



Office of the Bishop

312 Garfield Street

Johnstown, PA 15906

Protocol 8/2014

PASCHA ARCHPASTORAL LETTER

To the Very Reverend Protopresbyters, Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers, and the Faithful of our God-Protected Diocese

CHRIST IS RISEN!

INDEED HE IS RISEN!

On this great and glorious feast of Pascha—the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, our hearts are filled with tremendous joy, our souls are transformed and we bask in the Light of Truth. I wish to share with you the inspiring, uplifting and brilliant homily of our Father among the Saints, Athanasius the Great.

Brethren, how fine a thing it is to move from festival to festival, from prayer to prayer, from holy day to holy day. The time is now at hand when we enter on a new beginning: the proclamation of the blessed Passover, in which the Lord was sacrificed. We feed as on the food of life, we constantly refresh our souls with His precious blood, as from a fountain. Yet we are always thirsting, burning to be satisfied. But He Himself is present for those who thirst and in His goodness invites them to the feast day. Our Saviour repeats His words: If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

He quenched the thirst not only of those who came to Him then. Whenever anyone seeks Him is freely admitted to the presence of the Saviour. The grace of the feast is not restricted to one occasion. Its rays of glory never set. It is always at hand to enlighten the mind of those who desire it. Its power is always there for those whose minds have been enlightened and who meditate day and night on the Holy Scriptures, like the one who is called blessed in the holy psalm: Blessed is the man who

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ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

has not followed the counsel of the wicked, or stood where sinners stand, or sat in the seat of the scornful, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on His law day and night.

Moreover, my friends, the God who first established this feast for us allows us to celebrate it each year. He who gave up His Son to death for our salvation, from the same motive gives us this feast, which is commemorated every year. This feast guides us through the trials that meet us in this world. God now gives us the joy of salvation that shines out from this feast, as He brings us together to form one assembly, uniting us all in spirit in every place, allowing us to pray together and to offer common thanksgiving, as is our duty on the feast. Such is the wonder of His love: He gathers to this feast those who are far apart, and brings together in unity of faith those who may be physically separated from each other.

Personal Greetings:

May all the Priests and Panis, Deacons, Parishioners, Friends and Supporters of our American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese experience the joy, excitement and wonder of the early followers of Christ when they first saw Him following His Resurrection. Christ is Risen!

Greetings from Johnstown with much love,

+ Bishop Gregory

+His Grace Bishop Gregory of Nyssa

To be read as the sermon in all churches of the Diocese at the Paschal Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ.