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

Most beloved clergy and monastics, sons and daughters,
faithful children of our God-protected Eastern American Diocese of our Holy Church!
We greet you on this most radiant and most joyous Feast of Feasts –
Christ's Resurrection from the dead, with the all-glorious,
ever resounding and victorious Paschal salutation:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

With a paternal heart bursting with inexpressible joy, We now join in proclaiming the triumph of life and light over death and darkness, profoundly inspired by the Resurrection of Christ, as we sing:

*Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ,
let us worship the Holy Lord Jesus, the only sinless one.
We venerate Your Cross, O Christ,
and we praise and glorify Your holy Resurrection...
Come, all you faithful, let us venerate Christ's holy Resurrection.
For behold through the Cross joy has come into all the world.
Let us ever bless the Lord, praising His Resurrection.
For by enduring the Cross for us, He has destroyed death by death.*
(Paschal Canon)

This year, along our collective journey through Great and Holy Lent, we experienced a not-too-often seen phenomenon of nature – the total eclipse of the sun! For some, this rare experience was awe-inspiring and magnificent, for the faithful in Christ it was yet another expression of love, grace and the greatness of the Creator of the universe and the Lord of all creation. For He has graciously ordained to fix the order and movement of celestial bodies ([Gen. 1:14-18](#)). Yet, others were overcome with fear and anxiety, wondering what teleological implication this heavenly marvel could have, wherein the light of day was turned into a fleeting experience of the darkness of night.

Precisely, that same wonder of the Lord, dear brothers and sisters, occurred on Holy and Great Friday, “when the sun was darkened, unable to bear the sight of God outraged” ([Antiphon X-Good Friday Matins](#)). For the Lord said through a Prophet of Old: “I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight” ([Amos 8:9](#)). And as the darkness overcame the light of the sun, so also this great day became different from the rest, as the Sun of Righteousness, nailed to wood of the Cross, became the Pascha of the Lord – our salvation! Thereby, this striking motif is most indispensable in our Orthodox iconography of the Crucifixion, with anthropomorphic images of the Sun and the Moon – the light of day and the reflected light of night.

We, Orthodox Christians, by human intuition understand that we are not left destitute, for we are profoundly aware that *through the Cross, joy has come into all the world*. And the awareness of that eternal truth is ennobled by the brilliance of the Triduum Pascha of Christ – Who was crucified for us, buried and Resurrected on the third day! With His Resurrection, we celebrate the end of death’s grip over us, for *He has destroyed death by death*. Although death is inevitable, today we cease being its hostages. Today, we stand knocking at the Gates of Paradise, singing the Resurrection hymn: “Let us arise in the deep dawn and, instead of myrrh, offer a hymn to the Lord, and we shall behold Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, Who causes life to dawn for all” ([Paschal Canon-Ode 5 Eirmos](#)).

It is a fact that our deepest frustrations, our most restless feelings, worries, troubles, and anxieties are closely related to the consciousness of our mortality. Today, with this great triumph of life, we celebrate their conclusive end. On this glorious “Day of the Never-setting Sun” (c.f., [Holy Saturday Canon-Ode 5 Eirmos](#)), the penetrating rays of Christ’s Resurrection transfigure our sorrow into joy, our death in life! This is the Day of Days – the “Day which the Lord has made”, the day in which we “rejoice and are glad in it” ([Ps. 118:24](#)). It is the Feast of Feasts, the Pascha of the Lord – the Day of Resurrection. St. Dionysius of Alexandria ([248–264 AD](#)) once stated: “Other people would not think this a time for festival. Yet, far from being a time of distress, it is a time of unimaginable joy”.

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, let us allow the fullness of joy and peace – the joy of the Resurrection of Christ, to fully embrace us. Let all doubt be cast aside and all worries dissipate. For today Christ has defeated sin and death once and for all. As such, *let us praise and glorify His holy Resurrection*, exclaiming from all our heart and with resounding voice:

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

Given at Pascha, in the Year 2024.

YOUR FERVENT INTERCESSOR BEFORE THE RISEN LORD,

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