

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

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Rev. Presbyter Dragan Vukovic

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Pascha

(04.24.2022)



IRINEJ

BY THE GRACE OF GOD
BISHOP OF EASTERN AMERICA
THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Most beloved clergy and monastics, sons, and daughters,
faithful children of the God-protected Diocese of Eastern America and our Holy
Church!

We greet you on this most radiant and most joyous Feast of Feasts –
The Resurrection of Christ from the dead,
with the all-glorious and triumphant Christian greeting:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Emanating from a paternal heart exuberant with Paschal joy, We join in proclaiming
the victorious newness of life by the divinely inspired words of Saint John of
Damascus:

*David, the ancestor of God, leaped and danced
before the ark which prefigured You.*

*Now let us, the holy people of God,
Seeing the fulfillment of all figures, rejoice in piety,
for Christ is risen as all-powerful.*
(Pascal Canon Ode IV)

Through these vivifying verses of liturgical poetry, the world mystically comes to understand the eternal character of a Christ given life, a life which does not dissipate for the simple sake of human death and our departure from the stage of this transitory world. The dominance of humanity's greatest enemy and the natural consequence of sin – death, are destroyed by the Golgotha wounds of Christ on the Live-giving Cross. From then on, death has become a transitional moment toward eternal joy in the unending Day of His Kingdom in Heaven.

The Resurrection of Christ, most beloved, so transfigures the whole of our being on earth, and restores its exalted, complete purpose. For Christ, who "conforming to the body of our lowliness" (Anaphora of St. Basil the Great), has become the image of our anticipation – the fulfillment of the prefiguration of the Old Testament ark of salvation. For He, who did not create death, voluntarily gave Himself in exchange for death, once and forever breaking the infernal chains of death that held us in bondage, so that He Himself might be "the first in all things", as liturgically, and mystically contemplated by St. Basil the Great.

At a time when we are again forced to be living witnesses of a war, a war which brings with it terrible human agony, suffering and destruction, in a vortex of death that ruthlessly satirizes and takes human lives and forces into exile, which breaks asunder families and extinguishes the hearth of birthplaces, we wonder what kind of answer can comfort the humiliated, abused, imprisoned and exiled human soul, and those who have to fight for bare existence on the thin margins of today's society? We are summoned by faith through the words of the Old Testament Prophet Hosea, and the New Testament Apostle Paul, through the Resurrected Christ, in Him and through Him, who is the fulfillment of our expectations, and that faith now resonates: "Death, where is your sting? Hades, where is your victory?" (Hosea 13:14, I Cor. 15:55). For Christ is risen as all-powerful, Christ – The Victor over death, sickness, and all our inadequacies.

To his divinely inspired saying, "Christ steps lightly", the holy Bishop Nicholai of Zhicha and Ochrid adds this wisdom: "God does not need quick, but lasting

victories." Therefore, it is up to us, beloved, always to be on the side of God and our Resurrector from all death and misery. "God will help," zealously testifies our holy Serbian Patriarch Pavle, "if there is anyone to help." Fighting against the dishonorable rashness of evil that attempts to permeate the world at times when we long for peace, truth, and justice, we place our only hope in the Lord, who precisely before His own voluntary passion, calmly comforts us: "Be careful, see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come" (Matt. 24:6).

Therefore, most beloved, an encounter with the Risen Lord is to live in accordance with His Gospel, the Gospel that teaches us that the Lord gives to all of us, each according to his measure, the Holy Spirit, to bring us into the community of the saints. That this community, a community of peace and love, in which those who mourn will be comforted, and those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled (Matt. 5:4, 6), our Savior reminds us, time and time again, when He states: "I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble; but take heart, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Now let us, the holy people of God, as the Psalmist David before us, seeing the fulfillment of all figures, rejoice in piety. For in union with the Risen Savior, we are established in Him who came down to the lowest of our human condition to raise up fallen Adam: "Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for," exclaims the Holy Apostle, "my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord, dear friends... Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say: rejoice!" (Philip. 4:1,4).

**CHRIST IS RISEN!
INDEED, HE IS RISEN!**

Given at Pascha, in the Year 2022.

YOUR FERVENT INTERCESSOR BEFORE THE RISEN CHRIST,

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BISHOP OF EASTERN AMERICA
THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

John 1:1-17

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. *(KJV)*

HRISTOS VOSKRESE! VAISTINU VOSKRESE! CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

We are blessed with the experience of celebrating Jesus Christ's Resurrection in God's Holy Church. The passing of centuries and opponents of Christ have not diluted the power of the Resurrection.

Jesus' Resurrection established an enduring hope for all believers. Jesus' power over death offers hope in eternal life when earthly death exists. Jesus was very clear about eternal life.

Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." (Jn. 11:25) Jesus' Resurrection guides serious believers through the dark days of life.

