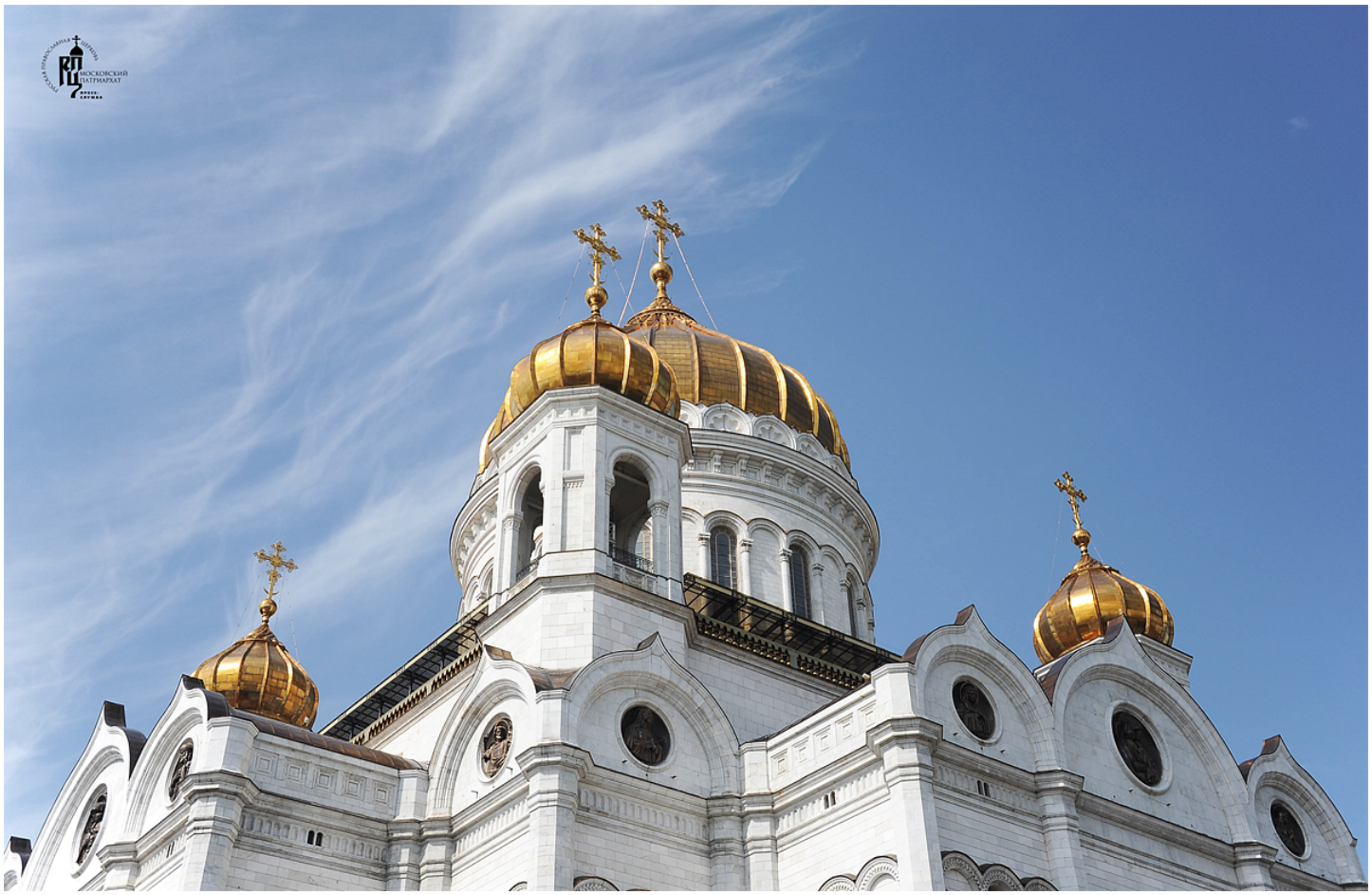
THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Department for External Church Relations

Paschal Message from Patriarch KIRILL of Moscow and All Russia



Paschal Message

from Patriarch KIRILL of Moscow and All Russia

to Archpastors, Pastors, Deacons, Monastics

and All Faithful Children of the Russian Orthodox Church

Beloved in the Lord archpastors, all-honourable presbyters and deacons,

God-loving monks and nuns, dear brothers and sisters,

I address all of you, Orthodox Christians living in many countries of the world, who are now in churches or praying in your homes, to extend greetings to you on the great feast of Holy Pascha with my heart full of spiritual joy, and to proclaim victoriously in accord with the ancient tradition:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

It is in these very words that the Holy Church has been triumphantly proclaiming the glad tidings of the God-given salvation for two thousand years. In them is the fire of our faith, the strength of love, the foundation of hope, the cornerstone of the Church, the heart of the New Testament message to the world, the unfading light of enlightenment and the source of inspiration, the core of Christian life and our entire future.

