the diaspora.

We greet all of you on the Holiday of Holy Pascha. We prayerfully wish that the Risen Christ will fortify your spiritual and bodily strength and grant you all the blessed power to accomplish good deeds, to increase brotherly love, to have peace and tranquility in your families and households, and especially in our mother Ukraine.

For the fourth year now, our brothers and sisters in the Homeland have been experiencing terrible trials because of a cruel and unjust war against the Ukrainian Nation.

Therefore, in these Paschal days, let us entreat the Risen Saviour to bring to our native land this long awaited peace which after His Resurrection Christ was brought to His disciples and apostles by saying: “My peace I give to you (John 14:27)”

Today we must accept these words of Christ the Saviour with special feeling and beg Him for this peace during this unjust and continuing war. Therefore let us strive for this just peace through our prayers and entreat the Risen Lord that such a peace may reign in Ukraine and throughout the world.

Let us remember that true joy and peace will be in our hearts only when we will spread goodness among ourselves. Our Heavenly Father will forgive us our trespasses only when we will sincerely forgive the trespasses of our debtors. He will grant us the opportunity to gain eternal life, that priceless treasure, “where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal” (Mathew 6:20). May we have this joy of the Day of the Bright Resurrection of Christ, not only in the Temple of God during prayer, but at every step of our earthly life, forgiving everyone and doing good Christian deeds.

Let us not pass by and miss this opportunity to gain eternity, but let us extend our hand to one another and say “brother!” even to those who hate us and forgive all because of The Holy Resurrection.

Celebrating Pascha together with all Christians in the world, let us pray to the Risen Lord and Saviour “that all may be one as you Father are in me and I in You (John 17:21)” and that we may all feel “His Glory,” the Glory of the Only Begotten of The Father (John 1:14).

May the grace of the Risen Saviour and Our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you beginning from the Luminous Sepulchre of The Lord and through all the time evermore!

CHRIST IS TRULY RISEN!

**With Archpastoral blessing:
Ilarion, Archbishop of Winnipeg, Metropolitan of Canada
Andriy, Bishop of Toronto**