

Bulgarian Patriarchate: Patriarchal And Synodical Paschal Epistle



Beloved in the Lord children of our Holy Church,

The wondrous news about the victory of Christ is still spread throughout the whole Universe today, in order to warm our hearts and to fill our souls with a joy that can be compared with no other joy because again the plentitude of the Church is triumphant:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Christ is risen and there is no death anymore! Christ is risen and life is established!
Christ is risen and the whole creation is rejoicing!

The sin of our forefathers is erased, the ancient curse is raised and the locked for ages gates of the Heavenly Kingdom are opened again for anyone who confesses the Lord and His salvific for the mankind deed with faith, hope and God-imitating love. “For”, as St. Paul the Apostle says, “if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in the same way God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus” (1 Thess. 4:14). “He [God] will wipe away every tear” and faith will be credited to anyone who believes “in Him Who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, [...] delivered up for our sins, and was raised for our justification” (Rev. 21:4; Rom. 4:24-25). Our filiality to God is restored and we are not servants to the sin anymore, but we are children of light now, called for sanctity and eternal life (see Rom. 6:22; Eph. 5:8).

And all this became possible because God Himself entered into the world and into the human history, undertaking with divine humility the once fallen image and completeness of human nature in order to raise it again to its initial purity and innocence. To sanctify it and to cleanse it from the damages of sin and to glorify it and, glorified in such a way, to raise it to the Heavens, as in this way to do the will of the Heavenly Father, for which Christ witnesses and says: “This is the will of my Father who sent me: that of all he has given me, I should lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. [...] everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and this one I will raise up on the last day” (John 6:39-40). The stake for this resurrection of ours, however, is the very Resurrection of Christ, as also the Apostle clarified in his joy: “But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead! He did become the first fruits of those who are asleep” (1 Cor. 15:20). Because “if the first fruit is holy, so is the whole batch. If the root is holy, so are the branches” (Rom. 11:16). And these branches are all of us, the faithful to Christ, witnesses in every time and in every place to His glorious Resurrection.

Poor is the human speech and the words are not enough with which to express the plentitude of this joy that fills us on the Day of Resurrection. The inaccessible for the mind, however, is revealed to the human heart, which today, triumphing, still exults: “It is the Day of Resurrection! [...] Pascha! The Lord’s Pascha! ” (Eirmos of Ode 1 from the Pascal Canon). “A new and holy Pascha, [...] a mystical Pascha. Pascha worthy of veneration, a Pascha which is Christ, the Redeemer: a blameless Pascha, a great Pascha; a Pascha of the faithful; a Pascha which has opened for us the gates of Paradise; [...] which sanctifies all the faithful” (from the Paschal Stichera). This Pascha we still celebrate today, joining the joy of the whole creation,

for the renewal of which Christ came down to the world and offered Himself as a holy and immaculate sacrifice, a sacrifice “for the life of the world” (John 6:51), so that we may have life and have it “in abundance” (John 10:10).

Brothers and sisters,

Triumphing with the joy of Christ’s Resurrection, let us always be in his light and always to be bearers of this light – witnesses and apostles of Christ, who with their life and deeds today still proclaim the good news to everyone about the victory of Christ and about the light of life that rose in the Paschal morning. Let every word and action of ours be a confirmation of this salvific Gospel message and witness to it, because this is our vocation: to sanctify and to transform ourselves and to spread the wondrous light of the Resurrection having shone on the third day from the empty tomb, because that is why Christ came, “to shine on those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death; to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1:79).

Let us be messengers of the joyous news of the Resurrection and bearers of God’s peace and God’s all-forgiving love, in which the Apostle advises us to vest ourselves and which he calls “the bond of perfection” (Col. 3:14). To everyone “let us say: ‘Brethren!’ [...] and let us forgive all things on the Resurrection” (from the Paschal Stechira). Because the sacrifice of Christ was offered for everyone and the salvific fruits of Christ’s victory over the evil and death are fruits of “the true light that enlightens everyone [...] coming into the world” (John 1:9). This light today shines upon every one of us and the whole world and it is the one that should shine also from ourselves, so that through us our Father who is in heaven to be glorified (see Matt. 5:16).

As we are greeting with the joy of the Christ’s Resurrection all faithful children of our Orthodox Church – those who are living within our Motherland as well as all those who are living far away from its confines – we wish to everyone peace and light in the soul and in the heart, “the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18), luminous Paschal joy and unity in faith and in our hope, because we all are one body and we are called to one hope (see Eph. 4:4) – “... and also to the hope of eternal life, which God who cannot lie promised before the age began” (Titus 1:2).

May to all of us be the Grace and Peace from our Lord Jesus Christ Who has risen from the dead!

CHRIST IS RISEN!

HEAD OF THE HOLY SYNOD

† NEOPHYTE

PATRIARCH OF BULGARIA

METROPOLITAN OF SOFIA

MEMBERS OF THE HOLY SYNOD:

† METROPOLITAN IOANIKIY OF SLIVEN

† METROPOLITAN JOSEPH OF USA, CANADA AND AUSTRALIA

† METROPOLITAN GRIGORIY OF VELIKO TARNOVO

† METROPOLITAN IGNATIY OF PLEVEN

† METROPOLITAN GAVRIIL OF LOVECH

† METROPOLITAN NIKOLAY OF PLOVDIV

† METROPOLITAN AMVROSIY OF DOROSTOL

† METROPOLITAN ANTONIY OF WESTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE

† METROPOLITAN JOHN OF VARNA AND VELICKY PRESLAV

† METROPOLITAN SERAPHIM OF NEVROKOP

† METROPOLITAN NAUM OF ROUSSE

† METROPOLITAN CYPRIAN OF STARA ZAGORA

† METROPOLITAN GRIGORIY OF VRATSA

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— Source: [Bulgarian Patriarchate](#)