Great and Holy Friday when Jesus hung upon the cross created great darkness over the earth. (Lk.23:44) The dark days of earthly life can be vivid reminders of Jesus upon the Cross.

Joy replaced darkness when the women went to the Tomb and heard the words: He is not here: for He is risen, as He said.” (Mt.28:6) The joy of the Resurrection is spread around the world today.

Believers greet each other with “Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen”. The truth of the Resurrection reaches into the hearts, minds and souls of believers. The Paschal greeting changes lives.

The Paschal greeting brings light where there is darkness in life. Never underestimate the power of the Paschal greeting. Saying “Christ is Risen” to a friend or neighbor can be just what is needed to lift them from darkness.

Pascha is a time of renewal for believers. The new life in Christ involves being more faithful to Christ. The Lenten journey and Holy Week intend to bring the believer into full conformity with the ways of Jesus Christ.

The effort put into making good use of the Lenten journey results in new ways for the believer to go forth in life. The Crucified and Risen Christ is always present to guide the believer.

The Church is full of Paschal joy. Savor the joy of the Resurrection throughout life. Give thanks to the Lord God for the Resurrection. Give thanks for the hope and possibility of eternal life.

Experiencing Paschal joy changes the believer. Jesus always is prepared to nourish the faithful. Just as He fed the multitudes during His earthly ministry, He continues to feed believers everywhere with His Precious Body and Blood.

Pascha comes each year. The Resurrection is celebrated to a degree on Sundays during the year. Believers are challenged to draw personal meaning from Jesus’ Resurrection.

Each believer benefits from the Church’s world-wide celebration of Pascha. Being part of the Church’s Paschal celebration increases the joy for believers and adds to the profound meaning of the Resurrection.

Believers determine individually the degree the Resurrection will be celebrated and incorporated into daily life. Hope in life is resolute when centered in and rooted in the Resurrection.

Jesus Christ overcame death and embodies life. Believers benefit all the days of life thinking about the Cross and the Resurrection. Serious Christian lives are shaped by the Cross and the Resurrection.

Thank God for the Church enduring through the centuries. Thank God for Christ’s Presence in the Church and throughout the world. Thank God for the goodness and mercy available to believers.

Christ is Risen and each believer has reason to celebrate. Christ is Risen and each believer has renewed hope in life. Christ is Risen and the world has changed for the better.

Pascha 2022. April 11/24, 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

Father Rodney Torbic.

The Prologue from Ochrid
St Nikolai of Zhicha
(04.07.2022)

ABOUT SEEKING THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD

Why do you seek the living One among the dead?
(St. Luke 24:5)



The angel of God asks the Myrrh-bearing women as though in astonishment: “Why do you seek the living One among the dead?” As though the perceiver of the mystery of God and God’s power wanted to say: “How could you have thought for a moment that He is the hostage of death? Do you not know that He is the principal source of life? Do you not know that all life is through Him and that not one living thing can borrow not even a drop of life from any other source? Did He not fully reveal to you His authority over life and death on earth? Who gave life to the lifeless Lazarus? Who took away the life of the barren fig tree?”

O my brethren, let us also cease to look for the living among the dead. If there are some of us who are still seeking Christ among the dead, let them desist from this soul-destroying effort. This is the vain effort of the Jews, pagans and non-Christians. We know that the Lord and Giver of life is not in the tomb but on the Throne of Glory in the heavens. The spirit, not darkened by sin, looks up into heaven and does not see the tomb; and the spirit, darkened by sin, looks into the tomb and does not see heaven. Sin and virtue govern the spiritual vision of man and reveals to each man its own world at cross-purposes with one another. Sin overthrows the vision of the spirit to the earth and reveals to it the corruption of the world. Virtue uplifts the spirit to heaven and reveals to it the eternal world and the resurrected Christ as the King in that world.

O my brethren, let us not seek life among creation, but from the Creator. Let us not commit an even graver sin i.e., let us not seek the Creator in the tomb of creation nor the Illuminating, Immortal One in the darkness of death.

O Lord Jesus, Victor over death, we cry out to You: resurrect us also into life eternal from the corruption and darkness of death.

To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.

From: *The Prologue from Ohrid: Lives of Saints* by St. Nikolai Velimirovič for April 7/20.

