



Orthodox Church in America
DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

Paschal Greetings
April 21 2022
№. 39

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

Beloved in the Lord,

I write these words of greeting to you after this morning's celebration of the Holy Thursday Vespers Divine Liturgy in commemoration of the Lord's Last Supper. And, as I write, I am thinking of and praying for His Eminence Archbishop Paul, my brother and concelebrant and your beloved archpastor and Father in Christ. As you are aware, His Eminence is preparing to be called from this life-to-life eternal. I am sure you join me in praying that his repose will be painless, blameless, and peaceful and that, as we have sung and prayed this morning, the Lord will remember him in His Kingdom.

In a few short days, having commemorated the saving events of Christ's passion and death, we will gather in faith and proclaim the joyful words: Christ is Risen! What sweeter words could we proclaim after our difficult forty-day journey through Great and Holy Lent? What other words would we want to rest upon our souls after standing at the foot of the Cross with our Lord, and placing Him in the tomb? Dear brothers and sisters, let us never underestimate the power of these words that are the confirmation of our faith.

The God-protected Diocese of the Midwest has indeed experienced its own Golgotha these past several months. Your Archpastor, Archbishop Paul, was hastily taken from among his flock as he received a diagnosis that was sudden and severe. This gave him little to no time for what we would consider a proper send off. Rather, the trial of his life ended, and he was sent to cross. Even with this reality before us, we also are confronted with the reality that Holy Week does not stop on Great Friday, but continues, with haste, to the glorious resurrection of our Lord. This is a reality and joy that is eternal and cannot be taken away.

This life-giving moment in history is the very focus and identity of the witness of the Church, of pastoral ministry, and of each and every Christian who longs for the Lord.

In this light, our sadness and sorrows are transformed and given hope. Our attention to death and suffering can no longer maintain its hold as we are now given life and rest. We are comforted knowing that our funeral dirge is “Alleluia!” as we sing in the funeral service.

Rejoice on this day, my fellow sojourners, and know that the Lord hears you, sees you, and died because of His great love for you. Let the very words of “Christ is risen!” be our strength, our joy, and our light during the dark days of our earthly journey, reminding us that *He has overcome the world.*

With continued prayers for you and yours,

In the Risen Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'D'.

†DANIEL

Bishop of Santa Rosa