



Приходскій листокъ

Свято-Вознесенской церкви

въ городъ Сакраменто

Западно-Американская епархія

Русская Православная Церковь Заграницей

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Христосъ Воскресе! Christ is Risen!



ПАСХАЛЬНОЕ ПОСЛАНИЕ ПАТРИАРХА МОСКОВСКАГО И ВСЕЯ РУСИ АЛЕКСІЯ ІІ

архипастырямъ, пастырямъ, монашествующимъ и всѣмъ вѣрнымъ
чадамъ Русской Православной Церкви

«Приидите, воспоимъ, людіе, Спасово тридневное востаніе,
имже избавихомся адовыхъ нерѣшимыхъ узъ,
и нетлѣніе и жизнь вси воспріяхомъ, зовуще:
Распныйся, и Погребыйся, и Воскресый,
спаси ны Воскресеніемъ Твоимъ,
Едине Человѣколюбче!»

*Стихира на Господи, воззвахъ
вечерни вторника Свѣтлой седмицы*

Возлюбленные о Христѣ Воскресшемъ Преосвященные архипастыри, боголюбивые пресвитеры, діаконы, честные иноки и инокини, благочестивые православные міряне — вѣрные чада церковные!

Со Свѣтлымъ Христовымъ Воскресеніемъ — самымъ радостнымъ для православныхъ христіанъ праздникомъ сердечно поздравляю всѣхъ васъ, дорогіе мои! Вновь наши храмы исполнены пасхальнаго ликования. Вновь и вновь мы переживаемъ великую тайну Искупленія, которая освободила людей, идущихъ за Христомъ, отъ власти грѣха и смерти. По словамъ святого апостола Петра, Господь нашъ и Спаситель «грѣхи наши Самъ вознесъ тѣломъ Своимъ на древо, дабы мы, избавившись отъ грѣховъ, жили для правды» (1 Пет. 2:24).

Сколь велика къ намъ любовь Божія! Тѣхъ, кто оставилъ Его, Онъ не оставилъ. Тѣхъ, кто отъ Него уклонился, выбравъ жизнь по своей волѣ, Онъ очистилъ, принявъ страданія и смерть. Тѣмъ, кто изнемогъ въ грѣхахъ, Онъ открылъ путь покаянія и духовнаго возрожденія — путь къ Вѣчной жизни. Возблагодаримъ же Господа за Его милость и человѣколюбіе! Возблагодаримъ какъ любящіе чада, которые могутъ укрыться отъ бѣдъ и опасностей въ Домъ Отца!

Пасха издревлѣ понималась христіанами какъ переходъ, по-церковнославянски «преведение». «Пасха, Господня Пасха! — поетъ сегодня Святая Церковь. — Отъ смерти бо къ жизни и отъ земли

къ Небеси Христось Богъ насъ преведе, побѣдную поющія». По нашей вѣрѣ, по нашему дерзновенію, по нашей любви ко Христу и другъ къ другу намъ даруется переходъ отъ гибели къ вѣчному бытію, отъ рабства грѣху къ свободному исполненію воли Божіей.

Совершаютъ этотъ спасительный переходъ и цѣлые народы, духовно окормляемые нашей Святой Церковью. Отъ тьмы нѣверія они идутъ къ свѣту Христову, возрождаясь и обновляясь духовно. Всѣ больше и больше въ нашемъ отечествѣ и за его рубежами, въ многомилліонномъ русскомъ разсѣяніи, людей, имѣющихъ во Христѣ «жизнь... съ избыткомъ» (Ин. 10:10), а значитъ, по-настоящему счастливыхъ, владѣющихъ истиной полноты бытія.

Да, намъ предстоитъ еще много потрудиться въ виноградникѣ Христовомъ. Но ваша проповѣдь и добрыя дѣла, возлюбленные мои, уже принесли сторичный плодъ и многіе изъ васъ достойны услышать слова Господа: «Добрый и вѣрный рабъ! Въ маломъ ты былъ вѣренъ, надъ многимъ тебя поставлю; войди въ радость господина твоего» (Мѡ. 25:21).

Средоточіе нашей вѣры, нашего свидѣтельства міру, всей нашей жизни — благая вѣсть о Христовомъ Воскресеніи. Пасхальная радость была естественнымъ состояніемъ духа для нашихъ святыхъ. Преподобный Серафимъ Саровскій cadaго приходившаго къ нему привѣтствовалъ словами: «Радость моя, Христось Воскресе!». Свято-

го праведнаго Иоанна Кронштадтскаго, 180-лѣтіе со дня рожденія и 100-лѣтіе со дня блаженной кончины котораго мы отмѣчаемъ въ нынѣшнемъ году, называли въ народѣ «пасхальнымъ батюшкой». «Люблю я взирать, — писалъ онъ въ своемъ дневникѣ, — на образъ Воскресшаго Жизнодавца со знаменіемъ въ рукѣ, съ этимъ символомъ побѣды надъ смертью и имущимъ державу смерти — діаволомъ. Гдѣ ти, смерти, жало? Гдѣ ти, аде, побѣда? Какой славный Побѣдитель!».

Будемъ же твердо идти по пути Христову, исполняя апостольскій завѣтъ: «Болѣе и болѣе старайтесь дѣлать твердымъ ваше званіе и избраніе; такъ поступаая, никогда не преткнетесь, ибо такъ откроется вамъ свободный входъ въ вѣчное Царство Господа нашего и Спасителя Иисуса Христа» (2 Пет. 1:10-11).

И какъ бы трудно ни было намъ на этомъ пути, не будемъ унывать, «зная, что Воскресившій Господа Иисуса воскреситъ черезъ Иисуса и насъ и поставитъ передъ Собою» (2 Кор. 4:14). Это свѣтлое упованіе озаритъ жизнь нашихъ семей, общинъ и народовъ свѣтомъ духовнымъ, и миръ и счастье воцарятся въ нашихъ домахъ, городахъ и всѣхъ.

Нынѣ, когда сердце мое исполнено этой великой радости, всѣхъ васъ, дорогіе мои, сердечно поздравляю съ праздникомъ Святой Пасхи, обращая къ вамъ слова вѣчнаго, идущаго отъ временъ апостольскихъ, передаваемого изъ рода въ родъ привѣтствія:

**ХРИСТОСЪ ВОСКРЕСЕ!
ВОИСТИНУ ВОСКРЕСЕ!**

Спѣшу раздѣлить пасхальное ликованіе со всіми православными людьми міра, съ каждымъ, кто призываетъ въ молитвѣ имя Христово. Пусть наша радость достигнетъ и тѣхъ, кто еще только ищетъ спасительную вѣру и стремится жить съ православными христіанами въ мирѣ и добрососѣдствѣ.

Мир, радость духовную, здравіе, спасеніе и во всемъ благое поспѣшеніе да даруетъ всѣмъ вамъ Воскресшій Христосъ Спаситель!

+ АЛЕКСІЙ,
ПАТРИАРХЪ МОСКОВСКІЙ И ВСЕЯ РУСИ
Пасха Христова
2008 года
Москва

ПАСХАЛЬНОЕ ПОСЛАНІЕ

АРХІЕПИСКОПА СИДНЕЙСКАГО
И АВСТРАЛІЙСКО-
НОВОЗЕЛАНДСКАГО

ИЛАРИОНА,

ВРЕМЕННОГО ЗАМѢСТИТЕЛЯ
ПРЕДСѢДАТЕЛЯ АРХІЕРЕЙСКАГО
СИНОДА РУССКОЙ ЗАРУБЕЖНОЙ ЦЕРКВИ

Преосвященные собратья-архипастыри,
всечестные отцы, дорогіе о Господѣ братья,
сестры и дѣти,

ХРИСТОСЪ ВОСКРЕСЕ!

Съ чувствомъ пасхальнаго ликованія привѣтствую всѣхъ васъ съ великимъ и миротворительнымъ торжествомъ Пасхи Господней, вселяющей въ насъ твердое убѣжденіе въ своемъ безсмертіи и упованіе будущаго блаженнаго воскресенія!

Христосуясь нынѣ съ вами, молитвенно желаю, чтобы радость о Христѣ Воскресшемъ укрѣпила всѣхъ насъ, осиротевшихъ послѣ безвременной кончины Высокопреосвященнѣйшаго Владыки Лавра, въ утро Торжества Православія вмѣстѣ съ апостоломъ Павломъ сказавшаго: «Желаю разрѣшиться и со Христомъ быти» (Филип. 1, 23). Какъ говорится въ Священномъ Писаніи, смерть для человѣка – покой. Поэтому, мы больше не плачемъ безъ вѣры, надежды и пасхальной увѣренности, хотя и плачемъ о разлукѣ; мы знаемъ, что смерть – это временный сонъ, сонъ для тѣла, которое возстанетъ въ послѣдній день исторіи, и время ликованія для освобожденной души.

При убѣжденіи, что послѣ этой кратковременной жизни настанетъ другая вѣчная жизнь, гдѣ Богъ небесной радостью благословитъ и утѣшитъ человѣка, терпеливо переносящаго временныя скорби и страданія, – при такомъ убѣжденіи никакая смерть, никакое несчастье, постигающее человѣка въ жизни, не могутъ быть тяжелы для насъ. Не страшна и самая смерть для человѣка, проникнутаго упованіемъ блаженнаго воскресенія: эта смерть представляется ему путемъ къ желанному соединенію со Христомъ. Среди огненныхъ искушеній, постигающихъ православнаго христіанина, онъ радуется, если страдаетъ со Христомъ, въ непоколебимой увѣренности, что въ явленіи славы Его возрадуется и восторжествуетъ. Притомъ памятованіе будущей жизни и надежда блаженнаго воскресенія служатъ для

человѣка сильнѣйшимъ побужденіемъ и вѣрнымъ средствомъ къ нравственному совершенствованію и духовному преуспѣянію. Если мы будемъ твердо помнить, что отечество наше – на небесахъ, а здѣсь мы – только временные гости, то мы не станемъ жить только для угожденія тѣла, не будемъ исполнять законъ по-внѣшности, быть честными, правдивыми, доброжелательными только изъ временныхъ расчетовъ, но будемъ исполнять свой долгъ служенія Богу и людямъ съ бескорыстіемъ и самоотверженіемъ.

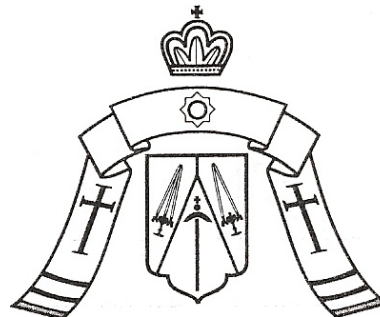
Одинъ изъ древнихъ учителей монашества Авва Евагрій поучаетъ насъ такъ: «Пасха Господня есть переходъ отъ зла къ добру. Принесемъ же и мы Ему какой-нибудь благоуханный даръ». Этотъ даръ выражается въ дѣятельной любви, активномъ добродѣланіи и самопожертвованіи, когда мы отдаемъ свою жизнь Христу, Его Церкви и ближнимъ, когда мы оживляемся, пребывая въ постоянномъ подвигѣ самопринужденія къ добру. Совершенствуясь въ добрѣ, мы сохранимъ въ сердцахъ нашихъ вѣрность Богу, Церкви и ближнимъ, вѣрность блаженной памяти Высокопреосвященнѣйшаго Владыки Лавра, подавшаго намъ примѣръ любви, смиренія и доброты. Поэтому, дорогие о Господѣ отцы, братья, сестры и дѣти, прочно утвердимся на свѣтломъ пути добродѣтели, помня, что, какъ учитъ апостоль Петръ: «Богъ и Отецъ Господа нашего Иисуса Христа, по великой Своей милости, возродилъ насъ воскресеніемъ Иисуса Христа изъ мертвыхъ къ упованію живому, къ наслѣдству нетлѣнному, чистому, неувыдаемому, хранящемуся на небесахъ» (1 Петр. 1, 3-4). Будемъ обращать свой умъ и сердце къ горнему Иерусалиму, небесному отечеству нашему – и мысль о нашемъ высшемъ назначеніи озаритъ темные пути нашей жизни, доставитъ намъ отраду, утѣшеніе и миръ среди печалей вѣка сего.

Снова поздравляю всѣхъ съ этимъ «торжествомъ изъ торжествъ» и отъ души желаю всѣмъ паствѣ Русской Зарубежной Церкви, а также и всѣмъ нашимъ братьямъ и сестрамъ въ Россіи и по всѣму міру, встрѣтить и провести эти всерадостные дни въ добромъ здравіи и благополучіи, въ ощущеніи побѣдной силы Жизни, Правды, Святости, Добра и Божественной Красоты, въ озареніи свѣта Живоноснаго Гроба Господня, просвѣщающаго души наши!

Съ пасхальной радостью о Христѣ Воскресшемъ и просьбой о молитвахъ,

+ ИЛАРИОНЪ,
архіепископъ Сиднейскій и Австралійско-Новозеландскій.
Пасха Христова 2008 г.

<http://www.synod.com/synod/2008/4ahpaschaposl.html>



Пасхальное Посланіе его Преосвященства Кирилла, архіепископа Санъ- Францискаго и Западно- Американскаго

Ⲡⲟⲩⲱⲛⲟⲩⲁ ⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩⲱⲛⲟⲩⲁ
ⲁ ⲞⲈⲰⲰⲞⲩⲁ ⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩⲱⲛⲟⲩⲁ

«Смерти празднуемъ умерщвленіе!» воспѣваетъ Святая Церковь. За смертью Спасителя начались гоненія на Его паству, то вспыхивающія, то утихающія. И ни одинъ православный народъ не миновалъ этихъ гоненій: сонмъ святыхъ мучениковъ, вмѣстѣ со Христомъ одержалъ, по неизреченной Благодати и Произволенію Божію, побѣду надъ самой смертью. Да и у насъ на русской землѣ, какъ извѣстно каждому, въ поколеніяхъ нашихъ родителей, дѣдовъ, прадедовъ, множество явилось мучениковъ, погибшихъ именно за одно: за вотъ эту Пасху Святую, въ которой весь смыслъ нашей вѣры – за право ее праздновать, за убѣжденіе, что именно и исключительно въ Православіи выражается во всей своей полнотѣ духовный обликъ, призваніе и цѣль жизни русскаго челоѣка, наше общее, всенародное послушаніе Христу Богу и Его заповѣдямъ.

Побѣда нашихъ мучениковъ, прошедшихъ кровь за Христа въ двадцатомъ вѣкѣ очевидна: на мѣстѣ гоненій возносятся сегодня эти же самыя молитвы, которыя и мы сохранили на чужбинѣ. Покаяніемъ и Святými Таинствами очищается на нашихъ глазахъ многострадальная Русь, еще недавно – богоотступница, несмотря на то, что по Волѣ и Милости Божіей удалось самымъ стойкимъ изъ вѣрныхъ ее во все годы гоненій сохранить, не смотря на опасность, удивительно многое изъ нашего общего святого православного наслѣдія.

Богу нашему слава! Умилительнѣйшее чудо сбылось въ наше время и насъ, недостойныхъ, сподобилъ Господь стать свидѣтелями его! Смерть умертвися: не только тѣлесная смерть, но и смерть духовная, которая, какъ Господь сказалъ, намного страшнѣе. И вотъ, братія и сестры, въ эту первую Пасху вновь объединившейся Русской Православной Церкви, нашъ въ Бозѣ почившій Высокопреосвященнѣйшій Митрополитъ Лавръ, незримо для насъ въ Царствіи Божіемъ раздѣляетъ ее съ нами. Послѣдній день земной жизни Владыки Лавра совпалъ съ днемъ памяти явленія Державной иконы Матери Божіей, а праведная его кончина съ утромъ Торжества Православія... Этимъ замкнулся печальный циклъ ознаменовавшійся вынужденнымъ отреченіемъ Помазанника Божіего, ввергшій весь православный міръ въ периодъ дробленія, да тяжкихъ духовныхъ испытаній. А 40-й день кончины Владыки Лавра пришелся на Великій Страстной Четвергъ, когда Церковь вспоминаетъ основаніе Самимъ Господомъ Святого Таинства Евхаристіи, читая съ трепетомъ Его слова: «Не о нихъ же только молю, но и о всѣхъ вѣрующихъ въ Меня по слову ихъ, да будутъ всѣ едины, какъ Ты, Отче, во Мнѣ, и Азъ въ Тебѣ... И славу, которую Ты далъ Мнѣ, Азъ далъ имъ: да будутъ едины, яко Мы едины: Азъ въ нихъ и Ты во Мнѣ: да будутъ совершенны воедино» (Іо. 17: 20–26). Вмѣстѣ со Святѣйшимъ Патріархомъ Алексіемъ, приснопамятный Владыка Лавръ постигъ всю полноту заповѣди этой Христовой о Единствѣ Церкви, поставилъ этотъ великій оплотъ Православія, Таинство Единенія, какъ камень во главу угла, совершилъ подвигъ и одержалъ побѣду надъ поверхностнымъ сужденіемъ нѣкихъ тщедушныхъ силъ. Такимъ образомъ, до конца выполнивъ свой монашескій обѣтъ послушанія Христу – который, кстати, распространяется не только на монашествующихъ, но на всѣхъ истинныхъ христіанъ – Владыка Лавръ, Миротворецъ, удостоился кончины праведника, ознаменованной Господомъ сими удивительными обстоятельствами. Вѣчная ему Память! «Созижду Церковь Мою и врата ада не одолѣютъ Еѣ!» Обѣщаль сие Господь и сбылось оно. Дивна дѣла Твоя Господи, вся Премудростию сотворилъ еси! Возликуемъ же, братія и сестры, вмѣстѣ со всѣми нашими родными по вѣрѣ и духу православными во всемъ мірѣ, и въ Царствіи Божіемъ! «Смерти празднуемъ умерщвленіе: иного житія, вѣчнаго, начало!» «Сей День, Егоже сотвори Господь, возрадуемся и возвеселимся въ оны!» Аминь.

† Архієпископъ КИРИЛЛЪ

Пасха 2008 г.

www.wadiocese.com/printerfriendly.php?id=442_0_2_0

PASCHAL MESSAGE

of His Holiness, Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia

to the Archpastors, Pastors, Monastics and All Faithful Children of the Russian Orthodox Church

Come, O people, let us hymn the Saviour's resurrection on the third day, through which we have been released from the indestructible bonds of hades and all received incorruption and life, crying aloud: O thou who wast crucified, buried and rose again, save us through thy resurrection, O thou alone who lovest mankind!

*Stanza for Lord, I have cried... for Vespers of
Tuesday of Bright Week*

Beloved in the risen Christ Your Graces the archpastors, God-loving presbyters, deacons, honourable monks and nuns, pious Orthodox laymen and women – faithful children of the Church!

From the depths of my heart I congratulate all of you, my dear ones, on

Christ's bright resurrection – the most joyful feast for Orthodox Christians. Again our churches are replete with Paschal rejoicing. Again and again we relive the great mystery of the Redemption that has liberated those who follow Christ from the dominion of sin and death. As St Peter the Apostle says, our Lord and Saviour who himself 'bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness' (1 Pet 2:24).

How great is God's love for us! He has not abandoned those who have abandoned him. By his suffering and death he has purified those who have deviated from him in choosing life according to their own desires. He has opened up the way of repentance and spiritual rebirth to those worn down by sin - the way to Life eternal. Let us give thanks to the Lord for his mercy and love for humanity. Let us give thanks as loving children who can take refuge from calamity and danger in the Father's House.

Since ancient times Christians have understood Pascha to be a transition, a Passover. 'The Passover, the Passover of the Lord! From death unto life, and from earth unto heaven hath Christ our God brought us over, singing a song of victory!' the Holy Church sings today. According to our faith and our boldness, according to our love towards Christ and each other we are granted a transition from death to eternal being, from slavery to sin to the freedom of fulfillment of God's will.

Whole nations spiritually sustained by our Holy Church accomplish this saving transition too. From the darkness of unbelief they are approaching the light of Christ in being spiritually reborn and renewed. There are in our homeland and beyond its borders in the great Russian diaspora more and more people who have in Christ 'life... in abundance' (Jn 10:10), which means genuinely

happy people enjoying the truth of the fullness of life.

Yes, we still have to labour much in Christ's vineyard. Yet your spreading of the Word and good deeds, my beloved ones, have brought forth fruit a hundredfold and many of you have worthily heard the Lord's words, 'Well done, good and faithful servant: you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master' (Mt 25:21)

The focal point of our faith, of our witness to the world, of our whole life is the good news of Christ's resurrection. Paschal joy was the sole spiritual condition of our saints. St. Seraphim of Sarov greeted all those who approached him with the words: 'My joy, Christ is risen!' St. John of Kronstadt, the hundred and eightieth anniversary of whose birth and hundredth anniversary of whose blessed repose we celebrate this current year, was known by the people as the 'Paschal Father.' 'I love to gaze upon,' he wrote in his diary, 'the image of the risen Giver of Life holding the cross banner, this symbol of victory over death and the one who has the power of death – the devil. O death, where is thy sting? O hades, where is thy victory? How glorious is the Victor!'