St. Nikolai Velimirovich

The Prologue from Ochrid

St Nicholai of Zhicha

(04.07.2022)

1. THE HOLY FEMALE MARTYRS AGAPE, CHIONIA AND IRENE

All three were sisters from the vicinity of Aquileia. When Emperor Diocletian was staying in Aquileia he ordered that the distinguished spiritual father Chrysogonus be killed. At that time an aged presbyter, Zoilus, had a vision in which the location of the unburied body of Chrysogonus was revealed. Hastening, the elder found the martyred body of Chrysogonus, placed it in a coffin and kept it in his home. Thirty days later, St. Chrysogonus appeared to him, informing him that, in the course of nine days, these three maidens would suffer martyrdom and that he, Zoilus, would also die at that time. The same news was received in a vision by Anastasia the Deliverer from Bonds [a woman endowed with moral and spiritual insight-

December 22], who was a disciple of Chrysogonus. Indeed, after nine days the Elder Zoilus died and these three sisters were brought to trial before the emperor. The emperor urged these three maidens to worship idols, but they all refused and confessed their steadfast faith in Christ. Irene told to the emperor that it was foolish to worship things made of stone and wood, which were ordered for an agreed price and made by the hands of a mortal man. The enraged emperor cast them into prison. When the emperor departed for Macedonia, all slaves and prisoners were taken with him, including these three saintly maidens. The emperor turned them over to a certain commander, Dulcitus, for torture. This commander, inflamed by dark passion, wanted to defile the virgins; however, when the commander attempted to enter the prison while the virgins were praying to God, he went insane. He fell among the black cauldrons and pots by the gates and began to embrace and kiss them, departing sooty and blackened. The emperor, upon hearing about this incident, ordered that another commander, Sisinius, take over the trial of these sisters. After prolonged torture, the judge condemned the first two sisters to death by burning, while he detained Irene for a while longer, hoping to defile her. But when the judge sent Irene to a brothel with the soldiers, an angel of God saved this chaste virgin by staving off the soldiers and bringing her to a hill. The next day, the commander and his soldiers went to this hill, but they were unable to ascend it. He then ordered that Irene be shot with arrows. St. Anastasia gathered the bodies of these three sisters into one place and honorably buried them. They all suffered honorably for Christ the King and Lord in about the year 304 A.D.

2. THE HOLY MARTYR LEONIDAS, AND WITH HIM THE FEMALE MARTYRS CHARIESSA, NICE, GALINA, CALLISTA, NUNECHIA, BASILISSA AND THEODORA

They were thrown into the sea, but the sea received them not. They walked upon the sea as upon dry land and sang to God: "One battle have I won, O Lord, and the army pursued me; O Lord, I did not deny Thee; O Lord, save my soul!" Seeing them, the heathens at first were amazed, but they later tied stones around their necks and again threw them into the depths of the sea, where they drowned. They all suffered honorably for Christ the King and Lord in the year 281 A.D.

HYMN OF PRAISE

THE HOLY FEMALE MARTYRS AGAPE, CHIONA AND IRENE

Chaste souls, chaste bodies,

Like three lilies, pure and white,
Three sisters, heroines,
Golden treasures of the Holy Spirit.
Their blood they shed, their life they gave.
With wreaths are they crowned.
Agape--pure love,
Chiona--glistening as the snow,
And Irene--namesake of peace.
In torments as in the midst of a feast,
They glorified the Living God
And the resurrected Lord:
"Most-high God, whatever we have,
Behold, to Thee we give all:
Body, soul and all pains--
Thou receivest all into Thy hands!
From the river of fire save our bodies;
From eternal wrath save the souls!
Oh, thanks be to Thee, that Thou didst create us,
And didst even make us worthy of sufferings!"
Three sisters, three virgins,
Martyrs for the sake of the Trinity.

REFLECTION

A story of the Elder Barlaam: A certain man had three friends. Two of them he loved sincerely, but he avoided the third out of indifference. It so happened that the king summoned this man before him to render account and to repay his debt. He turned for help to his first friend, who rejected him and departed. He then turned to his second friend, but even he did not help him. With shame, he then turned to the

third friend, who joyfully accompanied him to the king. The interpretation is this: the first friend is wealth; the second friend is one's relatives; the third friend is the good works of men in this world. The king is God, Who, through death, sends a summons and seeks payment of debt. A dying man seeks help in his wealth, but it turns away and passes on immediately into the hands of another owner. He then turns to his relatives, but his relatives send him off alone and they remain. Then, he reminds himself of his good works, which he carried out with indifference, and these immediately accompany him on his way to the King and Judge. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. The only companions of the soul into the other world are the works of a man, be they good or be they bad. All that was dear and precious to a man leaves him and turns away from him. Only his works, to the very last one, accompany him. He who has a mind to understand, let him understand.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the resurrected Lord Jesus:

1. How, according to the testimony of St. Paul, He appeared alive to five hundred people at once: *After that, He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at once, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep* (1 Corinthians 15:6);
2. How He appeared to the Apostle James, again, according to the testimony of the Apostle Paul: *After that, He appeared to James, then to all the apostles* (1 Corinthians 15:7);
3. How in the time of the Apostle Paul, even outside the circle of the apostles, many still lived who had seen Him.

HOMILY

on waking from sin

"Awake to righteousness and sin not" (1 Corinthians 15:34).

