Paschal Message of His Holiness Patriarch KIRILL of Moscow and All Russia to the Archpastors, Pastors, Monastics and All Faithful Children of the Russian Orthodox Church

My dear co-brothers the archpastors, all-honourable fathers presbyters, God-loving deacons, pious monks and nuns, brothers and sisters!

On the radiant and world-saving feast of the Lord's Resurrection I am glad in my heart to greet you with the inspired and unchanging great words of the Paschal good news:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

On this light-bearing night we abide in a life-affirming common exultation, for the event, which took place many centuries ago near Jerusalem of old, bears a direct relation to each one of us. Moreover, Christ's Resurrection possesses a truly universal meaning, for through it the Saviour bestowed the chance of obtaining gracious unity with God to each person who responds to his call: 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world' (Mt. 25:34).

For this reason we now cry aloud with St. John Chrysostom: 'Let no one lament his poverty, for the Kingdom has come for all!' When we celebrate Christ's Bright Resurrection we testify to how true these words are, for each person, even the greatest sinner, has been redeemed by the blood of Christ and has hope in salvation. Our sins, as all the sins of the human race, have been ransomed by the precious blood of the One who was crucified. In order to perceive the fruits of the Redemption one must have faith and be baptized (see: Mk. 16:16). Most of our nation has been baptized, yet how few who have faith are capable of changing their life.

The transformation of our life in Christ does not simply mean change for the better. It is a radical change that leads the human person to the triumph of life and fullness of being (cf.: Jn. 10:10) in both our sojourn on earth and in the age to come.

The feast of the Holy Passover enables us to feel clearly the unbroken link not only with events that took place two thousand years ago but also with the coming triumph of 'everlasting righteousness' (cf.: Dan.

9:24) when ‘God may be all in all’ (1 Cor. 15:28). We learn to see in human history the realization of the Creator’s plan when we become aware of the depths of ‘the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God’ (see: Rom. 11:33) by which the All-Merciful Creator leads humankind to salvation.

The ability of looking at history in the light of Christ’s Resurrection is especially important in our time – a time of the dominance of a media-influenced world whereby our hopes and aspirations are constrained by immediate concerns, and the rapid flow of time compels our contemporaries into forgetting that ‘the days are evil’ (Eph. 5:16). By living by current events, and the fears and troubles of a single day, we are inclined to forget that which is important – the salvation of the soul, Divine Providence, and that which is good and perfect.

Christ’s Resurrection indeed does allow us to transcend the vanity of everyday life so that we may see the true majesty of God’s love, which for the good of the human person condescended even unto the Cross and death. It is therefore important for us to realize that by his Resurrection the Lord renews human nature by granting fortification of the inner strength of every Christian in his ministry to the Church, country, society, family, and neighbour.

Many difficulties come the way of both simple people and of whole nations. Today people throughout the world suffer from enmity, wars, poverty, disease, loneliness and disorder in their personal lives. The world hurtles headlong in search of a better life, desperately trying to find an answer to its questions by way of human logic, political technologies or economic recipes. The Church and history testify that we must live according to the Word of God. It is then in the light of Christ’s Resurrection that the meaning of what is happening is revealed to us and that we can meet even the most hazardous challenges of life today.

May the risen Saviour inspire in our souls the firm resolve to follow his commandments!

Let us share with one another the joy of today’s feast! Let us warm the hearts of those who today suffer and experience privation. Let us direct our Paschal greeting to all people, to our neighbours and those far from us. Let us work hard for the prospering of the countries where we live.

I offer up my ardent prayers to the Lord that he may grant us a life of peace and prosperity. May he send down upon his Church his succour and the strength to minister diligently for the spiritual good of the nations whom he sustains, so that we all may grow in faith, hope and love.

Again from the depths of my heart I utter to you the exclamation of the Paschal joy in God who has trampled down death and has risen up with himself all of humankind:

Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed!

KIRILL

PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA

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