



**IRINEJ**

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

**ARCHPASTORAL PASCHAL WORD**

Most beloved clergy and monastics, sons and daughters,  
faithful children of the God-protected Eastern American Diocese of our most 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 a paternal heart bursting with inexpressible joy, We now join in solemnly proclaiming the triumph of life and light over death and darkness, profoundly inspired by the awe and wonder of the Holy Myrrhbearing Women before the Life-giving and Empty Tomb, as we bring forth with tenderness this hymn of praise:

*Before the dawn, Mary and the women came  
and found the stone rolled away from the tomb.  
They heard the angelic voice:  
Why do you seek among the dead as a man,  
the One Who is everlasting light?  
Behold the clothes in the grave.  
Go and proclaim to the world:  
The Lord is risen. He has slain death,  
as He is the Son of God, saving humanity.*  
(Paschal Hypakoe)

Today, most beloved, all humanity stands in joyful fear and trepidation! Some as the courageous Myrrhbearers before the Empty Tomb of Christ, who, after witnessing the harrowing and awe-inspiring Mystery of the Cross – wherein the Creator of all willingly gave Himself over to suffering and death – were rewarded in first hearing from Him, the Risen Lord, this salutation: "Rejoice!" (cf, [Paschal Kontakion](#)). As such, the lament of Eve, the first mother, was turned into joy, heralding the end of sorrow through His Resurrection. Will we, beloved, in like manner, find the courage to go to the tomb of our heart, with enough conviction of faith to remove the large stone covering its entrance and with spiritually enlightened eyes, behold Christ risen from the dead?

Yet others, likened unto the Holy Apostles, who were hidden away safely out of fear in the Upper Room, until the news of Christ's Resurrection was given to them by the Myrrhbearing Women.

Then, overcome with immense joy, the foremost of the Apostles, Peter, ran with great haste to the Empty Tomb to see for himself; while the Beloved Disciple, John, did likewise outrunning Peter. For he alone among the disciples had the conviction of faith in love to stand beneath the Cross with the Most Holy Theotokos – whom, at the words of the Crucified Savior, received her unto his care as his Mother (John 19:25-27) – having already gained the experience of love that gives birth to unwavering faith. For Christ is truly risen as He foretold, and death is no more! The disciples themselves were comforted by the Risen Lord, Who, stood among them and said to them: “Peace be with you!” (John 20:19).

Thus, everyone who lives in Christ, becomes a communicant of His Resurrection; for as the God-bearing Apostle testifies: “If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of His Spirit who lives in you” (Romans 8:11). Will we, therefore, allow that life-giving Spirit to raise our hearts, minds and souls and to deliver us from all internal death into new life, life in abundance? However, that joy of Resurrection can neither be isolated, nor contained within the boundaries of personal experience; for by its very nature, it strives to be revealed and to be given to others. Hence, the command given to the Myrrhbearing Women: *Go and proclaim to the world: The Lord is risen. He has slain death, as He is the Son of God, saving humanity* (Paschal Hypakoe).

“Christ is Risen, my joy”, exclaimed the Venerable Seraphim of Sarov to everyone whom he would encounter, witnessing that every day and every encounter is, indeed, the seal and confirmation of the Resurrection. This unshakeable conviction becomes a source of true joy and an affirmation of life eternal. As a God-wise Elder of Mount Athos taught: “The Orthodox Church, in the heat of the final judgment, burns and emits, like the finest incense, the fragrance of relief and spiritual freedom, which saves man by granting him new vistas that lead him to a different level, bestowing beauty to his joy and sorrow, his freedom and captivity, his life and death.”

Therefore, my Beloved, allow the Life-giving Tomb to be discovered anew in us. Open our hearts that we may be fully embraced by joy, peace and the ineffable light of Pascha, so that all doubt is removed and all worries dissipate. For Christ has defeated sin and death once and for all. As the Holy Myrrhbearers once announced this great joy, let us also now exclaim with one accord and one heart:

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

Given at Pascha in New York, in the Year of Our Lord, 2026.

YOUR FERVENT INTERCESSOR BEFORE THE RISEN LORD,

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