The Apostle Paul gives this commandment in relation to the Resurrection of Christ. Since he had enumerated many proofs of the Resurrection of the Lord, he decisively commands the faithful to awaken to righteousness and to sin no more.

Why does the Apostle make our wakefulness contingent on the Resurrection of the Lord? Because the Resurrection of Christ from the dead is the main rebuttal to sinning. And because nothing else in this world can turn us away from sinning as surely as the knowledge that the Lord resurrected from the grave and now sits alive on the Throne of Glory, awaiting us at His Judgment. Having acquired this

knowledge, sinning is utterly absurd. Having acquired this knowledge, waking from sin is perfectly natural and reasonable.

Awake to righteousness! Not halfheartedly, but completely. Dismiss from your minds even the remembrance of sin. For sin is like a plant that can grow even in the most parched places. One drop of moisture, and a seemingly withered plant becomes green. One remembrance of a seemingly long-forgotten, dead sin makes it come alive and become stronger.

The heathens, who sinned without having the example of the Resurrection of the dead, will have some justification at the Judgment. They will say: "There was nothing powerful enough to awaken us from sinning. We believed that the grave was the final delta of the river of human life, for we did not have any proof of life after death." Thus will the heathens speak? But how will you Christians justify yourselves, you who have learned of the Resurrection of Christ and have not awakened; you who have heard so many testimonies of the Resurrection and the Judgment and yet have continued to sin? How are you going to justify yourselves? My brethren, *awake to righteousness and sin not*, for Christ is risen from the grave. O resurrected and living Lord, help us to awaken from sin once and for all. **To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.**

Services this Week

- ❖ ***Monday 04.25. – Resurrection Monday - Divine Liturgy 09.00 AM***
- ❖ ***Tuesday 04.26. - Resurrection Tuesday - Divine Liturgy 09: 30 AM***
- ❖ ***The 2nd Sunday of Pasha- of Thomas - May 1th) – 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy***

Donations April 17, 2022

Offering - \$1,255.00 Candles - \$127.00

Easter Donation

In Memory of Connie Bartis from Joe Bartis & Family - \$200.00

Building Fund

In Memory of Robert Knepp from Dan & Dianne Tomak - \$25.00

In Memory of Carlos Garcia from Frank Palmer - \$100.00

Large Candles

In Memory of Julie Lambrinos from Kumovi Dan & Dyne Tomak

***In Memory of Parents, Mike & Mildred Tumbas from Robert & Milica
Knepp***

In Memory of Ranka Marinkovich from Richard Kondas

In Memory of Ed Gartrell from Steve Purich

In Memory of Linda (Locher) Leckrone from Dorothy Podolak

Flowers for Pascha donated by;

***Patricia Niel IMO Buncich Family-Milos & Mary, Radovan, Milos Jr.
& Christine, David
Niel & Michelle***

Joanne & Peter Todorich IMO Milka-Nikola & Nick Jr. Todorich

John & Patricia Pavich IMO Deceased Family Members

***Linda & Tony Freidhoff & Joanne Uzelac IMO Wayne & Patricia
Fredihoff & Dino Uzelac***

Eli Cvijanovich IMO The Cvijanovich and Bitsko Families

Brandon & Melana Simms IMO Connie Bartis

Donna Zimmerman IMO Nickolas, Mary, David, Deborah Miller

Evelyn Walet IMO Father Sam

Carole McAllister IMO Nick & Sara Davich and Nicholas Davich

***Dan & Dianne Tomak IMO Bosa & Lazo Vuckovich, Damjena & Lazo
GJurcuh, Mila &
Milich Buchan***

Richard Kondas IMO Parents, Amelia & Joe Kondas

***Rose, Gojko, & Kristina Marinkovich IMO Marinkovich & Holbay
Families***

Joe Bartis IMO Connie Bartis

Richard & Suzette Gardenhour IMO Deceased Bozic, Grisin & Gardenhour Families

Adam Lichvar

Cameron & Linda Palmer

Sarma Sale

\$30/Dozen \$15/ 1/2 Dozen

Contact Suzette Gardenhour to place your order

LENTEN FISH FRIES

A HUGE THANK YOU to everyone who helped make our Fish Fries such a success during this Lenten season.

A big shout-out to our children who made time in their busy school schedules; QUIN KOMAR, Brayden Simms, Marcus Simms, Michael Zahurak, Maddison Zahurak, Myra Gleason, Jonathan Gleason, Ben Ribaric, Sam Ribaric, Eli Ribaric, Nikki Ribaric and Amelia Ribaric!

SAVE THESE DATES!!!!

Due to the Sewar Project, Taste of Serbia has been RESCHEDULED to Saturday, August 13th

Sunday, May 22nd – St. Nicholas Anniversary Celebration

Polka Fest – June 3-5, 2022