Let us then tread yet more firmly the way of Christ, fulfilling the apostles' commandment, 'Therefore, brethren, be the more zealous to confirm your call and election, for if you do this you will never fall; so there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Pet 1:10-11). And no matter how difficult we find it along this path, let us not fall into despondency, 'knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise up us also with Jesus and bring with you into his presence' (2 Cor 4:14). This radiant hope will illumine the lives of our families, communities and peoples with a spiritual light, and both peace and happiness will reign in our homes, cities and towns.

Today, as my heart is full with this great joy, I congratulate all of you, my dear ones, on the feast of Holy Pascha, addressing you with the eternal words of the greeting from apostolic times, passed on from generation to generation:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

HE IS RISEN INDEED!

I hasten to share the Paschal rejoicing with all Orthodox peoples of the world, with each person who calls upon the name of Christ in prayer. May our joy touch those who are but seeking saving faith and striving to live with Orthodox Christians in peace and goodneighbourliness.

May the risen Christ our Saviour grant to all of us peace, spiritual joy, health, salvation and furtherance in all good things.

+ALEXY
Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

Pascha, 2008, Moscow

The Paschal Epistle of Archbishop Hilarion of Sydney, Australia and New Zealand, Deputy of the President of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

Most Reverend brother-archpastors, all-honorable fathers, beloved-in-the-Lord brothers, sisters and children,

CHRIST IS RISEN!

With the overwhelming feeling of Paschal jubilation I greet all of you with the great and salvific feast of the Lord's Pascha, which instills in us the firm conviction of our immortality and hope of future blessed resurrection!

In exchanging the Paschal kiss with you today, I prayerfully desire that the joy of the Risen Christ strengthen all of us, since we have been orphaned following the untimely repose of His Eminence Metropolitan Laurus, who in the morning of the Triumph of Orthodoxy pronounced in spirit together with the Apostle Paul: "My desire is to part and be with Christ" (Philippians 1:23). As written in the Holy Scriptures, death for a person is repose. Though we weep over the parting, our sorrow is now filled with faith, hope and the Paschal reality; we know that death is a temporary slumber, a slumber for the body which will arise on the last day of history, and a time of rejoicing for the liberated righteous soul.

Since we have the firm conviction that after this brief life comes another, eternal life, where God will bless us with heavenly joy and will comfort those who have patiently borne temporal sorrows and sufferings, no manner of death or misfortune which comes our way can be too burdensome. Death itself is not fearful to a person who has complete hope in blessed resurrection: death for him is the path to the longed-for union with Christ. Amidst the fiery temptations which assail an Orthodox Christian, the Christian rejoices in suffering with Christ, being steadfastly assured that in the appearance of Christ in His glory, he will rejoice and be triumphant. Remembrance of the future life and hope of blessed resurrection serve as strong incentives and sure means towards moral perfection and spiritual achievement. If we remember well that our homeland is in heaven, while here we are only temporary guests, we will cease liv-

ing only for our bodily pleasure. We will cease observing the commandments only outwardly, being honest, truthful, or benevolent solely out of temporal calculations, but will fulfill our duty of serving God and neighbor unselfishly and without seeking recompense.

One of the ancient teachers of monasticism, Abba Evagrius, offers us the following admonition: “The Passover [Pascha] of the Lord is the passing from evil to good. Let us also bring Him some God-pleasing gift.” This gift can take the form of active love, active works of charity and self-sacrifice, when we dedicate our life to Christ, His Church and our neighbor, and gaining inspiration, maintaining constant zeal for the struggle to do good. In perfecting ourselves in virtue, we will be able to preserve in our hearts faithfulness to God, the Church and those around us, as well as dedication to the blessed memory of His Eminence Metropolitan Laurus, who gave us an example of love, humility and goodness.

Therefore, beloved-in-the-Lord fellow archpastors, reverend fathers, brothers, sisters and children, let us establish ourselves firmly on the radiant path of virtue, remembering the words of the Apostle Peter: “blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you (1 Peter 1:3-4). Let us turn our minds and hearts to the heavenly Jerusalem, our heavenly homeland—and the thought of our high calling will enlighten the dark paths of our life, grant us consolation and peace amid the sorrows of this world and bring us joy and delight.

Once again I congratulate all of you with this “Feast of feasts,” and sincerely desire that the flock of the Russian Church Abroad, as well as our brothers and sisters in Russia and in all the world, enjoy these most wondrous days in good health and well-being, guarded by the victorious power of the Life, Righteousness, Holiness, Goodness and Divine Beauty radiating from the Life-giving Tomb of the Lord, the Enlightener of our souls!

