



*ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA*  
**DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST**  
*OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP*

Archpastoral Letter  
Holy Pascha 2009  
No. 102

To the Esteemed Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful in the Diocese of the Midwest:

Beloved in the Lord,

Christ is Risen!

It is a joy to greet all of you on this Feast of Feasts, the Great and Holy Pascha -- great, because it stands beyond time and space at the center of all things, of all that came before us and all that is yet to come; and holy, because by His ultimate victory, our most merciful Savior reveals the fullness of His holiness while making us holy, despite our sins and shortcomings, and leads us as partakers of His divine nature to His very Kingdom that, while yet to be fully revealed, is already fully present in the life of His Body, the Church!

Once again, dear brothers and sisters, we have traveled together through the Lenten Fast. We have attempted to lay aside those things that control and burden, distracting us from "the one thing needful." We have prayed, fasted, and given alms, striving to attain that divine freedom that comes from true repentance. Having sought and received forgiveness from one another and our most merciful Lord, and having witnessed that great harbinger of the Living Word's own resurrection when, by His spoken word He raised His friend Lazarus from the dead, we pressed on with Christ to Jerusalem, sharing in His betrayal and arrest, His trial and passion, His crucifixion and burial, and His descent into the realm of darkness, which He destroyed by His very presence. Today, having descended into darkness with the Light Whom darkness could not overcome, we rejoice as members of one another, and in one another, as living icons of all that our most merciful Savior came into the world to accomplish for us.

I would be remiss if I limited my greeting to the perfunctory reminder of all that our Savior has accomplished for us, on our behalf, eliciting merely the "warmth of faith" apart from the burning zeal found in a living, active faith. The very essence of the resurrection -- responding to all that He has done for us by allowing Him to accomplish great and holy things through us as His holy nation and royal priesthood -- implies a living, active faith firmly rooted, together with hope, in the all embracing love of God. Imagine, if you will, what would have transpired had the holy myrrhbearers and the apostles been preoccupied with sharing among themselves heartwarming stories about

their encounter with the risen Lord, while neglecting to proclaim the risen Lord, much less to allow Him to accomplish great and holy things through them. I dare say that, had the apostles not allowed the Lord to work through them, broken vessels that they were, my message today would be of a radically different sort, if indeed it would have been written at all.

And so, my beloved brothers and sisters, on this great and holy feast, I invite you to join me in rediscovering not only what our victorious Savior has accomplished for us, but to renew -- or perhaps make for the first time -- the commitment to allow Him to accomplish great and holy things through us. While the invitation I extend to you is certainly not new, it does come at a time when a renewed commitment borne of faith and hope, of love and trust, is indeed needed as we, the Orthodox Church in America, continue to take our first steps, walking in the newness of life, after our own dark days of passion and death. And, as we continue to walk in this newness of Life and Light, may our steps be strengthened, and in Him perfected, as He continues to accomplish His will for the salvation of the world not only for us, but through us, His People.

May our most merciful and victorious Savior perfect in us all that is lacking as we set out to accomplish His great and holy will, and may the grace that today shines forth so abundantly from the tomb lead us into His Kingdom now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Christ is risen! In and with Him, may we too be -- and remain -- risen!

With love in the risen Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Job". The letters are stylized and cursive.

† Job  
Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest