



Orthodox Church in America
DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

Paschal Greetings
April 16, 2023
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PASCHAL MESSAGE OF HIS EMINENCE, ARCHBISHOP DANIEL

to the Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy, Venerable Monastics, and Beloved Faithful of the
God-protected Diocese of Chicago and the Midwest

The Angel proclaimed Thee, the crucified and buried Master. He told the women: "Come, see the place where He lay! He is risen as He said, for He is almighty." We worship Thee, O only immortal One. Have mercy on us, O Christ, the Giver of life! (Anatolian sticheron of the Resurrection, Tone 2)

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

CHRIST IS RISEN!

The Gospel of Saint Matthew tells us that the good news of Christ's Resurrection was first heard and then first proclaimed by the Holy Myrrhbearing Women. These faithful disciples, on their early morning mission to anoint the Lord's body, encountered an angel sitting on the stone that had miraculously been rolled away from the Lord's tomb. The angel greeted them with the words, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you." So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to bring His disciples word" (Matthew 28: 5-8).

This Gospel passage describes how the frightened women quickly left Jesus' tomb. Jesus Himself then appears to them, saying: "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me" (v. 10). With these words, the Risen One entrusts the women with the mandate to evangelize: "Go. Tell." Indeed, these holy and faithful disciples of the Lord had offered an admirable example of faithfulness, of dedication, and of love for Christ throughout the time of His public ministry. This was followed by their fidelity during the dark days of His passion. Now they are rewarded by Him with the distinction of being the first to proclaim His victory over sin and death.

First the women, then the disciples, and Peter in particular, were granted to bear witness to the reality of the resurrection. Fifty days later, on the great day of Pentecost, Peter declared with faith, courage, and conviction: “This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses” (Acts 2:32). From that moment on, the proclamation of the Resurrection of Christ has “gone out into all the universe” and has reached the four corners of the earth. This good news has become the message of hope for all peoples of all times and places. Jesus’ Resurrection tells us that death does not have the last word, life does. As Saint John Chrysostom reminds us in his Paschal Homily: “O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown! Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen! Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice! Christ is risen, and life reigns! Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave! For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen.” This is, indeed, our hope. This is the good news of the Gospel.

Christ is risen! Because of this, it is possible to look with hope at every moment of our lives, even the most difficult ones. This is the message of hope that we are called to proclaim with words, and above all through the witness of life. May this news resound in our homes and in our hearts: “Christ is risen!” May this certainty strengthen the faith of every baptized person, and above all, encourage all those around us and throughout the world who are facing greater suffering and difficulty.

As we gather in our churches to celebrate the Feast of Feasts, with the Holy Women we once again hear the Angel proclaim that Christ is risen! This joyous proclamation has resounded throughout the centuries and has taken root in the hearts of millions of Christians. In our own day, it has become our own message of hope, a message we are called to share with the world around us.

I invite you to join me in prayer, asking the Risen Lord to grant His peace to our troubled world and His light to all whose lives are darkened by hopelessness and despair. I also extend my blessing to you, to your families, and to all your friends and loved ones, as well as my heartfelt best wishes for a bright and blessed celebration of Holy Pascha.

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

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

Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest