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BY THE GRACE OF GOD
BISHOP OF WASHINGTON-NEW YORK AND EASTERN AMERICA
THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Most beloved clergy and monastics, sons and daughters,
faithful children of our 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 victorious Paschal salutation:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

With an exuberant paternal heart filled with abounding joy, We now join in proclaiming the all-embracing triumph of Christ's Holy Resurrection—the victory of life over death, and light over the darkness of despondency! Profoundly illumined by the newness of the Pascha of our Lord, let us all sing from the entirety of our being:

*Come on this chosen Day of the Resurrection,
let us partake of the new fruit of the vine.
Let us share in divine rejoicing of the Kingdom of Christ,
praising Him as God forevermore!*
(Troparion on Ode VIII-Paschal Canon)

As we gather in this most sacred moment in celebration of the glorious Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, most beloved, we are enveloped in the profound joy that only Pascha can bring forth. For Pascha invites us all and without exception, not only to reflect on the central mystery of our faith—the triumph of life and light over death and despair—but also to consider how this transformative event truly impacts our lives and our world.

The Resurrection is the cornerstone of our Christian faith, a unique proclamation of joy that reverberates throughout the ages. We hear the angelic announcement: "Christ is Risen!"—a message that echoes not just in the stone walls of the tomb, but also in the depths of our hearts. This joy is not a fleeting emotion or a superficial response to temporary circumstances; it is a deeply rooted gladness that arises from our encounter with the Risen Christ, as He invites us to *partake of the new fruit of the vine*.

In the Gospel, the Myrrh-bearing women who went to the tomb found it empty, and they were filled with both fear and joy ([Matthew 28:8](#)). This duality of emotions is a beautiful reflection on the reality of our human experience, for joy is often born from the ashes of our sorrow. In our lives, we face trials, uncertainties, and changes that can seem overwhelming. Yet, the Resurrection reminds us

that beyond every moment of pain, there is the promise of new life, for Christ alone said of Himself, *Behold, I make all things new!* (Rev. 21:5).

According to Elder Vasileios of Iveron Monastery, for us to experience this newness of life, “that which is required is the boldness, the daringness of faith. This happened to the myrrh-bearing women. With an overflowing love for their Teacher, what could they do? They took myrrh to anoint their Teacher Who had died. And so, the result was that they experienced the myrrh of the Resurrection—they bore the myrrh which overcomes death. The angel told them, *The Lord is risen; go tell the disciples and Peter. Coming out of the tomb they said nothing to anyone for they were afraid* (Mk 16:6–8). Saying that they said *nothing to anyone*, means that they said everything to everyone. Saying that they were afraid, means they did not in any way want to give a false impression of what they had seen or experienced. For whoever accepts this experience of the Resurrection does not speak and yet, He speaks continuously, through His words and His silence.”

Resurrection is fundamentally about change. Through the mystery of Christ’s victory over death, the world is transformed as darkness gives way to light, despair to hope, and death to life. As Orthodox Christians, we are summoned to embrace this change, with the fear of God, filled with faith, love and anticipation. Change can, indeed, be daunting, for we lack the boldness to experience transformation. Yet, we must remember that through it all, the Risen Christ is present in our lives, as we face various transitions, be they in our relationships, careers, schooling or even health. We can draw strength from the knowledge that the disciples, who once feared on the eve of the Resurrection, we too can find reassurance in the presence of the Risen Lord.

Therefore, my dear brothers, sisters and children, let us rejoice in the Resurrection, let us embrace the change it brings, and let us live out the joy of this Feast of Feasts in all that we say and do. For always remember, in Christ, we are not only transformed, but we are also agents of transformation in a world yearning for hope and renewal. Let us then exclaim with all our heart:

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

Given at Pascha in New York, in the Year 2025.

YOUR FERVENT INTERCESSOR BEFORE THE RISEN LORD,

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