Whatever happens in our ever-changing, sometimes restless and conflict-torn world, whatever hardships and ordeals befall us, we know, believe and preach that the Paschal joy in the Risen Saviour remains unfailing and all-victorious.

What is the meaning of this greatest Christian feast? In the name of what and why did the Son of God come down to earth, take the form of a servant (Phil 2:7), endure sufferings, being crucified on the cross, and rise from the dead? And what do we, people of the 21st century, have to do in order to become true partakers and heirs of Christ's victory over death?

The Church gives us answers to these questions, bearing witness that through the Son of God Who was incarnate of the Most Blessed Virgin hell is led captive, Adam is recalled from the dead, the curse is made void, Eve is set free, death is slain, and we are endowed with life (Sunday Theotokion, Stichera at the Praises, tone 2). Truly, the Lord quickens us by His love, delivers us from the fear of death and corruption, heals our spiritual and bodily infirmities, supports us in hardships and trials, comforts in afflictions and sorrows, and helps us follow the path of salvation leading to eternal life when God will

wipe away every tear from [people's] eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more (Rev 21:4).

Having performed the feat of redemption, through His sacrifice on the cross and glorious Resurrection the Lord opened the gates of heaven to everyone. From then on and to this day, every human being is given an opportunity to wholeheartedly embrace Christ as the true God and Saviour Who grants blessed strength for leading a life of righteousness and actively participating in the transfiguration of the world.

Reflecting on the feast of Easter, Saint Nicholas of Serbia, a prominent theologian of the past century, wrote, Christ is risen – it means that life is stronger than death. Christ is risen – it means that good is stronger than evil. Christ is risen – it means that all difficulties in life are resolved (Thoughts on Good and Evil). And this Paschal joy, which is the joy of communion with God and of building up a new life (Rom 6:4) on the basis of goodness and justice, touches the hearts of millions of Christians, inspiring them to do works of charity and mercy, helping to overcome adversities, comforting them in ordeals, giving hope to the desperate and strengthening the faint-hearted.

On the radiant feast of Pascha our special prayers are offered to God for people in combat zones. We as Christians cannot remain indifferent to the troubles and hardships of our brothers and sisters whose hearts are seared by the fire of internecine strife. So we lift up our fervent supplications unto the Lord that by His mercy and loving-kindness He may heal bodily and, above all else, spiritual wounds, give comfort in every sorrow and grant a lasting and just peace to the brotherly peoples that came from one Dnieper baptismal font.

The earthly life of the Saviour was full of labour and sacrificial love for people, and we are called to become like Him in serving our neighbours, since any, even the smallest virtue, every effort to overcome our own selfishness for the sake of another person, draws us closer to God – the Source of life and immortality – and therefore makes us happier.

May the Risen Lord Who in accord with His truthful promise abides with His followers even unto the end

of the world (Mt 28:20) vouchsafe us, sinful and infirm, but thirsting for righteousness and seeking salvation, to inherit the blessed life after we complete our earthly journey, so that in the Heavenly mansions prepared… from the foundation of the world (Mt 25:34) we together with saints reign in His eternal glory (St Ambrose of Milan, Hymn “We Praise Thee, O God”). This joyful anticipation of the Kingdom of love to come, of God being everything to every one (1 Cor 15:28) is what the Church preaches at all times and even more so in the radiant Easter season.

Let us hearken to the salvific voice of the Church calling us through the Holy Apostle Paul to celebrate Pascha not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Cor 5:8). Let us heed and try to live according to the Divine commandments, by the truth of the Gospel, our good deeds and our whole life bearing witness before those near and those far away that Christ is risen indeed, unto Whom are due all glory, honour and worship unto the ages of ages. Amen.

+KIRILL

PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA

Easter

2023

Patriarchal message is also available in other languages:

Arabic

Cebuano

French

German

Greek

Indonesian

Italian

Khmer

Korean

Russian

Simplified Chinese

Tagalog

Thai

Traditional Chinese

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