

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

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Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ - PASCHA (04.016.2023.)



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 Eastern American Diocese of our Holy Church!

We greet you on this most radiant and most joyous Feast of Feasts –
Christ's Resurrection from the dead, with the all-glorious,
ever resounding and vivifying Christian greeting:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Emanating from a paternal heart replete with Paschal joy, We join in proclaiming the triumphant victory of life and light over death and darkness, deeply inspired by the hymnography of Saint John of Damascus:

*○ Christ, great and most holy Pascha!
○ Wisdom, Word and Power of God,
Grant that we may more perfectly partake of You
in the never-ending day of Your Kingdom!
(Paschal Canon—Song 9)*

“Christ is Risen, my joy”, exclaims St. Seraphim of Sarov, joining in the chorus of that reverberating proclamation of immeasurable Paschal joy, which is gone out into all the world. For Christ is Risen, indeed, my Beloved! This *great and most holy Pascha* has burst into our world, the world of time, space, and matter, of real history, real people, and real life! The *Wisdom, Word and Power of God* has destroyed death and darkness, as “the glory of God is man fully alive” in the words of St. Irenaeus of Lyon.

Yet, our minds and imaginations, it seems, cannot fathom the fulness of the Paschal Mystery, as we endeavor to fit the luminous and explosive fact of the Resurrection into the minute and fragmented possibilities we already know. While at the same time, contemporary society attempts to overshadow this victory of life and light by offering corruption as freedom, education void of illumination, and advocating false choices in life. "If so, then the end of the world is not before us, but behind us", prophetically warns the Holy Bishop Nicholai of Zhicha and Ochrid, “and humanity is not existing only in a Paradise lost, but in a Life lost too”.

Take heed, for this very reason, the Holy Apostle Paul cautions us: “Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word, I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first

importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (I Cor. 15:1-4). As such, our only goal, Beloved, is to be united in Christ, and become part of a stream, that converges into a forceful river uniting in Him and with Him in Whom alone lies the fulness, and with it the beauty of real freedom, truth and righteousness such as we have never known.

Our saintly Bishop Nicholai likens this image of a river to the community of our salvation. According to him, individuals are like a stream, which easily freezes in the winter; yet, we are as a mighty river, which continues to flow even in the dead of winter when we join one another. As a community, together, we become the iconic likeness of the Church. For we are members of the Body of the Risen Christ, which is the ark of our covenant and ark of our salvation. As the great Psalmist David sang: “The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and He helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise Him. The Lord is the strength of His people, a fortress of salvation for His anointed one.” (Ps. 27:7-8).

Analogous to the words of Bishop Nicholai, who preached in New York many years ago in 1921 to the then builders of contemporary society, concerning Christ as “the stone which the builders have rejected” (Ps. 118:22). He compares those who attempt to build a foundation for a mill by sinking their only large stone in the middle of a riverbed and constructing a mill with small stones found at the edge of the riverbank, which are easily carried away by the water. Then, as today, if such small stones are used in the construction of society, they too shall be taken by the flowing river. The one essential stone is the Crucified and Risen Lord – our only fortress, our corner stone and secure foundation.

Therefore, Most Beloved, to *more perfectly partake of Him in the never-ending day of His Kingdom*; let us rejoice in our common quest for the restoration of truth and righteousness with the plentitude of Christ’s Holy Church, our firm community and sure salvation, now, more than ever, from all our heart exclaiming:

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

Given at Pascha, in the Year 2023.

YOUR FERVENT INTERCESSOR BEFORE THE RISEN CHRIST,

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BISHOP OF EASTERN AMERICA
THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Pascha 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!**

Today the Light of the Risen Christ shines in the lives of believers everywhere. Present believers are united in the Light with believers through the centuries. The Church Militant and the Church Triumphant are One!

Death is defeated and Life resounds! The Tomb is Empty. “He is risen. He is not here.” (Mk.16:6) Paschal joy fills the lives, hearts and minds of believers. The Resurrected Christ lives within believers’ souls everywhere.

The long journey to Pascha is complete. Jesus Christ’s Resurrection is proclaimed and celebrated! Unbounded joy spreads through churches, homes and communities.

Life is new today! Light replaces darkness. Joy replaces sadness. Hope replaces gloom. Strength is renewed. Weakness is no more. Life’s outlook has changed. Life eternal is established.

God’s Holy Church exists throughout the world and down through the centuries. The knowledge of Jesus Christ’s Resurrection is not limited by time or geography.

Words are insufficient to communicate the power of the Resurrection. The Resurrection creates lasting change beyond measure. History does contain or restrict the change.

The Uncontainable having taken on Human Flesh while remaining Uncontainable was not bound by death or the grave. The future unfolds defined by the Resurrection.

The days ahead are days of joy. Living in the Resurrected Christ is blessed beyond measure. The new and renewed life in Christ embraces the future with the assurance of the Resurrection.

The Resurrected Christ’s daily Presence influences the way each day of life is lived. Believers have the opportunities to go forth with confidence in the Resurrected Christ.

The Empty Tomb and Christ’s Resurrection appearances are verified in the Holy Gospel. The Church through the centuries witnesses to the Resurrection appearances.

Extended Paschal celebrations have shaped the centuries since the Empty Tomb was discovered. Remote villages and major metropolitan areas on various continents have been affected by Paschal celebrations.

Today and each day the account of the Resurrection has a place deep in the hearts and minds of believers. The meaning of the Resurrection for each life merits consideration throughout earthly life.

Eternal life is the goal of each believer embraced at Holy Baptism. The Kingdom of God is within reach of each believer choosing to follow the narrow path.

The journey to Pascha through Great Lent and Holy Week keeps the believer on the path to God’s Kingdom and life eternal. Christ’s Resurrection is the verified proof necessary for believers to follow the narrow path.

Believers are blessed to receive the Precious Body and Blood of the Resurrected Christ at the Paschal Divine Liturgy. Believers unite with each other and are united with Christ.

The unity in the Church permeates the centuries. Communicants are united in the Precious Body and Blood. Jesus Christ died and rose for all until the Glorious Second Coming.

Today let us join together in the deepest gratitude to the Resurrected Christ. Let our thankfulness be reflected in the way we live in Christ each day. May Christ’s love embodied in the Resurrection be manifested throughout the world.

Hristos Voskrese! Vaistinu Voskrese! Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

Pascha. April 316, 2023. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

Father Rodney Torbic

ON DEATH AND RESURRECTION IN CHRIST

Yesterday I was crucified with Him; today I am glorified with Him.

Yesterday I died with Him; today I am made alive with Him.

Yesterday I was buried with Him; today I am raised up with Him.

Let us offer to Him Who suffered and rose again for us ... ourselves, the possession most precious to God and most proper.

Let us become like Christ, since Christ became like us.

Let us become Divine for His sake, since for us He became Man.

He assumed the worse that He might give us the better. He became poor that by His poverty we might become rich. He accepted the form of a servant that we might win back our freedom.

He came down that we might be lifted up. He was tempted that through Him we might conquer. He was dishonored that He might glorify us. He died that He might save us. He ascended that He might draw to Himself us, who were thrown down through the fall of sin.

Let us give all, offer all, to Him who gave Himself a Ransom and Reconciliation for us.

We needed an incarnate God, a God put to death, that we might live. We were put to death together with Him that we might be cleansed. We rose again with Him because we were put to death with Him. We were glorified with Him because we rose again with Him.

A few drops of Blood recreate the whole of creation!

St. Gregory the Theologian

Services this Week

- ❖ April 17, Resurrection Monday - St. Elijah Serbian Orthodox Church
Aliquippa – Cemetery Chapel – Hierarchical Liturgy – 10:00 AM
- ❖ April 18, Resurrection Tuesday - 08.00 am – Divine Liturgy
- ❖ April 23, 2nd Sunday of Pascha – of St. Thomas - 10.00 am – Divine Liturgy

Donations April , 2023

Offering - \$ 1,350.00 Candles - \$99.00
Donations - \$250.00

Building Fund

In Memory Of Millie Moncilovich - Wick-\$200, Olga Lucas-\$100,
Mary Kelly-\$50, McMichael-\$50, Steve Purich-\$25,
Gary, Rose, & Kristina Marinkovich-\$20
In Memory of Dragich Banda - Gary, Rose & Kristina Marinkovich - \$20

Large Candles

In Memory of Mike & Mildred Tumbas from Kathleen McDowell
In Memory of Bosiljka & Lazo Vuckovich from Dan & Dyne Tomak
In Memory of Julia & Demetrias Lambrinos from Dan & Dyne Tomak
In Memory of Andrew Grisin from Richard Kondas
In Memory of Damenja & Lazo Gjurich from Diane and Dan Tomak
In Memory of Connie Bartis from Bartis & Pavich Family

Thank you to the following who purchased flowers to decorate the tomb and the church for Pascha: Joe Golden, Goyko, Rose & Kristina Marinkovich, Carly Zahurak, Joe Bartis, Linda & Tony Freidhoff, Joanne Uzelac, Mike Stipanovich, Michele Goas, Eli Cvijanovich, John & Patricia Pavich, Richard Kondas, Helene Gleason, Danica B. Wess, Diane Thomas, Carole McAllister, Dan & Diane Tomak, Michelle Nesdore, Evelyn Walet, Laura Malich, Suzette & Richard Gardenhour, George Kohan, Peter & Joanne Todorich, Peti Gjurich, Lazo & Deb Gjurich, Natalie Ofsanko, Jencine Campagna, & Donna Zimmerman.

Thank you to Milo Kermin for his donation of the chocolate crosses for the children.
Mnogaja ljeta!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, May 21st - Anniversary Celebration

Polka-Fest June 2-4, 2023

Band of Brothers - July 13-15 & 19-22, 2023



Taste of Serbia - August 12, 2023



Slavic Festival - September 15-16, 2023