

## **Paschal Message of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon**

### **To the Venerable Pastors, God-loving Monastics and Devout Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America**

*“We celebrate the death of death and the overthrow of hell, the beginning of another life which is eternal; and in exultation, we sing the praises of its source. He alone is blessed and most glorious, the God of our Fathers.” – (Paschal Canon, Ode 7)*

Dearly Beloved in the Lord:

The central mystery of the Christian Faith is the glorious Resurrection of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, through which mankind is offered the gift of another life, which is eternal. This miracle of divine and everlasting life was wrought for us in a most remarkable way, for our Lord accomplished it by voluntarily suffering His Passion, being nailed to the Cross and descending into the tomb and into hell.

To the world, suffering is understood as something to be avoided at all costs. The Cross is perceived as foolishness, while the reality of death is ignored as often as possible. But Christ takes the very things the world fears and uses them, not only to reveal His glory and His power, but to share that power and glory with us. He voluntarily endures suffering to free us from our suffering. He ascends the Cross to bring joy to a world that is so often shrouded in war, destruction and hatred. And He willingly endures death so that He might trample it down and reveal that, in the risen Lord, it has no power over us.

Throughout our beautiful Paschal services, we sing of the great paradox of eternal life, revealed and accomplished through death: of mortality, clothed in the robe of immortality; of the Sun of Righteousness shining forth from the tomb; of death being trampled down by death. Christ, Who is Life itself, dies for us, so that we who are dead might live. We no longer fear those things that the world fears, for they no longer have power over us. As Saint John Chrysostom reminds us in his magnificent Paschal homily, “Let no one fear death, for the Savior’s death has set us free. He who was prisoner of it has annihilated it. By descending into hell, He made hell captive.”

Let us, therefore, rejoice in the Risen Lord and be strengthened to face our own struggles with courage and hope, knowing that the Lord is ever with us. As we celebrate the bright and joyous day of His Resurrection, let us exclaim with the Apostle Paul, “O death, where is thy sting? O hell, where is thy victory?” (1 Corinthians 15:55). And let us all partake of the Banquet of Immortality, the Feast of Faith, with joy and thanksgiving.

With love in the Risen Lord,

**+TIKHON**

Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada