МОНРЕАЛЬСКАЯ И КАНАДСКАЯ ЕПАРХІЯ
Русской Православной Церкви Заграницей

Diocèse de Montréal et du Canada • L'Église Russe Orthodoxe Hors Frontières
Diocese of Montreal and Canada • Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

ЕПАРХІАЛЬНАЯ КАНЦЕЛЯРІЯ
DIOCESAN CHANCELLERY

EASTER EPISTLE

To the clergy and God-saved flock of the Chicago and Mid-America Diocese

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ!

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Of all the feasts that our Lord has given to His Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, the Feast of the Pascha of the Lord is the most joyous, the most solemn, the one closest to our hearts. But this very feast is also the most mysterious one, the one that our minds find most difficult to comprehend. We are not granted the earthly knowledge of the way in which Christ's most glorious Resurrection in the flesh took place. So we, as Holy Hierarch Innocent of Kherson said, can only venerate the signs of the glory of God that appeared over the tomb of the Author and Finisher of our salvation. Yet the signs of the glory of God are manifestly inscribed in our hearts, and we never fail to feel it.

Once again we are celebrating the Feast of Eternal Life in a time when, in the words of Holy Hierarch Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow and Confessor (the centenary of whose blessed repose we mark this year), "the cannons of death are roaring in mutual internecine battle" in the lands of Holy Rus. It was 1917 when Saint Tikhon said this. But both before that year and long after, our forefathers approached the day of the Resurrection of Christ in times of calamity for our historical Motherland. Therefore, beloved brothers and sisters, let us listen diligently to the wonderful words of the Easter service: "Now all things been filled with light – heaven and earth, and the nether regions. Let all creation, therefore, celebrate the rising of Christ, wherein it hath been established." The light of the Resurrection shines also upon hell, and we see this in the holy icons that depict the Risen Lord Jesus. The gates of hell were opened on the day of the Glorious Resurrection of Christ, and they remain open forever for those who want to enter therein.

A touching legend from the time of Old Rus tells us that even the torments of hell are eased near the Feast of the Lord's Pascha, as sinners in the nether world are given respite from them between Holy Thursday and Pentecost. Such is the essence of the greatest, the most decisive event in the world – the Resurrection of Christ, which not only brought the creature closer to the Creator and people closer to God, but also with its power of grace gathered the faithful together into the Church of Christ. The Feast of the Lord's Pascha reminds us of this, as those who celebrate this day with a pure heart are filled with mutual forgiveness, because their whole being is being embraced by the love of the Risen Christ: "... Let us say, o brethren, even unto those who hate us: Let us forgive all things at the Resurrection"**.**

Truly He is Risen!

+ Archbishop Gabriel

Gabriel
Archbishop of Montreal and Canada

Lord's Pascha, 2025