With Paschal joy in the Risen Christ and the request for your holy prayers,

+Hilarion

Archbishop of Sydney, Australia and New Zealand
Christ’s Pascha 2008

http://www.synod.com/synod/eng2008/4print_enahpaschaposl.html

Paschal Epistle of His Eminence Kyrill, Archbishop of San Francisco and Western America

Christ is Risen Indeed He is Risen

«The slaying of Death we do celebrate!» exults the Holy Church. Our Saviour’s death was followed by persecutions against His flock, at times flaring up, at times dying down. Not a single Orthodox nation has been spared these persecutions: together with Christ, a multitude of holy martyrs, through the unutterable Grace and Will of God, experienced this triumph over Death, through death. And in our own Russian land, as each of us knows, in the generations of our fathers and forefathers, a great number of martyrs was revealed, dying for just one thing: for this, our Holy Pascha, which holds all the meaning of our faith: for the right to celebrate it; for the conviction, that only and exclusively in the summons to Orthodoxy does the entire spiritual person find purpose and fulfilment; that this Orthodoxy expresses most fully, most suitably our shared obedience as a people to Christ our God, and to His commandments.

The victory of our martyrs who shed their blood for Christ in the 20th century is self-evident: in the places of martyrdom, we hear today these selfsame prayers rise up to God, that we ourselves preserved in foreign lands. Before our very eyes, Russia becomes, through penance and the Sacraments, re-sanctified by God: this Russia that has suffered much, this Russia that we remember having turned away from God – even if, through the Will and Mercy of God, some of the strongest of her faithful did manage, in defiance of fierce persecution, in the face of real danger, to preserve a remarkably great amount of our common holy Orthodox heritage.

Glory be to God! For what we see is a compelling, deeply moving miracle that has come to pass in our own times, and we, unworthy though we may be, have been granted by God the joy of witnessing such extraordinary events! Death has been slain: not only the death of the body, but the spiritual death of human souls, which, as our Lord said, is infinitely worse. And so, brothers and sisters, we reach this first Pascha of our newly reunified Russian Orthodox Church, as our own Metropolitan Laurus, who has reposed in God,

shares it with us, invisibly, in the Kingdom of Heaven. The last day of Vladyka Lavr's earthly life coincided with the day the Church marks the finding of the Sovereign Mother of God ikon; his righteous end came on the morning of the Sunday of Orthodoxy Triumphant... Thus, on this Pascha, we mark the closing of a grievous cycle whose start was signalled by the forced abdication of God's Anointed, the martyred Orthodox Emperor Nicholas II. It was a cycle of persecution and fragmentation, as well as severe spiritual testing, for all the Orthodox world, not just for its Russian part. And the 40th day after Vladyka Lavr's repose fell on Holy Thursday, when the Church remembers our Lord's establishment of the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and reads these, His words, with loving awe: «Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe in Me because of their words, that they all may be one: as Thou, Father, are in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be One in Us... And the glory which Thou gavest me, I give them, that they may be One, even as We are One: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in One» (John 17: 20-26). Together with His Holiness Patriarch Alexei, Vladyka Lavr fully grasped the depths of this commandment of Christ concerning the Unity of the Church; together they took this great principle of Orthodoxy, the Sacramental Mystery of Unity, as a cornerstone to

be put back in its proper place; the heroic spiritual feat was undertaken and successfully brought about, thereby triumphing over the superficial, not Christ-like, biases of certain weak souls. Thus, having faithfully met the obligations of his chief monastic vow of perfect obedience to Christ – an obligation which, we must remember, applies not only to monastics, but to all true Christians – Vladyka Lavr, the Peacemaker, was made worthy of the death of a righteous saint, as God has seen fit to reveal in these extraordinary convergences. May his memory be eternal! «I shall create a Church of My Own and the gates of hell shall be powerless against Her!» The Lord so promised, and it has been fulfilled. Wondrous are Thy works, O Lord, for by Thy Wisdom didst Thou create all! Let us rejoice, therefore, brothers and sisters, together with all our Orthodox family, with those who know kinship to us in Faith and Spirit, both in the world and in God's Kingdom! «The slaying of Death we do celebrate: and the start of a new, a different life: eternal!» «This is the Day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it!» Amen.

† *Archbishop KYRILL*
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