



**IRINEJ**

BY THE GRACE OF GOD  
BISHOP OF EASTERN AMERICA  
THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Most beloved clergy and monastics, sons and daughters,  
faithful children of the Diocese of Eastern America of our most holy Church,  
from a paternal heart overflowing with Paschal joy,  
We greet you on this most radiant and most joyous Feast,  
The Feast of Feasts – the Resurrection of Christ from the dead,  
with the all joyous and ancient Christian greeting:

**CHRIST IS RISEN!  
BRINGING JOY – DISPELLING GRIEF!**

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice!  
Let all men know your forbearance: The Lord is at hand. . .  
And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,  
will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.  
(Philip. 4:4-5,7)*

And truly, most beloved, *rejoice in the Lord always*, for life once again reigns and death no longer rules! Christ is risen and grief is displaced! Christ – The Life and Resurrection, The Life and Source of our lives, *is at hand*. By His life, He hastens to meet us! And an encounter with Him is an encounter with the Source, with Him who transcends all reason and human wisdom, with Him Who *will keep your hearts and your minds in Himself*, with Him through Whom all is filled with the light of Resurrection and God's gift of life!

The One Who is risen today from the dead, established in Himself the indivisible community of Divine love and truth! So also, we, like Saint Mary Magdalene, the first witness of Living Christ, are today invited to overcome ourselves, to become witnesses of the dying of our weaknesses and heralds of the resurrection of our Christian dignity! Because in selfishness lies sin, which is far from and outside the framework of the Divine community of love. That is why, most beloved, the Lord today invites us not to distance ourselves from this community. Today, the Risen and Living Christ, invites us to the joy of life and the holiness of blameless living, into the eternal community of love together with all those who suffer and sorrow!

Therefore, beloved, like those wonderful myrrh-bearing women, let us be quick and hasten to encounter others, for *the Lord is risen and fills everything with fragrance*, as inspired by the words of the contemporary Athonite Elder Vassilios of Iveron, who continues: *What is required is the boldness, the daringness of faith. This happened to the myrrh-bearing women. With an overflowing love for their Teacher, what could they do? They took myrrh to anoint their Teacher Who had died.*

*And so the result was that they experienced the myrrh of the Resurrection—they bore the myrrh which overcomes death.*

*“The angel told them, ‘The Lord is risen; go tell the disciples and Peter.’ Coming out of the tomb they said nothing to anyone for they were afraid” (Mk 16:6–8). The Elder continues by interpreting: Saying that they said nothing to anyone means that they said everything to everyone. Saying that they were afraid means they did not in any way want to give a false impression of what they had seen or experienced. For whoever accepts this experience of the Resurrection does not speak, and yet He speaks continuously, through His words and His silence.*

Neither an individual alone, nor any community as a whole, can exist without one's own fortification in the Person of Christ. This gives life meaning, a new sense of direction, and a new vertical axis. This is a new dimension of life for humanity and an endless horizon of salvation. His words are the indicator and direction in this and in the other world. For He overcame death and opened unto us the gate of a day without dusk! Only in Him and in His community of love can a person discover their own personhood and find the meaning of their life. For through Him, who is both Person and community, *everything is filled with fragrance!*

Therefore, *rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice!* And reiterating wholeheartedly: *the Lord is at hand*, We greet you paternally and joyfully, with the triumphant words and ceaseless Paschal exclamation:

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

Given in New York, at Pascha in the year 2018.

YOUR FERVENT INTERCESSOR BEFORE THE RISEN CHRIST,

BISHOP OF EASTERN AMERICA  
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