

**PASCHAL EPISTLE
OF HIS EMINENCE HILARION,**

**Metropolitan of Eastern America and New York,
First Hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia**

I extend my heartfelt greetings to my eminent brother archpastors, beloved-in-the-Lord reverend fathers, brothers and sisters, on this most radiant of feasts, the Resurrection of Christ from the dead!

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Pascha is the only night in the year, a night like no other, which brings down upon the earth great heavenly joy, making it the birthright of all people who greet and celebrate this “feast day of feast days”!

Whoever rejoices at the Resurrection of Christ palpably senses Christ Himself, and whoever senses Christ is together with Christ, and is within Christ. This proximity to Christ is nothing less than the sweetest goal of our lives. And there is no question that we can attain this goal! Christ prepares the way that we may approach Him. He is with us. Undoubtedly, each and every one of us has experienced moments of heartfelt communion with Him. Especially vividly, joyously and brightly do we feel this proximity, this beauty, this power and this love of God during the holiday of the glorious Resurrection of Christ. Our childlike glee over the Resurrection of the Savior can be so powerful that it can remain vivid even into our old age. It is up to us, then, to preserve, to strengthen and to develop this Paschal joy within our spiritual lives. Having partaken of this joy of the Divine in our childhood, we have been unable--out of our own ignorance—to preserve this joy, we have not kept close to its sweetness, but instead swerved away to chase other joys and dreams.

Lifting our thoughts to the Life-Bearing Sepulcher of the Lord and our Resurrected Christ, we pray for the reign of this omnipotent joy in the hearts of all the people of Ukraine, of Syria, and of our Church throughout the world. Brothers and sisters, if we actively seek this joy of Christ and of our personal meeting with the Resurrected Christ in our inner lives, then we shall know that being with Him is not terrifying, it is not burdensome; all that we do for this temporal life is fleeting and fading, but whatever we do for eternity shall remain with us forever.

“And they said one to another, did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?” (Luke 24:32), said Luke and Cleopas when the Life-Giver revealed Himself to them during the breaking of the bread. Based on the testimony of eyewitnesses present at the Paschal matins

performed by St John (Maximovich, +1966), his face literally shone during the night-time service, and the fervor of his heart ignited everyone with the joy of the Resurrected Christ. His face shone with faith and love as he waved the censer with the Paschal triple candles, circling the church and exclaiming "Christ is Risen!" Glory be to God, even today this great hierarch of the Russian diaspora remains uncorrupt in the cathedral of San Francisco, truly living in spirit and praying for us all. The time has now come for us to plead for the prayers of St John so that the forthcoming Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and the 13th All-Diaspora Russian Orthodox Youth Conference bring forth worthy and fruitful results, for they will coincide with the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of his canonization by the Church. On Sunday, June 29, Hieromonk Nicholas (Olhovsky) will be consecrated Bishop of Manhattan. On this day, the miracle-working Kursk-Root Icon of the Mother of God "of the Sign" will be present.

By the prayers of our Most-Pure Hodigitria (Protectress) and of St John, this holy man of Christ, may our Church life be well established and strengthened, as well as the efforts of our new laborers in the harvest-fields of Christ.

Truly is Christ God, our Chief Pastor, Risen!

With Paschal joy in the Risen Christ, and requesting your prayers,

+ Hilarion

Metropolitan Hilarion of Eastern America and New York,
First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.



Pascha of the Lord 2014.