

PASCHAL EPISTLE OF
HILARION,
Metropolitan of Eastern America and New York,
First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

Beloved Archpastors, Honorable Fathers, Dear in the Lord Brothers and Sisters:

With a heart filled with the endearing sensation of Paschal joy, I congratulate the hierarchs, clergymen, monastics, parishioners and worshipers of our churches, scattered throughout the whole world, on the joyful celebration of the glorious Resurrection of Christ, and I greet you with the angelic good news: CHRIST IS RISEN!

I greet you with these holy Christian words joy of eternal life, I send you all prayerful wishes for Paschal communion with God, spiritual peace, firm health, boldness, well-being, and the many mercies and blessings of God, and express my heartfelt gratitude for your prayers, support and help in bearing the burden of obedience imposed on my unworthiness, and for your efforts and participation in the life of the Church. The words of the Paschal greeting, like the trumpets of the archangels, which will in time lift up all who have died, lift even now the morale of all Orthodox Christians as it does every year on the light-filled night of Holy Pascha. “Even the disbelievers,” wrote Archbishop Anthony (Bartoshevich) of blessed memory, “sense something special on this night, they feel that something is happening that they cannot comprehend.”

By His sacrificial love and victory over sin, evil and death, Christ delivered enlightenment, purification from sin and renewal to all who genuinely believe in Him (Hebrews 10:10-14, Colossians 1:21-23). Piously partaking of the Mystery of His Eucharist on this “feast of faith,” towards which the great Chrysostom beckons us, let us seek the strength to “walk in the newness of life... not serve sin... and be alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:4-11). The Lord now awaits our renewal, while the mystical powers, through “grace by grace,” are given from the over-abundant spiritual fullness we receive in Christ (John 1:14-16).

St Tikhon, Patriarch-Confessor of All Russia, summons us to this renewal through his example, having 100 years ago meekly accepted the position of Patriarch, bravely leading the way to the Russian Golgotha for many millions of “living sacrifices,” the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, who are our shared treasure and the seed of the rebirth of the Orthodox Church. We archpastors are likewise summoned to this renaissance by the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, which will take place during the days of Holy Pentecost, so that we may worthily, piously and in the spirit of wisdom perform the constructive, peace-making and salvific work of the Church, to perfect and improve her earthly life and all her works. We are also called towards renewal through all the celebrations of this important year—especially the 10th anniversary of the reestablishment of unity within the Russian Orthodox Church, which became possible through the patience, all-forgiveness and humility of His Holiness Patriarch Alexy II and Metropolitan Laurus, who, in the words of Apostle Paul, “enlarged their hearts” (2 Corinthians 6:11), to accommodate all the faithful flock. The Lord calls upon us all towards this renewal, for, as St Gregory the Theologian writes, “Thus the day of spiritual renewal is honored!”

May our purifying and illuminating conscience, labors and life spread like a breeze from heart to heart throughout our diaspora like the “Pascha of purification” (Paschal canon, Ode 4)! May this call of the Resurrection on the third day of the Lover of Mankind, God, inspire our life in the Church, in society, in family and personal life to “glorify Him with a pure heart.” Amen.

**With Paschal joy in the Resurrected Christ,
+HILARION,
Metropolitan of Eastern America and New York,
First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad.**

Pascha 2017.